The benefits of cloud to higher education institutions

Because few institutions have the necessary resources to increase their capex spend to rip out and replace servers, storage, networking switches, and other infrastructure devices, cloud computing is an attractive alternative to upgrading and modernizing. Utilizing cloud to extend the infrastructure, and to support a wide range of IT services, is a strategy that promotes agility, scalability, and cost-effectiveness.

‘Moving key workloads to the cloud provides numerous benefits that include accelerating the move to the digitalization of higher education - from instruction and student support services to research, collaboration, and social engagement.’
Moving key workloads to the cloud provides numerous benefits that include accelerating the move to the digitalization of higher education - from instruction and student support services to research, collaboration, and social engagement. Also, by enlisting an experienced and well-resourced partner, it helps control risks such as security, compliance, and technology obsolescence.

An attractive element of cloud computing is that it can be deployed and managed in a variety of architectural models. Institutions can have dedicated private clouds, either on-premise or hosted remotely, and accessed over secure Internet connections. Or, they can utilize the increasingly popular hybrid cloud model. Hybrid cloud combines on-premise infrastructures and services with cloud resources for smaller-scale solutions such as university research programs, or wide-ranging workloads such as distance learning, cybersecurity, financial administration, and collaboration.

The attraction of hybrid cloud for these institutions is that it preserves what’s working efficiently in legacy, on-premise infrastructures, while allowing cost-effective IT infrastructure modernization. IT and business leaders don’t necessarily have to decommission their in-house data centers or build additional ones. Instead, they can partner with cloud service providers to make available additional IT infrastructure resources in a more agile and cost-effective manner.

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‘Education’s driving need for flexible, scalable consumption of platform in support of extended reach teaching and learning platforms, research enablement, student engagement and regulatory compliance can only be supported by consumption-based private, public and hybrid cloud solutions with advanced networking, storage and security services,’ says David Heyns, Education Vertical Specialist for Dimension Data.

‘Strategic partnerships around consulting and collaboration provide for functional delivery on global best practice across the institutional enterprise. Managed security and global data centre distribution further support regional regulations pertaining to information privacy, data sovereignty and risk management. Dimension Data’s solutions, and service delivery empowers institutions to strike the right balance between agility, functionality, and security, and enables them to develop a sustainable strategy and framework for future-proofed IT infrastructures.’

Dimension Data’s cloud portfolio for higher education

With IT workforces and budgets under pressure, many institutions want experienced partners to help them create more efficient ways to upgrade their infrastructures, and deliver more services.

One organization with extensive experience in the provision of a hybrid cloud model that’s well suited to the evolving needs of education is Dimension Data. The company’s experience in modernizing infrastructures across all business sectors is combined with a unique concept for the implementation and support of ‘community clouds’. These ‘community clouds’ provide flexible, cost-efficient platform solutions, and are focused on industries where collaboration is vital.

Dimension Data offers a wide range of cloud-based infrastructure solutions and services designed to support clients’ desires to upgrade performance and security. The organization also has experience in supporting technologies that extend the university enterprise such as mobility, distance learning solutions, and collaboration tools.

Dimension Data’s cloud is a flexible, secure, resilient, full-service infrastructure for production workloads and enterprise applications. The company has centers of excellence in networking, storage, and security, across six continents and offers a globally consistent service for multinational organizations.
Conclusion

Higher education institutions can’t afford to ignore the need to make smart, strategic investments in their IT infrastructures. Their stakeholders’ increasing demands for performance, agility, and scalability mean that systems must be upgraded. Additionally, a broader cyberthreat profile, and greater regulatory burdens put even more pressure on an infrastructure even if it’s resilient and highly available.

IT leaders in higher education must give serious consideration to accelerating their adoption of hybrid cloud solutions that combine sophisticated infrastructures with an opex-based financial model, which provides maximum value. Technology and business officials need the support of experienced CSPs with a track record for helping institutions upgrade their services through flexible and scalable cloud infrastructures.

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For more information about Dimension Data’s hybrid cloud solutions for higher education, please go to dimensiondata.com/us-Education

It can provide both public, shared resources and private clouds either in the client’s data center or in a Dimension Data data center. Together, these models provide hybrid cloud environments that address the time-to-value expectations required by enterprise workloads and critical applications, and there’s an opex consumption model at every price point. Today, many IT organizations are emerging as service brokers, leveraging cloud where they can and surrounding it with other delivery models as required. However, Dimension Data is able to surround the cloud with service delivery options to simplify the management of core systems and custom enterprise applications.

Another important element of Dimension Data’s higher-education solution is its community cloud for education. Dimension Data has created and deployed cloud environments for like-minded organizations and individuals looking to share experiences and learn from each other.