



Enhancing the Campus Experience at University of Otago

Overview

Country or Region: New Zealand

Industry: Education

Customer Profile

Founded in 1869, the University of Otago is New Zealand's oldest university. It has an enrollment of more than 21,000 students and operates campuses in Dunedin, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Invercargill.

Business Situation

Otago's Horde email system was no longer keeping up with student needs for accessibility, performance, or storage. Otago officials recognized that it was time for a new solution.

Solution

After a detailed review of online solutions from Google and Microsoft, Otago officials decided to deploy Microsoft Office 365 for education to support the needs of its students.

Benefits

- No capital costs
- Improved accessibility
- Improved availability
- Increased online storage
- A foundation for collaboration

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The University of Otago, in New Zealand, needed to update an aging email system that was based on Open Source tools and that provided students with insufficient online storage space. The University began moving towards an implementation of Microsoft Live@edu, but upon learning about Microsoft Office 365 for education switched direction. With a full complement of proven online resources and more than 10 times as much online storage space for each student, the decision to leap over Live@edu and adopt Office 365 for education was not difficult. The University migrated thousands of student email accounts and inboxes to this cloud-based solution, which students quickly and enthusiastically embraced. Today, Office 365 for education is a key part of "the campus experience" at the University of Otago, and for the University that's an important draw.



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Situation

New Zealand’s oldest and most well-established university had an evolving email problem. Its aging Horde-based e-mail system provided students with only 80 megabytes of email storage—and attachments alone could fill a student’s mail box within weeks. Adding more storage might have resolved that issue, but University IT officials felt that email storage was only one of several issues they had with Horde. The system provided only basic communications functionality, offered no calendaring features or shared contact lists—it also required a certain IT expertise (and a certain amount of time) to keep it running optimally.

The need to modernize the University’s student email infrastructure led Otago IT director Mike Harte to explore options. Mr. Harte assembled a team comprised of faculty, staff, and student advisors, developed a set of solution requirements, and then looked at what various vendors could provide to meet those requirements.

Microsoft and Google made the short list of contenders. Both companies offered attractive integrated communications solutions—Gmail, Google Calendar, and other tools from Google; the Live@edu solution from Microsoft. After a powerful set of presentations from Microsoft and compelling testimonials from other universities, Harte and his team recommended the adoption of Live@edu for Otago.

Then Microsoft showed the University a new offering that would soon be replacing Live@edu: Microsoft Office 365 for education. It promised to offer even more than Live@edu, so Otago agreed to leap right over Live@edu and deploy Office 365 for education directly.

Solution

Mr. Harte and his project team realized the advantages of Microsoft Office 365 for education early on. Not only did Office 365 for education provide the key features and functionality that Otago officials wanted to be able to offer students, but Office 365 for education would allow the University’s faculty and staff—who have their own Microsoft Exchange-based email infrastructure—to migrate easily to this cloud-based solution if it was decided to move off their on-premises deployment of Exchange. Moreover, Office 365 for education would enable students to use Microsoft Office Outlook 2010, an email client with which most students were already familiar.

Microsoft Office 365 for education combines the familiar Microsoft Office desktop suite with online versions of next-generation Microsoft communications and collaboration services, including:

- Microsoft Exchange Online for email, shared calendars, and shared address books.
- Microsoft Lync® Online for instant messaging and online video conferencing.
- Microsoft Office Web Apps for online access to Microsoft Office files.
- Microsoft SharePoint® Online for collaboration and resource sharing.

These applications run in data centers owned and operated by Microsoft, and Microsoft maintains the servers and the software on a day-to-day basis. Otago officials anticipated that this would free the University’s IT personnel to devote their time and attention to activities that are more strategically valuable than maintaining an aging email infrastructure. And, because Microsoft keeps the Office 365 for education software up-to-date on

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the back end, students at Otago would always be working with the latest software releases—without the local IT team having to oversee server migrations and upgrades.

Benefits

With Office 365 for education, the University of Otago has been able to roll-out a new, fully modern email infrastructure quickly and cost-effectively. It provides students with more capabilities—including shared calendars and contact lists, as well as access from anywhere, at any time, from any device with a browser. It also provides students with much more storage capacity—25 gigabytes (GB) per student—so students have ample room to store their work online.

Anywhere, anytime, and from any device

“We now have a world-class email and calendaring solution for our students,” says Mr. Harte. “Office 365 for education fits in with our ‘anywhere, anytime, any device’ strategy, which enables students to access services on the go, wherever they are. And when the Microsoft Office mobile apps are released, they will further enable students to pursue their studies wherever they are and by using whatever device they prefer to use—be it a University-supplied device or not.”

While Otago has focused primarily on rolling out the email capabilities of Office 365 for education—that has been its most pressing need—both Mr. Harte and University students have been watching developments in other areas of the Office 365 for education offering. Some students have begun to use Microsoft Lync on their own, taking advantage of the instant messaging and videoconferencing features to interact in ways that were not previously possible. With Microsoft SharePoint Online, students will find additional ways to interact, working together online on

projects—regardless of where they might physically be at any given moment—share documents, and more.

“The Microsoft Office applications in the pipeline will enable extensive collaboration opportunities for students,” Mr. Harte continues. “They’ll be able to work together on various educational activities in ways that simply have not been viable until now.”

Attaining the unattainable

In moving from its old Horde-based infrastructure to Office 365 for education, the University has not technically reduced its costs. It has, however, been able to achieve two very cost-related gains. Because Microsoft ensures that the hardware and software are always operating efficiently and that the software is always maintained at the most current release and patch level, the IT staff at the University of Otago no longer has to devote any time to maintaining the email infrastructure. That frees the University’s IT staff to focus on adding real value elsewhere.

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The second cost-related aspect has to do with the level of availability and reliability that the University has gained by adopting Office 365 for education. Microsoft provides round-the-clock monitoring of the Office 365 for education environment, and staff is always able to respond to any issues that might arise. This ensures that the Office 365 for education environment is available and responsive whenever users need it. That level of responsiveness and support would have been cost-prohibitive

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services in New Zealand, call 0800 800 004. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

www.microsoft.com/education/en-nz/Pages/index.aspx

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www.microsoft.com

For more information about University of Otago products and services, visit the website at: www.otago.ac.nz

for the University if it had tried to provide it internally.

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Adding to the campus experience

Mr. Harte says that the fact that the University has adopted Office 365 for education is beneficial for the University in other ways, too. "Universities are in a competitive marketplace and Office 365 for education makes the University of Otago that much more attractive to students. Eighty percent of our students come from outside the city of Dunedin, where the University's main campus is based, and they come here for what we call 'the campus experience.' That's quite an important part of our brand, and we need to ensure the quality of that experience. We need to deliver the services that students expect, and Office 365 for education is a key part of that campus experience."

Microsoft Office 365 for Education

Microsoft Office 365 for education brings together cloud versions of our most trusted communications and collaboration products—Microsoft SharePoint Online, Exchange Online, and Lync Online—with the latest version of our Office desktop suite and companion web applications for educational institutions.

Office 365 for education helps save time and money, and it frees up valued resources. Simple to use and easy to administer, it is financially backed by a service level agreement guaranteeing 99 percent reliability. Office 365 for education features robust security, IT-level phone support, geo-redundancy, disaster recovery, and the privacy controls and standards that you expect from a world-class service provider.

For more information about Microsoft Office 365 for education, go to: <http://education.office365.com>

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office 365 for education