

The University of Sydney deploys cloud-based courses in one week

Insight and Citrix quickly creates an
online learning environment.



By teaming with Insight and Citrix, The University of Sydney quickly created an online learning environment for students who were unable to return to campus locations to study.

Enabling students to learn safely

We've all heard someone utter the phrase, "It turned my world upside down". Almost never do we hear someone say that, in just seven days, an innovative IT team designed, procured, implemented, tested and rolled-out an enterprise global solution that set things right again. However, the IT team at The University of Sydney did exactly that in providing remote students with rapid-fire education alternatives.

"During a time of rapid change and uncertainty in Higher Education, Insight is proud to be able to support The University of Sydney in the rapid procurement and deployment of a leading edge solution to a very modern problem," explains Alex Nikolaidis, Account Manager, Education NSW & ACT at Insight. "It speaks to the depth and trust that exist between The University of Sydney and Insight that this was able to be achieved so quickly"

Connecting students and staff across the globe

The University of Sydney is committed to delivering a great student experience. A longstanding relationship with Insight as the IT partner of choice, and strategic partner with Citrix, the university's IT team deployed an entire digital environment that enabled remote access to coursework, apps and data. Technologists on the ground in China then tested the system to ensure its viability. "The great thing about the Citrix platform is that we built it directly in the cloud," explains Jordan Catling, Associate Director of Client Technology at The University of Sydney. "Our implementation took seven days and is entirely scalable."

The idea was to address the immediate challenge first: to build capabilities for students, followed by providing tools for staff and faculty. The team's goal was to provide a range of agile tools, while avoiding being prescriptive as to how those tools should be used. This would ultimately enable greater innovation. "We wanted to provide a secure, high-quality student experience by supporting the diverse ways in which different individuals consume information," Jordan says.

The team has provided more than 100 course-specific applications and SaaS apps that students can access regardless of the type of device or location. The student experience is as good as – and sometimes better than – what a student would have when using locally installed apps on a physical computer.

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*Alex Nikolaidis
Account Manager, Education NSW & ACT, Insight Enterprises Australia*

The University of Sydney: Case study

Industry

Education

Location

Australia

- Insight Enterprises Australia leveraged strategic partnership with Citrix to provide a solution for an online learning environment, designed, implemented, tested and deployed within 7 days.
- Citrix solution makes it easier than ever before to onboard students and faculty.
- Enables students to work from anywhere, on any device, at any time and provides remote PC access.
- Computers can be configured from a single image in minutes, enabling virtual access to software.
- Data security is enhanced by keeping data only in the data center while embedded security means access is strongly controlled and user context is governed by policies set by the IT team.

"With a focus on multidisciplinary research and teaching, The University of Sydney wanted to provide our staff and students with a broad set of tools that enable disciplinary depth as well as breadth. "

*Jordan Catling
Associate Director of Client
Technology, The University of Sydney*

Insight and Citrix empowers students in virtual labs and classrooms

Many of the statistical, scientific or technical apps that The University of Sydney students use put high computational demands on physical computers. Virtualization with Citrix allows the university to run these intensive apps in the cloud. "A physical computer might take up to two minutes to load one of our statistical programs," Jordan clarifies. "Running it on the Citrix Cloud management platform, we can see responsiveness in 20 seconds."

The university has now enabled student access to virtual labs, and, thanks to Insight and Citrix in combination with other tools such as Zoom, students can attend virtual classes.

The Citrix-based Virtual Research Desktop is a great example of a virtual lab that delivers high-powered resources so researchers can perform their work more easily. The Faculty of Medicine and Health provides students with healthcare-related tools regardless of the teaching hospitals in which they operate. Not only can students now access information easily in the hospitals, they can also rely on Citrix to complete coursework as they are in transit to and from various medical facilities.

Citrix content collaboration capabilities allow students and staff to securely share data. In the past, transmitting massive volumes of data slowed down the system and took up valuable space on servers. Citrix solved that problem.

Not only is The University of Sydney now enabling students to work from anywhere, on any device, at any time, it is also providing remote PC access. This is something that some staff find particularly appealing. Users are able to connect to their physical desktop computers via a Citrix Virtual agent – without actually needing to be on site.

The University of Sydney: Case study

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Closed borders create barriers and innovation

As the Covid-19 pandemic hit Australia and the rest of the world many students from The University of Sydney were unable to return to campus to continue their studies due to closed international borders and "stay at home" orders.

The University of Sydney worked closely with their IT partner of choice - Insight Enterprises Australia, to help provide a solution for an online learning environment, designed, implemented, tested and deployed within 7 days! Leveraging strategic partnerships Insight engaged Citrix to develop the solution.



Insight and Citrix, a strategic partnership

Monitoring performance to ensure a consistently great experience

The Citrix solution also helps IT gauge the consistency of the online staff and student experience. Using Citrix Analytics, IT can monitor performance in remote locations to determine if latency is an issue and adjust to make the user experience even better.

The university's IT team implemented an underlying foundation of Citrix networking technology to ensure performance is consistently high. This is achieved by prioritizing and routing network traffic based on geography. The Citrix network capitalizes on the nearest available resources.

Forward-thinking goals

The University of Sydney's IT team had several goals in mind that could serve the university now and in the future.

- Providing a set of highly responsive, flexible, robust, and scalable tools that are natural to use.
- Provide the user base with tools that encourage innovation, without being prescriptive in their use.
- Establishing and maintaining business partnerships that enable the exchange of innovative ideas.

Significant benefits for the IT team:

The University of Sydney IT team has realized a number of benefits from the new solution.

- The collaboration of Insight and Citrix makes it easier than ever before to onboard students and faculty.
- Computers can be configured from a single image in minutes allowing the team to use its cloud-based tools so users can access other valuable digital tools.
- The Citrix platform enables virtual access to software that staff and students might occasionally need without installing hundreds of applications.
- Rest easy knowing that data and applications are secure in the new digital environment. Data does not reside on the students' devices.
- Citrix technology has embedded security so access is strongly controlled and user context is governed by policies set by the IT team.

"The great thing about platforms like Citrix is that they are feature-rich, flexible and scalable, so we can embrace leading-edge ways of educating students and researching complex global problems"

Jordan Catling, Associate Director of Client Technology, The University of Sydney



Global Partnerships and Local Partners

"No matter the size of the company, successfully managing work mobility securely is a crucial component to productivity in today's technology-driven world. The deep connection we share with Citrix to deliver complete workspace solutions results in reduced operational costs for IT and a high-quality end-user experience for our clients,"

*Bob Kane
Senior vice president of product marketing, Insight Enterprises*