

Case Study

City College Coventry

“Fujitsu vShape delivers the comprehensive performance we need in the most cost-effective way with simple installation and all the functionality we could ask for. It is now the literal centrepiece of our new innovation hub while also providing a platform for the entire college to connect with.”

Kevin Vashi, Head of IT, City College Coventry



The customer

Country: United Kingdom
Industry: Education
Founded: 1992
Employees: 290
Website: www.covcollege.ac.uk



The challenge

After upgrading its infrastructure to Fujitsu PRIMERGY servers, City College Coventry wanted to create a digital space that would deliver new services to students and faculty alike.

The solution

The college joined Fujitsu's Education Ambassador programme and together they designed an Innovation Hub centred on a Fujitsu vShape platform, which provides server, storage and virtualisation in one single box.

The customer

City College Coventry provides high quality technical and professional education to support the achievement of its 5,000 students. Its courses cover hundreds of potential pathways, which are designed to improve career prospects and help pupils progress to university and beyond.

The college's strength comes from its close ties with industry and local employers who contribute to the design of courses to ensure they stay current and relevant. They also provide valuable work experience opportunities, expert mentoring and guest speakers, all of which enhance the students' chances of securing a dream job.

The challenge

City College Coventry had amassed a number of servers which were reaching end of life and could no longer support the virtual machines it required. After close evaluation of the market, the college decided that Fujitsu would be the best choice as a new hardware partner.

“The equipment itself is largely commoditised but what Fujitsu brought to the table was its aftercare support as well as its honest approach,” explains Kevin Vashi, Head of IT, City College Coventry. “Fujitsu's engineers actually revised our plan so that we didn't need as many physical servers. That obviously reduces costs but it also creates trust.”

As a result of this successful collaboration, which has provided a robust, scalable and high-performing technology infrastructure, the college also joined Fujitsu's Education Ambassador programme. Chosen for their commitment and desire to support future generations of students by inspiring them to take-up technology subjects, Fujitsu, alongside partners Intel, Brocade and Kyocera, supports Ambassadors in project-based learning and skills development. At its heart lies the Innovation Hub, which provides students and educators with the opportunity to develop their digital skills.

“We thrashed out our requirements with Fujitsu in a collaborative way in order to create a digital space that would serve the needs of all our students and the faculty,” adds Kevin Vashi. “We also wanted to integrate technology across the college and move away from the traditional ‘teacher at the front of class’ model of education.”

The benefit

- Fujitsu vShape provides an all-in-one pre-configured solution that is easily installed for a seamless migration
- Allowed the college to investigate augmented reality to help students engage with their courses as well as a dedicated games design capability
- Enhanced performance reduces the time it takes teachers to generate vital reports, relieving frustration and boosting productivity
- By purchasing all components from a single vendor, costs have been cut by 25 per cent and time to deployment by 70 per cent

However, as a public institution, cost was a key concern: "Like many others, we are faced with budget cuts so we wanted to find an integrated solution that would provide a one stop shop for servers, storage and virtualisation."

The solution

The college deployed Fujitsu PRIMEFLEX® vShape, a virtualisation and private cloud reference architecture that integrates the expertise and technologies of leading manufacturers. PRIMEFLEX vShape offers a simple concept with highly scalable industry-standard components including storage, networking and virtualisation software, all running on Fujitsu PRIMERGY servers. These components are synchronised and pre-configured as a single solution.

"Fujitsu vShape delivers the comprehensive performance we need in the most cost-effective way with simple installation and all the functionality we could ask for," continues Kevin Vashi. "It is now the literal centrepiece of our new innovation hub while also providing a platform for the entire college to connect with."

This all-in-one solution consists of three PRIMERGY RX2540 M1 servers, one ETERNUS DX100 S3 storage system with 5TB of capacity, two Brocade 10GB switches and Microsoft HyperV virtualisation software. With only two cables to connect, it is the easiest way to deliver a scalable virtual platform for SME organisations.

"Within two days, we were up and running and had migrated all our core applications to the new environment," says Kevin Vashi. "That included SQL databases, attendance records, financial and management software as well as specialist games design applications."

Products and services

- FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX® vShape 50

The benefit

The new Fujitsu vShape solution is delivering powerful performance combined with high availability. Since the installation, City College Coventry has not once needed to make a support call; at the same time, users have found their experience has improved considerably.

"We used to get a lot of complaints about how long it took to generate reports, which was driving teachers to distraction," comments Kevin Vashi. "Now, they appear at the touch of a button – that reduces frustration and makes everyone more productive."

Fujitsu vShape has also enabled the college to introduce a dedicated games design server with full rendering capabilities. Beyond video games, it is also helping would-be hairdressers and mechanics, among others, to progress their education.

"We are working towards augmented reality environments for someone to spray-paint a car, for example," remarks Kevin Vashi. "Or we can stream live footage from a local salon for pupils to study in real time."

By purchasing all the components from one vendor, the procurement process was painless, costs were minimised and time to deployment was reduced. It is estimated that the college is enjoying initial CAPEX savings of 25 per cent while the implementation was 70 per cent faster than would usually be expected.

Conclusion

With the flagship Innovation Hub in place, City College Coventry is keen to explore other areas where it can partner with Fujitsu. A new campus-wide network upgrade is first on the list.

"Fujitsu's Education Ambassador programme has not only given us an outstanding Innovation Hub that powers the entire college, it also opens the door to new technologies and provides a network of other colleges with whom we can share knowledge," concludes Kevin Vashi.

"Fujitsu is fantastic; it gives us the support and aftercare to ensure we always have what we need. This company doesn't just go the extra mile; it sprints that mile."

Kevin Vashi, Head of IT, City College Coventry

Contact

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