

Assuring Sovereign Resilience



Australian National University Takes Teaching Online Through Virtual Desktops

Based in Canberra, The Australian National University (ANU), supports over 20,000 students from across the country and overseas, with a strong focus on the on-campus learning experience. When stage three lockdown measures came into place in March 2020, ANU needed to quickly transition students, staff and lecturers to a remote platform with the same level of access to campus-based resources and functionality.



Challenge

While ANU had previously been working on an on-premises solution, this would not meet the urgent timeframe. Instead, it needed to turn around a remote learning solution in the middle of a semester to safeguard continuity for students and employees. This had to meet the University's existing education standards, but via an online platform. Not only was ANU operating under time constraints, but it also had to ensure this approach met the University's robust and comprehensive security and privacy policies.



At ANU we are committed to the wellbeing and health of our community. We are also committed to ensuring our students can still pursue one of the world's best educations from some of the world's best teachers and researchers – despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. Moving all our teaching online so our students can keep learning during a pandemic has been a monumental effort. So too has been setting up a Virtual Information Commons. It means our students can access the software and programs they use on campus and continue their learning away from the University.



Garry Whatley

Chief Information Officer,
Australian National University

AUSTRALIA'S
SOVEREIGN CLOUD
IAAS PROVIDER

australiacloud.com.au



Solution

Time was of the essence. ANU needed to continue a seamless student experience, mitigating further issues while making sure students' studies were disrupted as little as possible. In just one week, a small multidisciplinary team, from ANU, AUCloud and Insitec, implemented a turnkey solution that allowed the University to move its operations online, via remote access.

To bring the ANU campus experience online, AUCloud deployed the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure as a Service (VDIaaS). Known within the University as the 'Virtual Information Commons', this provided the capacity for the University to scale to support over 20,000 students, including international students located overseas, as well as staff and lecturers, to access key applications online. With the solution provisioned and available for all academic colleges, students across the University could all work remotely with the same level of functionality, and reliability available on campus.

Based on VMware's Horizon 7 application and working with partner Insitec, the AUCloud VDIaaS provides a resilient, highly secure, sovereign service that meets the Australian Government's security controls for data classifications at Official, Official:Sensitive and Protected (in accordance with the Australian Signals Directorate's (ASD) Information Security Manual (ISM)). This provides the assurance that supported data remains in Australia and is operated by security cleared, Australian citizens.

Outcomes

ANU staff, students and lecturers are now able to access key applications via a remote virtual desktop, bringing the University's on-campus experience online, from anywhere. The service is accessed by authentication logins, using the CSIRO's AARNet connectivity network, and integrated into the University's broader security requirements for compliance, safeguarding valuable data.

To support the rollout, AUCloud and Insitec expanded the existing support desk for students and employees to include a Managed Support Service, including a dedicated helpline with email and phone support, alongside a user guide.

This improved the user experience and minimised the workload for the ANU IT team as the helpline could support a large volume of students and lecturers, most of whom were not familiar with the new platform.

With this approach, ANU, in partnership with AUCloud, is now able to offer the on-campus experience online, in a secure environment. With over 120 apps available via the ANU virtual desktop, AUCloud's remote desktop solution is ensuring curriculum continuity into the future.

Benefits

- Remote access to essential learning applications through a secure portal for 20,000 students, as well as staff and lecturers
- Expansion of the University's Service Desk capability to include a Managed Support Service to deliver a seamless experience for ANU students
- Desktop service performance levels that match ANU requirements, with the ability to vary VDI performance levels for specific curricula
- Cloud and cyber monitoring, using protective monitoring technology at the AUCloud perimeter and supported by AUCloud's 24x7 Canberra based SOC capability
- White-labelled browser and student facing support materials to ANU branding for visual consistency.

“Our achievements during this project, in such a short period of time, are a testament to the expertise, shared sense of purpose and collaboration of the AUCloud, Insitec and ANU teams. Delivering this remote access has had a huge impact on the ANU community; from students to staff, the University will now continue to deliver their world-renowned education in a new way, but equally effective way.”

Phil Dawson

Managing Director,
AUCloud

Contact 1800-282-5683
sales@australiacloud.com.au
australiacloud.com.au