



case study

University of

Huddersfield utilises Cetus' skills to provide secure and remote access for over 20,000 students



Increased competition in higher education means that many establishments are placing great emphasis on providing an enhanced student experience as a key differentiator. The need to view students as customers and to ensure that the service they are receiving is of a very high level is driving the more forward thinking universities to improve the way students can utilise organisational IT resources.

With roots in the Huddersfield science & mechanic institute, founded in 1825, Huddersfield University now has over 22,000 students and 1,600 staff. Attracting students from all over the UK and 85 foreign countries, Huddersfield has been voted a top University for student satisfaction. Now that students have a large choice of HE establishments, such an award is obviously an important factor for them when deciding on their future.

Alan Radley, IT Infrastructure Manager at Huddersfield University explains, "Student satisfaction has always been high on the management team's agenda and we are always looking at ways in which we can improve. The use of IT to provide a more holistic student experience is key to our thinking."

secure and easy-to-use remote access

In line with this, in 2007 the University decided it wanted to give all its students access to their data, which was held on the University's servers, irrespective of where they were located. This would enable them to make more efficient use of their time, rather than always having to travel to campus buildings to carry out their work.

To offer secure and easy-to-use remote access to over 20,000 users could have presented the IT team at Huddersfield with a major headache, both in the design and implementation of the solution as well as the day-to-day management. Fortunately, they had been talking to Manchester-based Cetus Solutions for some time and they were able to provide advice and guidance on the right product for their needs.

"Initially we drew up a list of requirements and discussed these with Cetus", said Alan Radley, "from this they were able to present with a number of options as to which was the best way to proceed. We eventually decided to go with Citrix Access Gateway as it provided a cost-effective and efficient method of delivering exactly the service we wanted".



control access and locations

Citrix Access Gateway gives users secure remote access to the data they need to be productive. It offers unprecedented control through comprehensive SmartAccess policies allowing administrators to control both access and actions based on both the user and the endpoint device.

This was important to the University as students could be accessing the data on their servers from a variety of devices and locations. For example, a user may have full access (read, save locally, print, etc.) to data when utilising a PC on campus, but may be restricted to “read-only” access when connecting through an unrecognised “kiosk” device.

Similarly, if a student tries to log onto the network via a home PC that does not have an active anti-virus update service they may not be able to access certain data. With SmartAccess, administrators are provided with the ultimate flexibility in developing and implementing security policies.

24x7x365 access

Initially, Cetus consultants’ set up a proof-of-concept pilot by providing an evaluation solution that enabled remote access for the 60 members of the IT team at the University. Commenting on this, Alan Radley said, “This proof-of-concept was vital in us gaining a full understanding of exactly what Citrix Access Gateway could do for us and how we would manage it in a live environment. Cetus set everything up for us and provided full training so we could experiment with different scenarios. From this we were able to decide exactly how we wanted the live application to operate.”

The pilot was a complete success and Cetus then implemented the full production solution that enables the students to access their data 24x7x365.

Unlike many other SSL VPN solutions Citrix Access Gateway is virtually invisible to the user. A Web distributed client allows students to automatically download and install the Secure Access client. This also means that students always



receive the latest client version, eliminating the need for administrators to manually update client software - an important consideration with over 20,000 users to look after!

mobile desktop service

With the solution live and operating smoothly, the University’s IT team embarked on the second stage of the project - providing staff with a mobile desktop service. Alan Radley explained, “We wanted to give all staff access through the gateway to a cut-down version of their desktop with the critical applications and data they need to do their job.”

Initially, Cetus helped them setup a pilot for 100 members of staff, but after a successful 3 month trial this is now being extended to all 1,600+ members of staff.

“Cetus has a tremendous technical knowledge, but they don’t seek to impose a solution on you” concluded Alan Radley. “They listened to our problems and requirements and gave us a number of options. When we had made the choice over which was best for us they acted very quickly to set up the pilots and provide us with all the necessary training and support to ensure that we would achieve our aims. Everything ran really smoothly and I am very pleased with the relationship we enjoy with them.

We have been able to experiment with Citrix safe in the knowledge that Cetus experts are there to help us if there is a problem”.

The University IT team are now working closely with Cetus consultants as they look to enhance the mobile desktop service for staff.



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