Setting new standards
for universities in the cloud

Perth's Edith Cowan University became the first Australian university to move its entire IT infrastructure to the cloud – equipping it for the digital age and bringing unprecedented agility to help transform education.

Background

Edith Cowan University (ECU) is an open and vibrant public university with around 23,000 students. It's based in Perth, Western Australia – one of the remotest cities in the world.
In a highly competitive market and with an ambitious vision for growth, ECU's leadership team saw the huge potential of digital technologies. Today's students naturally expect access to digital tools and content. ECU's Board wanted to harness new technologies to:

- Attract and retain talented students and staff through dynamic and innovative educational provision
- Connect and enable growing numbers of overseas students (who contribute financially) to participate remotely in the curriculum
- Underpin new efficiencies and its future plans for expansion.

ECU had two data centers on campus that were becoming less and less efficient to maintain. Specific problems included:

- Rising costs of maintaining and upgrading on-premise hardware and software, with ongoing capital investments
- Severe constraints on growth and on ECU's ability change technologies or teaching models
- Difficulties attracting IT skills in-house.

Key challenges

Like many universities, ECU had three essential concerns when it came to cloud:

- Resilience. The university had to ensure a smooth and reliable digital environment for students and staff, with high levels of performance and reliability guaranteed in any location on any device.
- Data sovereignty. Critically, ECU wanted to access, govern and safeguard its own data (and that of its students), without giving away sovereignty to a third-party provider. With faculties such as the School of Nursing holding sensitive personal data, it was vital that all data was stored within Australia and subject to local laws and privacy regulations.
- Latency of data. ECU's vision depended on students and staff being connected and able to access vast amounts of data and systems in real time, whenever and wherever they needed. That meant storing data at a relatively close distance so that there would be no delay in retrieving it. With the nearest city 3,000km away, that presented a challenge.

In 2015, after a competitive tender, ECU chose Atos as its partner based on:

- Atos' readiness to invest long term by building a brand-new data center in Perth to meet all ECU's needs
- The high levels of maturity of Atos' solution, which meant that the cost was very competitive
- Atos' dedication to making the transformation happen at the pace and scale that ECU wanted.

ECU's vision

With the need for a more agile, high-performing and cost-efficient digital infrastructure, ECU knew that cloud adoption was essential. The Board's vision was bold: to move the university's entire data center infrastructure to the cloud as early as possible.

A piecemeal approach was not an option. Success depended on realizing all the benefits of cloud as early as possible. To avoid having to make further major investments in ECU's two existing data centers, migration of all its existing applications had to happen within an 18-month timeframe and with minimal operational impacts. To make the necessary leap, ECU needed a secure and sustainable cloud technology platform delivered by a highly flexible and trusted supplier.

Atos' solution

Atos worked closely with ECU to achieve a smooth and seamless transition and transformation of ECU's entire IT infrastructure to a new secure Managed Hybrid (multi-tenant) Cloud environment.

Atos invested in building a brand-new, state-of-the-art cloud hub with twin data centers in Perth, setting new cloud services standards for universities across Western Australia. Atos used best-of-breed technology with built-in scalability to ensure that ECU could rely on transparent, cost-efficient cloud services on a fast and high-performing IT infrastructure. Atos' Canopy Hybrid Cloud Orchestration Service is a fully managed cloud service (built on an EMC and VMware technical architecture) and provided on a highly efficient and flexible pay-as-you-go consumption model.

Secure transition and transformation

To ensure a smooth path to rapid transition, Atos used its global structured cloud adoption delivery model. The team worked closely with ECU to shape and explain the process so that all services were smoothly transitioned and transformed in the new cloud environment.

Atos' global cloud capabilities and standardized tools and frameworks were vital in managing risk and making migration as easy as possible for ECU. So that the university could rapidly realize the benefits of cloud, the team delivered parallel transition/transformation.

This is a complete Internet as a Service, meaning that all technology services are in Atos' hands as trusted cloud service provider for a five-year period.

Seamless and secure managed services

To ensure that services are simple to use and seamless for ECU, Atos provides an integrated managed service for cloud and non-cloud workloads. All ECU's hardware and software is hosted and fully supported by Atos. Services include disaster recovery and 24x7 monitoring and operations management, with enterprise-grade Service Level Agreements, including a target for availability of infrastructure of 99.9%.

ECU has absolute security and privacy from the shielded multi-tenant private cloud data center with full data-sovereignty guarantees.

Benefits

With the move to Atos' cloud in Perth, ECU is benefitting from the latest high-end infrastructure. The university's resources are optimized and faculties and departments can be faster and more efficient in responding to students' changing needs and advances in technology.

- Instead of having to maintain its own IT, ECU benefits from a simple 'hop-on/hop-off' service that flexes entirely to meet demand between and across semesters.
- ECU has access to agile, dynamic development expertise that reduces the time to market for any new digital tools and technologies.
- The university now has elasticity in-built, and can focus on transforming itself and providing an innovative education to its students. ECU can run self-managed virtual environments and colocation services. Students can stay connected to study from anywhere. Faculties and departments can open new app stores, reach growing numbers of students in China, get students enrolled faster, launch new websites, be quicker, more flexible and dramatically improve the day-to-day experience of staff and students.
- All this is done with reduced IT costs, enhanced processes and improved services.
- ECU now has much more visibility of its costs, making budgeting and cost-containment much easier to plan for and control.

Critical to success was the strategic drive and vision of ECU's leadership team combined with Atos' commitment and ability to work in partnership.

As education evolves and digital technologies continue to transform the way students acquire knowledge, ECU is ready to meet new challenges and opportunities. ECU can access Atos' research and development resources, innovation and global best practice, including key opportunities to leverage big data and real-time, data-driven learning.

> "While we reviewed the changing landscape of our organization against future expansion plans, moving to the cloud became inevitable and we found Atos with its international coverage and expertise to be the right fit."

Professor Arshad Omari
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Edith Cowan University

For more information, visit our web site here : **atos.net/education**