

Amity University, India

NComputing powers education at Amity, India's leading university

Challenges

- To refresh old PC-based computer labs with a reliable computing infrastructure that can run large, complex applications
- To ensure safety of student, faculty and organizational data
- To reduce maintenance/ support costs, and physical footprint

Solution

- Deployment of NComputing's L-series thin client access devices with four vSpace virtualization servers

Results

- Low initial investment
- 100 per cent uptime
- Reduction in power consumption
- Ease of administration
- Lower maintenance and support costs
- Reduction in e-waste
- Flexibility to use different application services

Amity University has multi-faceted IT requirements—from running administrative applications to powering their computer labs. When their old, PC-based labs required a facelift, they decided to go for a more reliable, scalable and flexible computing setup. NComputing won hands-down as it offered a technically superior solution at a fraction of the expected costs.



Old and New: Budgets go further with the NComputing L-series solution, extending the useful life of older equipment such as these CRT monitors

Amity University has a large network of educational institutions in India, with a student enrolment higher than 80,000. Reputed for being a tech-savvy organization, the university believes in adopting the best global technology practices for enhancing the quality of education and providing opportunities for students to experiment and apply what they have learned.

Maintenance hassles trigger search for better solution

At one point of time, the Amity management realized that their old PC-based labs were getting out of hand. While routine maintenance tasks and updates were tough to handle, there were also unexpected repairs to boot. Some of the old labs were also inadequate to serve the growing tech needs of their educational system, as they contained obsolete systems that appeared beyond redemption. It was difficult to run and troubleshoot complex applications on such machines. The management was also constantly worried about the safety of student and faculty data, despite regular backups.

It was at this juncture that Amity University decided to go for a tech makeover. They were bent on identifying a solution that would be reliable and could seamlessly manage the large number of applications while also reducing technical support and physical footprint.

Deployment Architecture

Virtual Desktops:

- 280 NComputing L-series thin client access devices

OS Platform:

- Windows XP
- Desktop Virtualization Software: vSpace

Host Server:

- 4 HP Blade Servers, with a 1:20 host-user ratio

Applications:

- Client-Server, Web and Desktop based applications

“NComputing’s desktop virtualization technology delivers significant cost savings, which we can re-invest in software and services to ensure our students benefit from the most advanced and high standard of curriculum possible.”

Dr. J S Sodhi

Head-IT, Amity Education & Assistant Vice President, AKC Data Systems

NComputing boots out Amity’s tech problems

While grappling with these issues, Amity evaluated several alternatives including traditional thin client solutions, but discovered that these were complex and pricey despite all claims. After extensive research, they zeroed in on NComputing’s L-series for vSpace—a desktop virtualization solution, which they believed would solve their problems and offer a much better experience at a fraction of the cost. Features such as low power consumption, compatibility with existing applications, reliability, hassle-free management, low maintenance and support needs, turned the management in its favour.

Amity University approached Adline Systems, an NComputing partner in North India, and purchased 80 L-series thin client access devices and four computer servers running vSpace Server software, each server supporting 20 virtual desktops. Happy with the deployment, Amity University extended the NComputing magic to six more centres, deploying an additional 200 L-series access devices.

A cost-effective, flexible and scalable solution

Amity University breathed free after the NComputing deployment as it solved most of the tech issues that they earlier faced. Each student’s monitor, keyboard, and mouse connect to the shared PC through a small and very durable NComputing thin client access device. The access device itself has no CPU, memory, or moving parts—so it is rugged, reliable, and easy to deploy and maintain.

The system was so powerful it could run all their complex applications using just a small bit of its full capacity. Maintenance and support costs were minimal, and so was the initial investment. It saved around 75 per cent of the expected costs. As a result, the University could channel these investments to fund higher computing needs.

Since virtual desktops use just 1 to 5 Watts of electricity, it resulted in around 90 per cent power savings. Each server host is scheduled to power on in the morning and power down in the afternoon. This helps save energy.

With low footprint and minimal power requirements, NComputing met the organization’s green philosophies. NComputing’s solution is also extremely flexible and scalable, enabling deployment of varied application services. Hence, the university is at will to use any applications they need, and also to scale up their infrastructure as their needs grow in the future.

Powering higher education, all over India

“NComputing’s desktop virtualization technology gives us tremendous flexibility to use different application services. The solution also delivers significant cost savings which we can re-invest in software and services to ensure our students benefit from the most advanced and high standard of curriculum possible,” said Dr. J S Sodhi, Head-IT, Amity Education and Assistant Vice President, AKC Data Systems, an Amity and AKC Group company. “Moreover, this advanced computer lab deployment is an important proof of our philosophy of working and educating in the greenest environment possible,” he added.