



Taking the classroom to the student

For 127 years, Savannah State University has been an important part of higher education. As the oldest public HBCU in Georgia and the oldest institution of higher learning in the historic city of Savannah, SSU has served the Savannah community with distinction while meeting the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

At a Glance:

Customer Profile:

- Company: Savannah State University (SSU)
- Industry: Education
- Location: Savannah, GA
- Size: 4,900 students

Summary:

- 30 Baccalaureate majors & degrees. 6 graduate programs
- Partnered with U2Cloud to virtually deliver high-powered graphics applications to students
- Mobilizing the student body with anywhere access to advance science and engineering programs from any device
- Consolidation of cloud technology to simplify management and reduce costs

Software:

- Desktop & application software: ArcGIS, AutoCAD Win10, Office 365, Skype, Project & Visio

Hardware:

- Thin Clients: Dell WYSE 5010 Thin Clients and student BYOD devices
- GRID boards: NVIDIA K1 and K2

The Challenge

Students in today's education environment are not comparable to traditional 9 to 5 workers. They're constantly on the go and moving across devices, so it's important that resources are available 24x7. In the morning, they may be working on their laptop at home or in the dorms. As the day progresses, they may move onto campus and work from a tablet or other mobile device. And after class, they can often be found studying in a student common area or collaborating in the computer lab, using a thin client.

These students need a flexible, mobile workspace that helps foster successful learning anytime, anywhere, and on whatever device they use to improve collaboration, share ideas, and make new connections.

Deliver Windows 10, Office 365, Visio & Project to the entire student population. Integrate with SSU's on-premise Active-Directory to enable Single Sign-On (SSO) for desktops & applications. SSU students and faculty have Office 365 accounts which are used for office apps, student file storage, email, instant messaging and SharePoint. The accounts are currently Active Directory Integrated between SSU's on-premise Active Directory and Office 365.

Recently SSU began seeing an influx of smartphones, tablets and notebook computers. With students no longer tethered to desktops, there is more freedom to learn from anywhere, at any time. But while students are embracing trends such as BYOD, IT departments, are struggling with how to best support and manage these new devices while ensuring a consistent end user experience across different devices, networks, and geographies.

As SSU's technical curriculum grew, so did the need for computer labs. Students became more dependent on the limited number of physical computer labs located throughout the campus. It became apparent that the demand for labs were going to drastically increase, especially when end-of-semester projects were due.

Existing labs require round-the-clock physical security, consume power, cooling and valuable real estate. Then add additional computer hardware and the onsite lab admin to assist with support issues and the costs have skyrocketed.

With a growing student enrollment and increasing lab complexity, the University began reassessing their computer lab and application access strategy by turning to desktop and app virtualization as their answer.

“SSU can now easily reach beyond our physical campus borders to meet increasing eLearning demands and provide remote access to students, faculty, staff and alumni.”

Patricia Ogden

Director of Technology Support Services

SSU’s first attempt at delivering desktops and applications to the students was not well received by the students. The feedback gathered from the students pointed to poor user experience. Additionally administrators lacked visibility and control of the system to easily provision services to students. While adoption was low, the IT leadership at SSU recognized the many benefits DaaS & SaaS could offer the university and continued their exploration for the perfect solution.

The Solution

The move to U2Cloud began when the IT department reached out to their Dell team. After some requirements gathering, U2Cloud provided a demo of hosted desktops & applications to the IT Department.

The solution enables both students and faculty access to hosted virtual desktops, published applications, identity integration and a management control plane to manage users and services. A mix of Desktop-as-a-Service, Software-as-a-Service & Infrastructure-as-a-Service were deployed to deliver the immersive learning environment.

All users connect via an Application Delivery Controller (ADC), a purpose-built networking appliance whose function is to improve the performance, security and resiliency of applications delivered over the web. Users connect to the ADC via a web browser or previously installed client software. Upon successful login, the system prompts the user to utilize the native HTML5 functionality of the web browser or install Receiver, a software client that provides secure, high-performance delivery of virtual desktops & applications. Once client detection has completed, the user is presented with both desktop(s) & applications for which they currently have access rights.

Users may then choose to launch their desktops containing the required software titles or just simply launch the application independently of the desktop.

By utilizing application publishing, users have access to more powerful systems than they would otherwise have access to, it also gets them around any application incompatibilities they may experience, because nothing except the client software is installed on their local machine. To the user, the application appears to be running on their local machine. What is actually happening, is the application is running on the server and sending a picture of what should be on the screen back to the users workstation.

With U2Cloud Control Plane (U2CP), Instructors can self-select the cloud services they want, and perform day-to-day account management without calling for services. With just a few mouse clicks, you can deploy a full virtual lab all delivered securely and experienced seamlessly to any device, anywhere & anytime. Instructors can seamlessly scale resources independently while maintaining flexibility with multiple versions of apps and desktops using multi-site support. Workflow approval streamlines administration while retaining final approval rights and auditing. Administrators independently manage multiple resource pools within a single platform – allowing a simple low risk upgrade and migration path.

U2CP currently integrates with an ecosystem of technology partners for additional services and functionality. With open API’s, the U2Cloud Control Plane easily and efficiently can integrate with other resources.

Key Benefits

U2Cloud has radically improved the speed at which the university can deliver new technology, dramatically streamlined university resource consumption, and most importantly made it easier for students to receive the technical instruction.

SSU is now able to deliver a virtual lab experience to any student, located anywhere on par with a physical computer lab. The University has improved agility by providing more granular delegation to each department. Now, departmental IT groups are able to refresh pools of virtual desktops with minimal or no intervention of the central IT Admin group. Additionally during the summer months or long breaks, larger more robust machines can be created for graduate student research activities.

By hosting desktops & applications with U2Cloud, SSU will also benefit from reduced administration overhead and less help desk support. IT can easily control who can access such applications and ensure that everyone is using the latest and most secure version of the application.

The student body is more mobile, software is more accessible, and SSU is able to rapidly address a growing student population without any real estate confinements. With an increase in distance learning enrollment, students from across the U.S. can now have access to the same resources available to an on-campus student.

U2Cloud enabled secure access to apps and data so students can be successful, and teachers and administrators can deliver a curriculum based on student needs and improve outcomes

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US Gov Development Center
Orlando, FL, USA

Central Data Center
Denver, CO, USA

East Coast Data Center
Jacksonville, FL, USA

West Coast Data Center
Las Vegas, NV, USA



About U2Cloud

U2Cloud enables users to access data from anywhere, and at any time with the same experience you have come to expect from your office desktop or laptop on the road. All your software, apps, data files and Email...securely operating in the Cloud. U2Cloud offers ultimate 24/7 portability and security, at reduced cost. No hassles, software updates to download or maintain, and simple to subscribe. With a variety of service levels appropriately scaled to government, private sector enterprise and a wide array of industries. U2Cloud is operating globally from a growing number of North American facilities on the East coast, Midwest and West coast.

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