

Cloud Migration Programme

Background

Abertay University contracted CoreAzure to deliver an exciting cloud migration programme, that has seen the majority of IT services transition to Microsoft Azure.

The move to a modern cloud platform was a way of strengthening its reputation for delivering leading edge ethical hacking, computer gaming, business and social science, as well as enhancing the resilience and efficiency of its IT hosting model.



The Challenge

As part of their Digital Strategy, the University wanted to migrate its systems and services to Azure quickly, efficiently, and securely. In doing so, the University wanted to reduce or eliminate the need for a physical data centre by minimising the amount of systems remaining on-premise after migration.

A large proportion of the infrastructure estate was nearing end of life and Abertay wanted to strengthen their cyber security protection given the increasing risk profile experienced by the UK higher education organisations.

Abertay also recognised the wider benefits of moving to a more modern, flexible infrastructure hosting model. This shift had the potential to accelerate enhancements, streamline back-office services, enhance IT resilience, provide a foundation for teaching, learning, and research, facilitate the expansion of online and blended learning delivery, and present an opportunity to simplify the University's application landscape. In summary, exploiting the Microsoft Azure Cloud would help Abertay to:

- Deliver exemplary digital services and transform teaching, research, and other professional services, in a proactive and cost-effective way
- Develop a resilient and secure digital infrastructure that would ensure that the university continue to be in control of, and be able to respond to, emerging cyber threats and security incidents.

Why CoreAzure ?

CoreAzure was able to demonstrate a proven history of successfully executing cloud migration projects for UK universities. Furthermore, CoreAzure possessed a substantial pool of expertise and capabilities required to provide essential support and skills across various key areas. For example, CoreAzure are a Microsoft Advanced specialisms and AMMP partner which made us eligible to apply for funding to support the migration programme.

CoreAzure's agile delivery model had already proven its adaptability to respond to customer's changing priorities and reinforced the reasons why Abertay selected CoreAzure as its partner of choice. For example, CoreAzure are a Microsoft Advanced specialisms and AMMP partner which made us eligible to apply for funding to support the migration

programme. CoreAzure's agile delivery model had already proven its adaptability to respond to customer's changing priorities and reinforced the reasons why Abertay selected CoreAzure as its partner of choice. CoreAzure was selected for this assignment for the following reasons:

- Eligibility for Microsoft funding
- Successful track record in data centre modernisation allowing us to demonstrate relevant experience and expertise
- We are highly recommended by Microsoft
- The Higher Education sector has been our primary focus for a number of years - we understand the technology landscape and the workloads used.

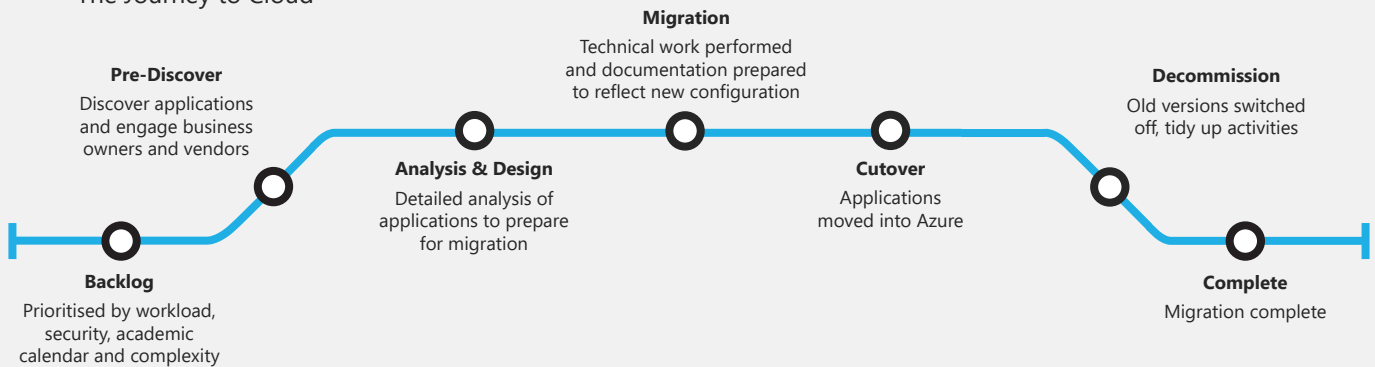
Solution

One of the early deliverables was to run a virtual managed classroom proof of concept to demonstrate how Azure could deliver solutions that benefited students. Azure Lab Services was chosen to support groups of ethical hacking students, allowing them to spin up VMs on demand but within a controlled and managed environment.

The joint team implemented an Azure hybrid cloud environment and Landing Zone, that wherever possible utilised native Azure capabilities such as Azure Firewall, Backup, Bastion, Defender for Cloud, and Azure Sentinel Threat Monitoring. The migration and modernisation of

applications and workloads was based upon an Agile approach which structured close collaboration between the Abertay IT, application, and business owners. The migration strategies predominantly revolved around IaaS, however, where possible the team actively explored opportunities for modernisation, aiming to optimise and leverage PaaS solutions and architectures whenever feasible. The migration was delivered in a little over 12-months and within an agreed budgetary cap. In achieving this, the collaborative team had to maintain flexibility in establishing specific migration patterns and scope, ensuring that such flexibility did not deviate from the project objectives.

The Journey to Cloud



Results

Application Migration Service

In-scope services, including 212 VMware virtual servers running approx. 180 applications and services, were successfully migrated to Azure within a 12-month window and within the project budget that was forecast in the business case. Over the course of the migration there were no service affecting incidents and the in-house team were trained and assumed responsibility for all operational support following a successful transition into service period.

Azure Labs (ALS) Service

By working with a range of IT, faculty staff, and researchers, we defined a full and integrated set of requirements. As a result, courses are now using ALS services including ethical hacking and cyber security.

Results were very positive with both faculty staff and students commenting on the agility and the flexibility of the solution provided.

The learning curve for both staff and students has been minimal with both groups quickly familiarising themselves with the new ways of working

"From the outset CoreAzure used their considerable experience of successfully transitioning universities to the cloud to demonstrate how the use of the Microsoft cloud platform could positively impact our IT services. Improving agility, reducing cyber comma after risk, and our carbon footprint by decreasing our campus data centre capacity significantly, are key objectives of the programme. At the end of the project, we will have a modern, secure IT infrastructure capable of delivering a wide range of innovative digital services to our students and staff."

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