



Building the Virtualized Student Union

College no longer takes place just on campus. Virtualizing operations ensures that the student experience remains consistently excellent and secure, wherever it happens.



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INSTITUTIONAL ROADMAPS FOR MANY COLLEGES

and universities have been turned inside out in the last year and carefully laid plans set aside or severely modified to focus on a single topic: student-centered education. What's going to remain as we emerge from the pandemic is the value that the institution of higher education provides its students. And that is a conversation in which the CIO is an active participant.

The IT organization has been at the heart of successful pivoting as remote teaching and learning have dominated. As a result, now that campuses are starting to return to normalcy, administration will rely on IT to continue enabling the work of enhancing the student experience. That's especially true if, as many experts predict, hybrid or blended learning will forevermore be part of the modernized college experience.

Integration is a big part of the solution. Forget about forcing students to figure out the dozens of different apps and websites they need to fully partake of college. IT needs to integrate the learning management platform, digital content, student support services, health and wellness, esports, collaboration, campus calendar and student information – enfolded them into a virtual student union.

This idea goes beyond the student portal, which has been around for a long time. What's new is the idea of marrying systems that may be PC-based, on-premise-based and cloud-based into a single hub and then wrapping that in a blanket of security that's transparent to the user. That becomes a game-changer for the student experience.

Success will ensure that small or mid-sized colleges increase their infrastructure efficiency, drive out cost and improve the user experience, better positioning them to compete against the national brands – institutions and MOOCs – by offering the best of virtual curriculum alongside the on-campus experience.

The Digital Workspace

What's required for the institution to accomplish such all-

encompassing integration is following a cloud-like approach for delivering agility, which is replicated with software-defined networking.

VMware has never made hardware. It has always viewed the world of technology as something to be defined, controlled and managed by software through virtualization. That's just as true for networking, storage and cloud usage as it has been for servers. What we have learned in working with higher ed to broaden their perspective on virtualization is this:

- Modernization doesn't require a forklift. You need to be able to take a lot of what you're already invested in and build on that to expand your capabilities to meet current needs, while future-proofing IT.
- Institutions can't be experts in everything. Rather than trying to skill up and maintain the many different brands that make up the technology profile of your institution, turning to software-defined infrastructure provides an end-to-end framework that simplifies the management of your operations.

VMware Workspace ONE is a digital workspace platform that enables schools to deliver any app securely on any device. Workspace ONE, available as a cloud service and as an on-premise deployment, integrates three key components:

- Application management, which provides users with access to all of their apps in one place and with a consistent experience.
- Multi-platform endpoint management, available from a single console, to ensure consistent processes and policies across any operating system.
- Access control, to make sure users and devices get the appropriate resources and IT can do configuration, policies, patches, updates and troubleshooting.

Secure Connections

Security is a crucial part of the platform. Achieving

zero-trust security requires a combination of endpoint management, detection and remediation, which starts by monitoring four dimensions: user identity, application access, network access and device.

Should anything vary from what's expected – suddenly, the student is logging in from another country – the security aspects of Workspace ONE, powered by Carbon Black, can throw a security question at the user. If he or she can't answer that, the fortress goes into defense mode.

What makes Workspace ONE so powerful and what holds those secure functions together is NSX, VMware's network virtualization platform that acts as a cloud firewall. NSX uses software-defined networking to support implementation of virtual networks on both physical networks and virtual server infrastructures. NSX serves as a security wrapper around network traffic, with instant recognition when good traffic turns bad and the ability to automatically eliminate access.

The Benefit of the Virtualized Student Experience

Institutions large and small have discovered the benefits of providing a virtualized experience to users.

One community college system has adopted Workspace ONE for its 24 different colleges and 80,000 students. The major concern was how to manage all of the devices that suddenly needed secure access to network services and resources, while delivering optimal learning to students and a robust remote work experience to faculty and staff. Workspace ONE has enabled the college system to integrate multiple curricular activities into the student experience.

A private, nonprofit technical college adopted VMware's digital workspace solution to give its students rapid, safe and effective access to collaboration tools and high-end computing programs for engineering, design, electronics and other programs, from their own virtual desktops, helping them to continue learning.

Adopting a platform approach to serve as a one-stop shop reduces the complexity of so many moving parts and simplifies IT operations. But it does this to support the kind of user experience that can satisfy every student.

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