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Customer Spotlight
Durham University

How Durham University modernized the learning experience for their students
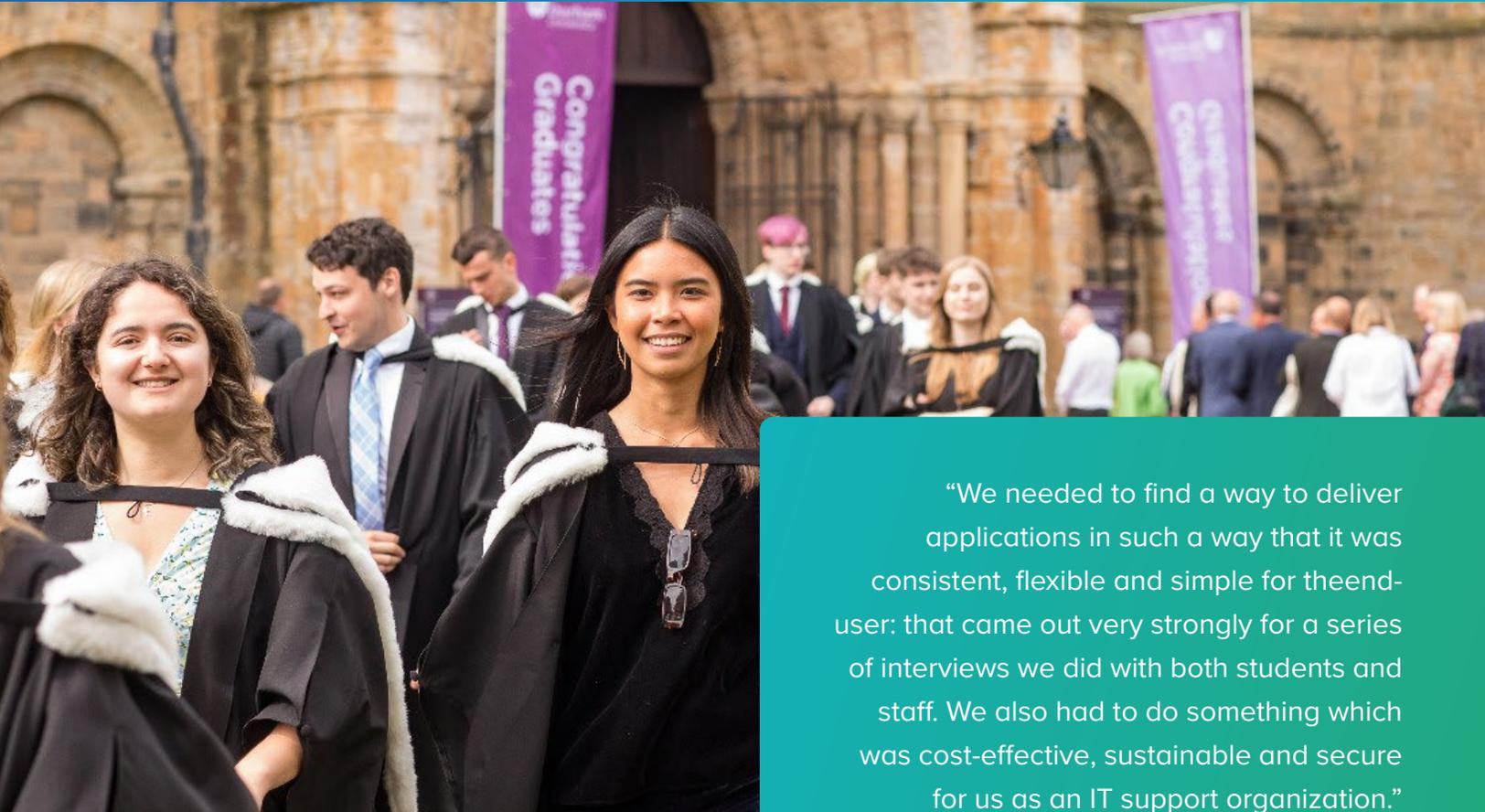
Durham University

Durham University (DU) is steeped in history as the self-proclaimed third oldest university in the UK.

The institute was founded in 1832 as Durham's University College, before it was granted a Royal Charter in 1837 by King William IV, making it Durham University.

DU attracts around 17,500 students of all levels with approximately 150 countries and nationalities being represented by its students and staff combined.

The university is made up of three faculties: arts and humanities, science and social science, and health. It comprises 16 colleges with 25 departments and schools that come together to offer over 200 undergraduate, and 130 postgraduate courses, as well as research programmes.

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> "We needed to find a way to deliver applications in such a way that it was consistent, flexible and simple for theend-user: that came out very strongly for a series of interviews we did with both students and staff. We also had to do something which was cost-effective, sustainable and secure for us as an IT support organization."

DU is incredibly proud of its heritage, but that doesn't mean that it's stuck in the past! They hold a number of core values which result in traditional principles with a modern point of view:

Inspiring	By stimulating an instinct to challenge, encouraging innovative thinking and taking our responsibilities seriously, we foster a culture that inspires the extraordinary.
Challenging	Always curious, we challenge ourselves and each other to answer the big questions and create a positive impact in the world.
Innovative	From creative teaching practices and cutting edge research to new ways of working, innovation is at the heart of what we do.
Responsible	We take our duties as a centre of learning, neighbour and employer seriously, embracing all of our different communities and celebrating the differences that make us stronger together.
Enabling	We create the opportunities, support and freedom for everyone at Durham to become the best they can be now, and for the future.

They had these values in mind when they created The New World Programme which started back in 2013. This compromised of a very large IT infrastructure and process improvements programme, which was all about giving people access to applications from wherever they are.

A homegrown solution

DU acknowledged that their previous system was very machine based, meaning they delivered software to a machine, rather than to a user. Initially DU decided that they were going to develop a brand new user centric desktop which would align all the variants that they had, aka kiosks, laptops, PC labs etc.

However they came up against a number of pain points, with the main issue being hardware.

"The hardware that we had at the time just really wasn't suitable for Windows 10. IT was a nightmare to log on and a nightmare to Cloudpage the applications. It really wasn't a great experience; we were talking about five minute log on times, maybe longer!"

DU knew they needed something else to complement their homegrown solution, however when they looked towards the likes of VDI provision they discovered that it would be a huge support overhead for them, in terms of gaining knowledge and skills, and quite a significant financial cost as well.

However, during their research they discovered AppsAnywhere.

Durham University & AppsAnywhere

In 2017 DU introduced AppsAnywhere as part of their digital toolkit. This meant that they could combine **Parallels and AppsAnywhere to work together**, resulting in a one stop shop for applications.

"Before we went with AppsAnywhere students had to go to a specific geographical location on the university campus, to access the applications that they needed to do their work. AppsAnywhere is a massive improvement!"

DU also recognise that this is now what modern day students come to expect from their university. Most students are expecting to be able to access applications whenever they like, using their tablets and smartphones where apps are available to them at any time through an app store.

"I'd like to think that the students would be really delighted by this as a project, because it gives them such a great level of access to applications. By giving students access to AppsAnywhere, it means that they can access those applications using whatever device they happen to have at the time and is most appropriate for them, in whatever location they happen to be in at the time!"

Looking Ahead

DU have stuck to their values by challenging their old methods, and by doing so have enabled a **new innovative way of learning for their students**. They are committed to being a part of a connected **society with flexibility** in everything they do.

We're incredibly proud to work with this historic yet modern university, where we will continue to work together to **provide modern, flexible learning to their students**.

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