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Customer Spotlight
Collège La Cité

How La Cité future-proofed its campus by facilitating BYOD for all devices

LA CITÉ

The phrase BYOD (bring your own device) is a concept seen throughout Higher Education, in which students can use their own laptop rather than using campus labs.

First coined back in 2005, BYOD has slowly gained momentum over the years, then was suddenly thrust into the limelight often coupled with remote learning due to the arrival of COVID-19.

Unlike many others, La Cité's journey to remote learning started long before the pandemic. As of 2013 they were using a VDI solution to deliver software to their students, however there were some performance issues. For example, it would take a very long time for students to log into a virtual machine, there was a very high maintenance infrastructure due to the sheer number of servers required, and as time went on the costs increased.

Despite their best efforts to resolve these problems, the software simply wasn't capable of giving students the service they deserved, nor was it giving the IT department the solution it needed. Before coming to AppsAnywhere, La Cité had briefly considered Microsoft and Amazon products but they weren't quite what they were looking for.

> "We really wanted something that was simple for our students and staff, in a sense that it's not hard to find an application that you need, you don't need to do anything too complicated or too special to access that. But it has to be really simple, like as transparent as possible, as seamless as possible."

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Working Together

Thankfully, La Cité happens to be a member of the OCCCIO, a collaborative organisation created to help improve its members' ability to effectively run information technology support across Higher Education. One of the many benefits to being a member of the OCCCIO is that members meet frequently and exchange new ideas and technologies. Previously, La Cité had attended a conference held at Mohawk College in which there was a live demonstration and Q&A surrounding AppsAnywhere.

"We liked the fact that students could have the software directly on their machine, which was really cool, and we liked the fact that you could access this information through a portal, a one stop shop if you wish. Also the use of parallels with AppsAnywhere meaning that software could be streamed not only to Windows devices but also Macs and Chromebooks! That really caught our eye, that's when we were convinced that was going to be a very good solution for us."

In Action

Once AppsAnywhere was implemented, La Cité noticed an immediate change. It has given their students an incredible amount of flexibility, to the point where they are now repurposing their general campus labs as bespoke BYOD stations. The computers have been removed and replaced with open workstations, network cabling, and power bars.

"We do still have specialized labs for certain courses such as biology, TV production, and police training, however the general labs are mostly gone now because we made room for BYOD."

Adapting

One of the reasons that La Cité chose AppsAnywhere is due to the ease of the portal. They wanted to have something in place that made it easy and accessible for everyone. Students responded particularly well as they had been craving the flexibility to begin with. During a time when the world felt rather uncomfortable they had the ability to use their own device, a device they already felt comfortable with.

When it came to staff and faculty they appreciated the ease of the portal not only for access to specific apps, but also as a communication tool. For example, if a teacher wanted their students to download something, instead of disjointed communication they can simply inform the class that the link is hosted within the portal.

"In a situation like this with a pandemic, we want to reach as many people as possible. We want to be a college that is accessible. We want to be a college that will allow people to study pretty much any way they want."

"Teachers really do like that we're able to put the exact version that they want for their course on the portal. So that's been very helpful, all they have to do is tell their students to log on, click this, install and go."

Looking Ahead

La Cité has a number of values one being, **"Boldness, dares to question practices and propose innovative ways to meet the challenges of the day"**. The fact they had a system in place but dared to question its value, and found something that met the challenges of modern day education is simply remarkable.

"You can use AppsAnywhere at home or on the bus, or anywhere and that's so cool. The interface doesn't change. So there's a certain element of stability that comes with the product. Even if everyone returned to campus tomorrow we would still use AppsAnywhere. It will still work just fine. And if there's another lockdown we're fully prepared."

Enabling BYOD both at campus and for remote learning has given La Cité security during a time when the world feels uncertain. It has given their students the flexibility and digital equity they deserve, and staff the tools the needed to provide quality programming, teaching, and support. We cannot wait to see what the future has in store for this innovative futureproofing college.

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