Case study

Sector Education
Service Managed IT Support

May 2022

Decommissioning legacy infrastructure in order to streamline University IT services

Durham University Business School recently officially became Durham University's fourth faculty. Work to decommission the legacy Durham University Business School infrastructure and migrate all live services to the central Durham University IT network was needed as a result. This project enabled staff and student experiences to be streamlined, creating an IT partnership with Central Durham IT, and removing several pinch points for IT support and service management.



James Randall
Senior Technology Consultant
Email james.randall@waterstons.com

Results at a glance

- Improved relationship between departments, central IT and Waterstons
- Reduced cost of maintaining legacy environment
- Consolidation of environment to streamline support
- Completed with no disruption to service during a worldwide pandemic

We've been a trusted advisor of the Business School since 2001, and the fact that we carried out the original project to install and configure the Business School's environment was an enabler to the migration and decommissioning process. Existing documentation was in place, meaning that most risks were already documented and could be reduced. This would have introduced a significant delay were it not available.

One key challenge with this project was timing. The project began in March 2020, coinciding with the first COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in the UK. Despite this, extensive communication, managed by our service manager, ensured all staff and students were kept up to date with changes to the service.

Solution

Firstly, the service manager identified all live services required to be migrated to the central IT environment that's accessible to all Durham University cohorts. This meant reviewing all seemingly 'active' licences and software, remote access solutions and legacy file shares. As the "Durham University Business School" domain was to be decommissioned, everything had to migrate to the new domain prior to this.

Waterstons' service manager managed the project, and we also provided resource to assist with the migration, whilst analysis was undertaken concurrently to assess services that required decommissioning. Around 50 virtual machines providing multiple legacy services were found and decommissioned, or upgraded and migrated.

The Business School Domain Decommissioning project has significantly reduced the support burden on the IT office and Waterstons' service desk. Now all software and services have been migrated to the central domain, all staff and students know exactly where to access everything they'll need during their University lifetime.

James Randall

Durham University Business School IT Manager and Senior Consultant at Waterstons

Benefits

The streamlining and consolidation of the separate Business School domain delivered reduced technical debt and risk and enables the Durham University and Waterstons service desks to provide more efficient support, thereby increasing productivity. The project also enables:

- Reduced total cost of ownership, saving Durham University tens of thousands of pounds per year.
- Reduced risk: Removing end of life operating systems, hardware and software means a more secure, streamlined and compliant system, giving the University greater visibility and enabling quick responses to security vulnerabilities and essential maintenance.
- Improved productivity: Removing duplicate systems, remote access tools, software and hardware means all software and services are in one domain. Staff and students now know exactly who to contact for support, and services exist in one place for everyone.
- Standardisation and consolidation: Decommissioning the legacy domain has streamlined the user experience and removed technical debt.

Added Value

During this exercise, we took the opportunity to resolve any issues found before migrating to the new domain, sharing our knowledge of the systems and fixes with both the Business School and Central Durham IT (CIS) for future needs. All documentation has been handed over with future knowledge sharing and training planned, allowing the CIS service desk to provide excellent customer service to staff and students for years to come.

Technology at a glance

- Windows Operating System
- Bespoke Applications, SQL
- SAN