

SAS elevates training experience with rapid app deployment

Citrix Cloud Virtual Apps and Desktops and Citrix ADC streamline user experience, lower costs, and simplify management

SAS is a leader in the business of analytics. For more than 40 years, the business has helped global customers shorten the path from data to insight for better decision making. In the words of SAS: *Identify what's working and fix what isn't.*

Its own data revealed SAS had an issue in need of fixing. SAS operates from 90 global locations running workshops in 140 classrooms, and different locations had different manual processes for managing hardware and updating software. When this unnecessary complexity became slow and inefficient, the SAS training experience suffered.

"We needed a more flexible approach—less costly and more tightly managed," says Mark Dowell, IT Manager, SAS. "We'd allowed individual locations to manage their own IT, which left us a little siloed."

To establish a more agile platform for controlling its global desktop estate, SAS adopted Citrix ADC and Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops as a cloud service with implementation by Citrix Partner, RoundTower Technologies. This ensures a consistent user experience and allows SAS to deploy new applications much faster. In the long term, this solution also creates the flexibility to move workloads from on-premise to the cloud.

Dowell says the solution's simplified management has been transformative: "The biggest difference is speed. We're now able to work in a standardized manner with far greater automation. Basically, we're doing things quicker and with fewer people."

"The biggest difference is speed. With Citrix, standardization and automation we're doing things quicker and with fewer people."

—Mark Dowell, IT manager, SAS

The solution

- Citrix ADC and Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops as a cloud service streamlined user experience across 140 global classrooms.
- The new Citrix solution sped IT deployments for 90 locations worldwide at a lower cost and with simplified management.

Improve speed and usability with automation and standardization

The immediate impact for global SAS users is a more consistent experience, with access to the latest and best applications across 140 classrooms. This enables SAS to unify the way it delivers training to clients and staff around the world.

This also allowed SAS to switch to thin clients that use only a simple monitor, mouse, and keyboard. The result is its global hardware is cheaper to purchase, longer lasting, and simpler to maintain.

“But the best thing,” says Dowell, “is that we can provision things quicker. In the past, we were limited by different hardware or local management. Today, we can flex up really quickly.”

Inspire creativity in how SAS delivers training

Dowell says the improved ability to deliver high-performance apps to users worldwide may lead to SAS rethinking its approach to training: “It may be that we need fewer physical classrooms in the future. We can be more creative, more flexible in how and where we deliver training.”

This will almost inevitably mean SAS adjusts how it manages desktops in other departments. “There are certainly challenges in managing high-end desktops and applications for R&D teams in China and India, for instance. It may make more sense to centralize their management.”

Drive greater agility for cloud-first IT strategy

The Citrix solution also supports SAS’s cloud-first strategy. Dowell says there will always be elements SAS would prefer to keep on-premises, but the business is constantly exploring which workloads it can take to the cloud: “We’re working with Amazon Web Services, and the plan is to distribute workloads around the globe. The cloud offers an opportunity to do things less expensively.”

Eduardo Molina, EUC Practice Lead at RoundTower Technologies, says the Citrix cloud solution helps SAS act quickly and efficiently once a decision has been made: “It was clear



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SAS wanted speed. They did not want to be discussing a solution for months, then rolling out over a year.

“With Citrix ADC and pool licensing, SAS can move ADCs from on-premise to the cloud as needed, and when not needed just put it back in the pool. The SAS team discovered other parts of the organization that can benefit from this pool licensing, and using those same capacities, we were able to benefit other parts of the business that initially were not in the scope.”