

XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA CUSTOM CLOUD-BASED SYSTEM

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

CUSTOMER NAME

Xavier University Louisiana

INDUSTRY

Education

LOCATION

New Orleans, Louisiana

CHALLENGES

- School was on a “vicious refresh cycle” every three years
- Small IT department under pressure from limited resources and high client demand
- Overcoming an outdated disaster recovery strategy

SOLUTIONS

VMware Cloud Foundation

RESULTS

- 90% reduction of physical infrastructure
- Reduction of power usage and costs
- Secure cloud storage & back-up
- Automatic updates & upgrades

CUSTOMER BACKGROUND

Located in New Orleans, more than 3,000 students attend the university, which was established in 1925. Xavier prepares its students to take on leadership and service roles in a global society. In order for Xavier’s students, faculty and administration to achieve their goals, Xavier’s IT department had to overcome numerous challenges, including hurricanes that tested their disaster recovery strategy.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

The university was tied to a legacy hardware system managed by a two-person IT department. “We are limited on resources, and physical infrastructure wasn’t going to cut it,” said Xavier Senior Systems Administrator Thomas Wimprine. The Xavier IT team—which needed to rapidly respond to the demands of the administration, faculty and students—sought a system that could run itself.



“We are limited on resources, and physical infrastructure wasn’t going to cut it.”

– Thomas Wimprine, Xavier

In addition to its technical challenges, Xavier’s New Orleans location meant that the university was often hit by severe storms and hurricanes. The IT team needed an effective disaster recovery strategy that would prevent Xavier’s precious IT resources from being repeatedly drained by recovering data and rebuilding systems.

XAVIER PARTNERS WITH ROUNDTOWER & VMWARE

According to RoundTower account manager Stephen Nabors, Xavier’s infrastructure was on a “vicious refresh cycle.” Eric Wippo, a VMware account executive, adds that “Xavier wanted to automate their infrastructure.”

RoundTower was one of the first VMware partners to build a platform which offered the level of automation that Xavier needed. RoundTower experts chose VMware Cloud Foundation, an integrated solution that provides a complete set of software-defined services for compute, storage, networking, security and cloud management to run enterprise apps. “As VMware vSphere customers, we were already familiar with VMware products and virtualization,” said Wimprine. “With Cloud Foundation, and with RoundTower to help us, our two-person department didn’t need to learn how to install and manage a whole lot of new products to get the time and cost savings, cloud capabilities and automation benefits we wanted.”

RoundTower technicians worked with Xavier to develop a customized suite of solutions that addressed the university's IT needs, while remaining under budget. RoundTower oversaw the project and advised Xavier how they could increase efficiency and reduce their number of IT partners from five to two.

During the process, VMware provided a white glove service to ensure a quick and hassle-free data migration. VMware's Wippo said, "We were really tight on making sure the build was correct. We made sure the customer understood what RoundTower was doing... we wanted to make sure the customer was enabled for success."

Automation was an essential factor. As Xavier's Wimprine said, his small team of two couldn't realistically manage 250 to 300 servers, plus maintain physical infrastructure. René van den Bedem, RoundTower's Chief Architect and Strategist explained things further, "The solution we designed and implemented for them really does take care of itself."

SOLUTION BENEFITS

Thanks to the virtualization and efficiency of Cloud Foundation, Xavier reduced its physical infrastructure footprint by 90% by going from five racks to half a rack. With the cost and time saved, Xavier can focus on other initiatives that will benefit students and the university.

Moving storage to the cloud also offered Xavier a safe place to back up and store data, without fear of losing

everything in the event of a natural disaster or failing server. The University's IT department of two no longer needs to be so hands-on. By bringing in the RoundTower and VMware solution, they can now devote more time to helping students, faculty and administrators. Xavier also broke out of its "vicious refresh cycle," as upgrades are now as simple as adding a single node, or pushing a button to add functionality.

With Cloud Foundation, Xavier can push updates out automatically to all campus laptops, which IT staff previously updated one at a time. IT can now schedule these updates to allow greater control over downtime, and most updates can be pushed without causing downtime at all. The physical space reduction also enabled the university to significantly cut their power usage and costs.

“*The customer is set for growth.*”
– Eric Wippo, VMware

XAVIER GOING FORWARD

The RoundTower and VMware solution empowered Xavier to explore additional cloud and development services, enabling the university to better serve its students, faculty and administration. Xavier plans to add nodes and service upgrades to their Cloud Foundation footprint as they continue to implement and roll out new solutions.

