

Hong Kong Polytechnic University Moves 38,500 Staff and Students to the Cloud with Microsoft Office 365 for Education



Migrating to Microsoft® Office 365 for Education Brings PolyU a Unified Communication and Collaboration Platform, Anywhere Access, Savings of HK\$2M Per Annum and Fulfills University's Strategic Vision of Sustainability

Overview

Customer: The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Website: <http://www.polyu.edu.hk>

Country or Region: Hong Kong SAR, China

Industry: Education

Customer Profile: The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, located in Hung Hom, is the largest government-funded tertiary institution in Hong Kong, with over 32,000 students and 6,500 staff (including temporary staff).

University Needs: To accommodate the new academic structure (3-3-4) and to stay abreast of mobile market trends, it became clear that the current email solution was inadequate for the university's needs.

Solution: The Hong Kong Polytechnic University opted for Office 365 for Education

Benefits:

- Highly secure communication and collaboration solutions
- Consistent user experience, rich functionalities
- Cost savings
- Environmental sustainability
- A strong base for further development



Mr. Gerrit Bahlman,
Director of Information Technology,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

"I really appreciate Microsoft for helping The Hong Kong Polytechnic University cope with challenges in this fast changing market, solve the insufficiencies of limited mailbox size, the need to distribute large amounts of information to a large number of people and keeping us abreast of emerging mobile device trends."

Mr. Gerrit Bahlman

Director of Information Technology, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

University Needs

Located in the heart of Kowloon, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), ranks among the top 200 universities in the world. Having an illustrious history dating back to 1937, the University experienced rapid expansion in the past two decades. Since seeing an additional 33% increase in the number of undergraduate students this year alone due to the new academic structure (3-3-4), PolyU now boasts the largest student community among publicly funded universities in Hong Kong with over 32,000 students and 6,500 staff (including temporary staff).

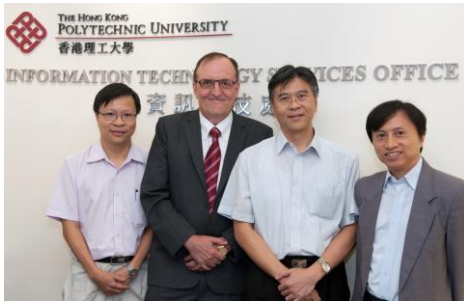
Universities are in the business of knowledge transfer, yet often experience difficulties in organizing and sharing that knowledge effectively from an IT perspective. As part of a long-term mission to drive greater efficiency, thus saving, on a large scale and develop organizationally as knowledge managers, PolyU recognized a need to unify and streamline their information and knowledge transfer. As an example, historically PolyU had acquired four email services, which were complex and costly to manage. While their legacy email platform – Novell GroupWise – was functionally rich, it wasn't conducive to on-boarding new staff and students as it took too long to learn, meaning a more intuitive user interface was needed. Its limited mailbox size resulted in staff having to archive their own mailboxes – one of many problems in usability.

Lacking third-party support and modern functionality such as remote access with multiple smart devices, the aging email system made access via notebooks and smartphones difficult, and retrieving archived emails daunting. There was a pressing need for the implementation of a new unified email messaging platform to replace the four systems. Adopting a common platform would bring consistency, whereby teachers and students could both enjoy the same user experience, easily share information, and benefit from flexible mobile access and security. PolyU therefore decided it was time to take the next step to enhance communication, bolster security and stay abreast of mobile market trends so that PolyU could truly foster a media savvy environment. As Novell GroupWise lacked the sought-after efficiency and scalability, they required hands-on support from a solution provider to aid them in pursuing their long term strategy of bringing greater consistency, ease of information exchange for students and faculty and flexible mobile access.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the customer hotline at (852) 2388-9600. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/hk>



Mr. Gerrit Bahlman and his taskforce

Microsoft Office 365

Microsoft Office 365 brings together cloud versions of our most trusted communications and collaboration products—Microsoft SharePoint Online, Exchange Online, and Lync Online—with the latest version of our Office desktop suite and companion web applications for businesses of all sizes.

Office 365 helps save time and money, and it frees up valued resources. Simple to use and easy to administer, it is financially backed by a service level agreement that guarantees 99.9 percent reliability. Office 365 features robust security, IT-level phone support, geo-redundancy, disaster recovery, and the business-class privacy controls and standards that you expect from a world-class service provider.

For more information about Microsoft Office 365, go to: www.office365.com

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Solution

PolyU opted for Office 365 for Education, a next generation communication and collaboration service that delivers the power of cloud productivity to educational institutions, offering them lower costs, better security, anywhere access to class assignments, email, and calendars, and – most importantly – a happier, more connected and knowledge-based campus. By adopting Office 365 for Education in phases, PolyU began first by migrating the 6,500 staff to Office 365 Exchange Online email and calendaring services to take advantage of a substantial 25GB mailbox – eliminating the need to archive – greater collaboration capabilities, and Outlook’s more intuitive user interface. To share a common platform deliver the same user experience to students and faculty, the next phase is to deploy Office 365 Education to all 32,000 students, to be completed by Q1 CY 2013.

“Security and privacy are often focal points in considering the cloud, however after careful review of Microsoft’s SLA’s, security and privacy policies, PolyU trusted in the integrity of Microsoft”, says Mr. Gerrit Bahlman, Director of Information Technology of PolyU, “Given the global scale of Microsoft and the millions of customers they have to support between PolyU and Microsoft, I’d bet my bottom dollar on Microsoft being more secure.”

Collaboration between Microsoft and PolyU at the start of the process was very honest in terms of what would and wouldn’t work, giving PolyU a clear understanding and trust in the Microsoft team. With Microsoft Premier Support services, PolyU has access to the highest level of service and support, giving PolyU the confidence needed to manage migration to Office 365.

Benefits

Highly secure communication and collaboration solutions

Consolidating email systems onto a common platform brought security assurance, and resulted in higher security as well. Being highly sensitive to the damage security breaches can cause, PolyU instigated a complete review and Microsoft addressed the issues raised and gave confidence in solution. PolyU benefited from the help Premier

Support in overcoming security and technical concerns.

Consistent user experience, rich functionality

With legacy systems out of the way, Microsoft’s intuitive User Interface and mobile device-support meant staff and students could learn features quickly, and collaborate better via scheduling and calendaring features at a degree that was previously impossible. A single sign-on opens students to a complete suite of connected services: AD Exchange, Outlook, SharePoint and Lync. With Outlook, users enjoy a larger mailbox, and having perpetual email service after graduating means PolyU’s alumni association can maintain contact with their former customers.

Cost savings

PolyU has seen a positive return as they will save over HK\$2M per annum in terms of server space, less downtime, software and administrative time – freeing up resources that can be redeployed to the needs of other deserving IT projects.

Environmental sustainability

Microsoft is part of PolyU’s strategic vision of moving the campus towards greater sustainability. With the connectivity brought by Office 365 it is estimated that a resulting 30-40% savings will be brought in reduction of printing and thus will equate to a significantly reduced carbon footprint. Now, with resources allocated more efficiently, PolyU has become a much more green university.

A strong base for further development

As Exchange Online and ActiveSync bring increased mobility, the future migration to Lync and SharePoint will enhance communication in order to cope with the trend of social networking and knowledge management. This will have profound effects on how staff and students maintain knowledge sharing and classify data within the organization. Through the social networks sustained by Office 365, staff and students will become a knowledge-aware organization, capable of achievements traditional educational institutions were never capable of.