



Microsoft Optimized Desktop Product Portfolio Customer Case Study



Customer: Humber College

Web Site: www.humber.ca

Customer Size: 4,000

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Education

Customer Profile

Located in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Humber College is a polytechnic secondary-education institution with three main campuses. It has an active enrollment of 74,000 students.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack for Software Assurance
- Microsoft Application Virtualization

Partner:

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Humber College Speeds Application Deployment with Virtualization

“We used to have to visit up to 30 of our 60 labs during a semester rollover, but last semester [with App-V], we only had to visit two—this is a significant reduction for us.”

Derek Ethier, Manager of Technology Integration, Humber College

Humber College serves more than 19,000 full-time and 55,000 part-time students in Ontario, Canada. With 60 computer labs and more than 80 operating system images, the college found it challenging to deploy applications quickly and to manage image size. It used Microsoft® Application Virtualization to virtualize 60 applications. As a result, it reduced its image size, reduced deployment time, anticipates lower licensing costs, and is quick to respond to user needs.

Business Needs

Humber College is a polytechnic post-secondary institution located in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Its mission is to prepare students for careers through a comprehensive choice of applied and liberal education programs. It has an active enrollment of 74,000 students, and 4,000 staff and faculty. The college has three primary campuses and several satellite campuses.

The IT staff at Humber College manages 3,000 academic workstations running the Windows® XP Service Pack (SP3) operating system. It manages hundreds of software

applications in 60 computer labs across the campuses with more than 80 customized images. Each image includes only the software needed for the academic discipline supported by the lab, though some images include up to 70 software applications.

Maintaining a growing number of images year after year was becoming time-consuming for IT staff and as image sizes increased, so did the inefficiencies. “In order to meet the needs of all of our students, we are always adding new applications, and our image sizes were becoming unmanageable,” says Derek Ethier, Manager of Technology Integration at Humber College. “As a result,

we need increasing amounts of storage for our images as their sizes increase.”

In addition, the time required to build and deploy images was increasing because of the large image sizes. At minimum, it took at least seven hours to build and deploy a single image. Adding to the extensive time commitment, faculty often had last minute, ad-hoc requests for changes. To efficiently manage change requests, the IT staff would consolidate requests, then fix and redeploy images three weeks into each semester. Though an efficient IT management approach, it was challenging to respond to time-sensitive requests immediately.

Humber College was looking for a solution that would enable it to centralize application deployment, reduce the size of its images, and accelerate its time-to-delivery for new services.

Solution

Humber College learned of application virtualization in April 2007 after Microsoft Corporation acquired the technology. After evaluating a few other application virtualization products and thin-client alternatives, Humber College decided to pilot a solution with Microsoft® Application Virtualization (App-V), part of the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack for Software Assurance.

For the initial rollout, it used Microsoft App-V 4.2 in its 220 podium workstations to virtualize 21 of the 45 applications used in this setting. For the second phase, the IT staff focused on The Business School labs with the collaborative help of Microsoft Gold Certified Partner WolfBridge TSS. It has virtualized a total of 60 applications, 27 of which are in The Business School labs, and plans to

virtualize more applications in the future. In total, Humber College has installed the Microsoft App-V client on 3,000 computers, with at least one virtualized application delivered to each.

Some of the key applications that Humber College has virtualized include an e-mail client that was difficult to manage because the vendor releases updates often, a door-access control system that requires regular client-side upgrades, and a tax software application.

At the end of the 2009 academic year, Humber College plans to upgrade to Microsoft App-V 4.5 in a load-balanced deployment.

Benefits

Using Microsoft App-V, Humber College can reduce its storage footprint, deploy applications faster, better utilize IT staff, create the opportunity to reduce licensing costs, and respond better to the needs of its end-users.

- **Reduced number of images.** Humber College was able to reduce the size of its operating system image. “We’re no longer storing many copies of the same application in different images, so we can reduce our storage footprint,” says Trevor Gibson, Service Development Specialist at Humber College. “As we continue to virtualize more applications, we expect to see improvements in terms of storage.”
- **Reduced deployment time.** Previously, it took IT staff at Humber College up to seven hours to build and deploy images. With Microsoft App-V, the IT staff have reduced image development time and improved software request turnaround.

“Now, we can have an application package sequenced and deployed into labs in about an hour,” says Justin Everets, Service Development Specialist at Humber College.

- **Better utilization of IT staff.** As a result of Microsoft App-V, IT staff has to visit fewer computer labs in person. Because applications are managed and deployed centrally, IT staff can fix the central package and then publish the virtualized application to the client. “We used to have to visit up to 30 of our 60 labs during a semester rollover,” says Ethier. “But last semester, we only had to visit two—this is a significant reduction for us.”
- **Opportunity to reduce licensing costs.** Humber College is using the reporting capabilities in Microsoft App-V to analyze its software usage. “With App-V, we can prove that there are applications sitting on a workstation and not being used, or not being used frequently,” explains Gibson. “In the future, this will give us the opportunity to reduce licensing costs,” concludes Ethier.
- **Improved responsiveness to end users.** As a result of Microsoft App-V, Humber College is able to deploy fixes to virtualized applications and can respond to user requests quickly. “We’ve made a significant improvement to how long it takes to push fixes,” says Ethier. “We’ve had instances where an instructor contacted us to report a problem, and we are able to update and redeploy the package before the end of class—that wasn’t possible before.”