



## Upper Canada District School Board

# Realizing Potential with O365 Managed Service for Education



### Fast Facts

- 28,000 students
- 4,300 staff
- 86 schools
- 12,000 square kilometers

[www.ucdsb.on.ca](http://www.ucdsb.on.ca)

Location: Brockville, ON

### Industry

Education

### Products Used

- Microsoft O365 for Education
- Microsoft Exchange
- Windows Server Active Directory



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### Introduction

A typical day at the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) involves managing a hybrid (part cloud, part on-premises) communication and collaboration environment with over 32,000 students and staff. It also involves thinking about what innovative technology solutions will help improve graduation rates, increase student success, and engage parents.

Itergy, a Microsoft Certified Partner, and its Office 365 Managed Services for Education brings to the mix people, processes, and services that enable the UCDSB to focus on delivering and sustaining high- value solutions for its important user community.

### Client Background

Located in Eastern Ontario, UCDSB covers over 12,000 square kilometers and is one of the largest public boards in the province from a geographical perspective. The 4,300 staff are dedicated to servicing the needs of 28,000 students at 86 different schools.

Under the leadership of Jim Guerin, manager of information technology systems, a relatively small but dedicated IT team works hard to support and maintain existing systems while also seeking out and learning new technologies that will provide the best possible experience for administrators, staff, and students. One such project that Jim's team took on are the broad rollout and integration of Microsoft Office 365 (O365) into UCDSB's environment.

### The Business Challenge

UCDSB views technology as a critical enabler. It is driven by the need to continually deliver innovation and value to the organization. It was in that light that Jim and his team took on the task of introducing O365 into the environment. O365 offered UCDSB the promise of a powerful, cloud-based collaboration and communication platform. To fully realize the platform's benefits and meet the expectations of the user community, the team would have to address the following challenges:

- Integrating the new O365 technology into their existing environment would be complex.
- The Upper Canada IT team had limited capacity and skills to complete it on their own.
- The new technology could deliver a more proactive and preventive maintenance environment, but enabling this was new to the IT team, and they wanted to ensure that they took advantage of every feature.

## Challenges

To find the best way to access a wide variety of skills and support in order to increase capacity to deliver and sustain technology solutions.

## Solution

Itergy's Office 365 Managed Service for Education:

- Proactive monitoring
- Access to technical expertise
- Committed service levels
- Proven methodology



*“Itergy brings the skills, the methodology, and the tools that help me and my team deliver results to the organization faster. They understand our challenges and what we are working to achieve. Having Itergy and O365 Managed Service for Education help me sleep at night.”*

Jim Guerin, Manager of Information Technology Systems, Upper Canada District School Board

## Managing Complexity

In order for UCDSB to gain the full value of the O365 solution, the product needed to work seamlessly with Upper Canada's existing on-premises exchange/active directory environment. It also needed to be rolled out to the entire organization. This hybrid (cloud/on-premises) solution, combined with a large, geographically dispersed user base, introduced new integration complexities. For starters, the UCDSB team would have to successfully plan for and manage federation, authentication, and synchronization if they were to maximize the potential of the solution.

## Limited Resources and Skills

More new technology introduced in the UCDSB environment placed demands on the already stretched IT resources to support these solutions. The O365 integration and maintenance efforts were no exception.

The situation became all the more challenging when a key IT team member announced that he was leaving to pursue other opportunities, creating a significant knowledge gap. Guerin commented, “Initially I considered hiring externally or ramping up the skills of an existing team member to fill that void, but I realized that while simply backfilling might restore the team's ability to move forward on the O365 integration efforts, it missed dealing with the bigger picture of freeing up my team to focus on developing and delivering higher-value, strategic, innovative technology solutions directly benefiting students and staff. What I really needed were expert resources to support the immediate integration and ongoing maintenance of this initiative.”

## Reporting for Decision Making and Preventive Maintenance

Having previously experienced an incident with a network-based service outage that impacted the productivity of its users, the UCDSB team was very much attuned to how services like email, OneDrive, and O365 were viewed as critical tools for students and staff alike.

Guerin and his team, however, simply did not have the time, resources, or requisite tools to proactively monitor the networking environment and prevent outages.

## Solution

“After considering all the options, I believed that the best way to scale, keep up with new technology solutions, and ensure an always available productive learning environment was to partner,” added Guerin. “I needed access to a team of experts with a deep set of skills, expertise, and proven methodologies.”

In parallel, Itergy, a Microsoft Certified Partner with experience in education and a positive working history with UCDSB, had just launched its Office 365 Managed Service for Education offering. This was exactly what UCDSB needed, as it provided:

- Proactive monitoring. Itergy has the tools and processes to monitor and manage a client's environment and identify potential risks before the organization is impacted.
- Skilled delivery resources. Itergy's team of technical experts is available when needed.
- A committed service level agreement. Itergy is one of the only companies in the world that offer Office 365 Managed Services based on service levels. This demonstrates a guaranteed level of commitment to its clients in the way of measurable units, KPIs, set standards, SLAs, ITIL processes, etc.

As part of Itergy's O365 Managed Service, UCDSB also leverages incident and problem management, asset and configuration management, change management, release management, capacity and availability management, and security and event management, as well as IT continual service improvement to maintain the current environment and plan for the future.

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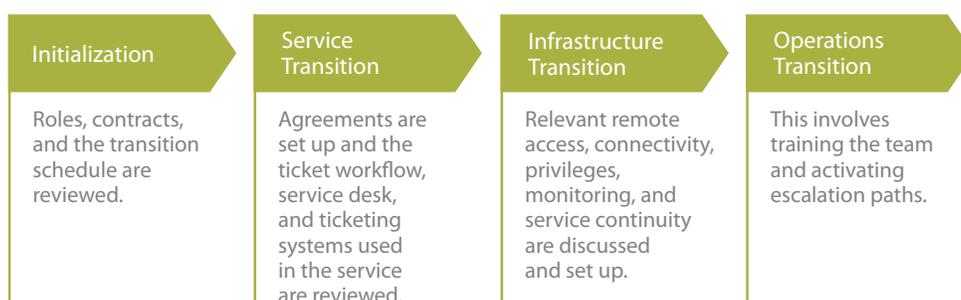
## Benefits

- Faster delivery of value to users
- Issue prevention
- Speedy resolution
- Positive community feedback

## Proven Methodology

To effectively move clients to its Office 365 Managed Service for Education, Itergy follows a specific methodology that begins by mapping client requirements to the service catalog. This step helped UCDSB get the right level of services and service level agreements in place to support its infrastructure. The onboarding process is next and details the move to the managed service. At a glance, this step involves the following.

Following this methodology ensures that all expectations are understood, making the transition to the Office 365 Managed Service seamless.



## Benefits

With the addition of Itergy's O365 Managed Service, UCDSB has been able to realize a range of benefits:

- Strategic use of resources and talent. Class distribution groups are a good example of accomplishing more by using resources strategically. These distribution groups are managed automatically for each class and are updated every 24 hours. Having access to Itergy's service freed up IT resources to focus on finding ways to reduce the administrative effort required of teachers, resulting in more time available to teach.
- Issue prevention. Included with Itergy's service is access to tools and analysis that help UCDSB deliver effective communication, uptime, and performance to its users. This aspect of the service is proactive and helps UCDSB avoid issues before they happen.
- Speedy resolution. Itergy's project-oriented approach uses regular meetings where accountabilities are solidified and tasks are identified and tracked to completion. With Itergy's help, UCDSB has been able to reduce the number of issues that impact users. If issues do arise, they are resolved quickly, thanks to service level agreements allowing the team to remain focused on the business of education.
- Positive community feedback. Parents too are reporting that they can see the benefits that come from an IT team that is now free to deliver value-added services. One example is the family portal, where student calendars and important events are available for viewing by parents. This provides parents with quick visibility to information on student agendas that they did not have access to previously.

## Conclusion

Reflecting on the use of Itergy's Office 365 Managed Service for Education, the team at UCDSB feels confident pushing forward with this and other new and innovative solutions because they know that they have access to the right skills and support. The UCDSB IT team and Itergy together are focused on student success, improving graduation rates, and keeping parents engaged.

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