THOMAS
MORE

Thomas More University College launch AppsAnywhere & enable BYOD

The consistent delivery of software to over 15,000 students and 1,400 teachers across 4,000 devices is quite a challenge and was the goal which led to Thomas More's decision to implement AppsAnywhere. Learn more about how they accomplished this alongside enabling student and staff BYOD and greatly reducing image sizes, number of images and cost.

Thomas More University College is the largest university of applied sciences in Flanders, offering over 31 Dutch-taught and 5 English-taught bachelor's degree programs in the province of Antwerp. Thomas More also offers exchange programmes in English, for students from partner universities. Following a 2013 merger of KHK, Lessius Antwerpen and Lessius Mechelen, Thomas More University College was founded.

This merger added another layer of detail to their goal, that being to smoothly and reliably consolidate the IT technologies and processes used by the three constituent institutions into a cohesive, robust and consistently-performing department.

Previous solutions

Prior to the 2013 merger, the three institutions were using entirely different products to deploy software to their students; KHK made use of Windows Deployment Services alongside Microsoft Deployment Toolkit whilst Lessius Mechelen used Symantec's Altiris and Lessius Antwerpen used Symantec subsidiary, Norton's now-end-of-life Ghost.

The inherently different natures and technologies behind these delivery products resulted in a lack of cohesion between deployment methods and seamlessness was missing from the student and user experience. This necessitated all computers eventually being installed with fat images and suffering from the associated drawbacks.

> **We were using this tech to deploy to all of our devices. Labs, open access areas, student & staff devices. You can imagine the number of images…**

Limitations & challenges

Even with most of Thomas More's hardware estate being Windows, fat client delivery posed a very significant challenge. However, when BYOD is thrown into the mix, fat images are not only an inefficient solution; they cease to be even an effective solution.

With up to 150 software titles to deliver to many machines, computers were slow and login times were unnecessarily long. Every change or update to software required a new rollout and, due to version incompatibility issues caused by negating to swiftly update outdated titles, Thomas More had to manually and regularly rebuild a large portion of their images. Coupling these drawbacks with regular image maintenance made for an unmanageable workload for IT and a poor return on investment when it came to IT expenditure.

Aside from maintenance and upgrade, Thomas More's existing package of solutions weren't complimentary to key strategic IT goals. The technologies used could not support BYOD and had no method of providing multiple versions of the same software title.

AppsAnywhere

When discussing the value added to their digital student experience by AppsAnywhere, Thomas More said that its flexibility was a key factor. Due to software not being locally installed on machines, IT are now able to deliver all software to all devices with a single package, including student and staff owned, non-managed devices. With today's students' tendency to expect unlimited access to all applications, Thomas More can meet this demand and deliver a stellar, universally accessible digital experience to all its students and staff.

Another benefit of AppsAnywhere, as described by Thomas More, is the improvement in performance it enables. Less software installed on university machines means faster computers and faster logins. This is especially beneficial in a classroom or lab setting, where there is often potential for large numbers of users to be launching intensive software simultaneously.

Thomas More's previous challenges when it came to maintenance and upgrade were solved by AppsAnywhere's implementation. AppsAnywhere reduced the number of images to maintain by IT greatly, across both different campuses and varying devices.

> **With more than 10 campuses it was an easy decision. We can package an application once and deploy it to all other campuses.**
>
> Dieter De Gendt, Program Manager, Thomas More University College, on AppsAnywhere.

When asked about the benefits of AppsAnywhere for their students, Thomas More stated that it has been the key factor in enabling student BYOD, with any student of theirs now able to access all the same software on their own, non-managed device as they can on a managed university machine. This has resulted in decreased stress and demand upon university labs and the IT department whilst simultaneously making learning and the student experience universally more flexible.

These benefits have been mirrored and strengthened by AppsAnywhere's single launch button; it is a more user-friendly system for students and staff, the simplicity of which results in greatly reduced dependence upon IT for launching software on owned and non-supported computers, quite simply because it is much more improbable that users will encounter obstacles than whilst using other delivery methods.

Thomas More's recent successful launch of AppsAnywhere has helped provide student BYOD, reduce the size and number of images whilst reducing delivery costs.