



Solution Case Study



Heythrop College

The Specialist Philosophy and Theology College
of the University of London

Introduction

Heythrop is the specialist philosophy and theology College of the University of London, offering undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees. Based in Kensington Square in the heart of London, Heythrop College is home to more than 1000 undergraduate and postgraduate students and well over 150 full and part-time staff.

Under pressure to improve the quality and functionality of their email services, yet with only a small and already over-stretched IT team, Heythrop decided firstly to move from their existing email platform to Microsoft Exchange, and secondly to find a trusted partner to deliver this service for them. After closely evaluating a number of different service providers, Heythrop eventually chose ThinkGrid to provide Hosted Exchange and SharePoint to their full and part-time staff members.

Client Profile

Educational Sector

c. 150 Staff Users

Central London

Client Drivers

Internal System - End of Life

Overstretched IT Team

Bespoke Requirements

Services Utilised

Hosted Exchange 2007

Hosted SharePoint

The Challenge

Faced with a demanding user base comprising of full and part-time staff, both onsite and remote, Nadeem Ahmad, IT Services Manager at the College, was charged with delivering a first-class email platform in place of internal email provisions which had now reached their natural end of life. With only limited internal resources at his disposal, Nadeem decided to look to an external provider to deliver a comprehensive Hosted Exchange service to the College.

“Ultimately we decided that ThinkGrid offered the best fit for our requirements”

Mindful of the need to find the right partner and ensure that any changeover of systems go as smoothly and seamlessly as possible, Nadeem and the College’s Network Manager, Tony Corley, began the extensive process of evaluating potential providers. Among those considered alongside ThinkGrid were a well-established Hosted Exchange provider and Microsoft’s own direct Hosted Exchange service, BPOS.

“Off-the-peg, static services were no use to us – we’ve got a mix of different users and systems to integrate and need a platform and technical team that can handle those requirements, which is why we chose ThinkGrid, not BPOS.”

According to Heythrop it quickly came down to a straight choice between ThinkGrid and Microsoft’s BPOS offering. “Tony and I were very clear that we didn’t want to listen to a lot of sales flannel, we wanted to know who could actually offer the kind of technical expertise and assistance we were looking for. We needed the platform to be able to handle a variety of different categories of user, to be compatible with the provisions already made for our student base and to be able to get our users onto it with the minimum of fuss and headaches.”

As their ThinkGrid Account Director, Richard South says, “We had to deliver a panacea solution for Heythrop which involved standing up to security and technical scrutiny, whilst also offering an easy migration path to the cloud. We worked with our partner network to look at the options and come back with one suitable for Nadeem and Tony.”

At the end of their exhaustive evaluation, Nadeem and Tony were clear that only ThinkGrid offered the kind of platform and technical expertise that would allow them to painlessly address the problems they were facing. Above all, ThinkGrid’s

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assistance in planning for a smooth migration process gave them the confidence that future requirements could be met just as quickly, flexibly and that the College could reap the benefits that a genuine, long-term customer-supplier relationship can provide.

The Services

Having chosen ThinkGrid, Nadeem and Tony managed the difficult task of migrating platforms and bringing their user base up to speed with the new system with the minimum of fuss. Working in close conjunction with both a partner and a Technical Account Manager, Nadeem and Tony not only brought well over a hundred staff onto the platform but, using ThinkGrid's powerful online Control Panel, have also successfully integrated those users with their student base and the College's VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) comprising of thousands of disparate members.

"It didn't take me long to master the control panel and if ever I need any assistance ThinkGrid are quick to respond."

Heythrop also chose ThinkGrid to help deploy a Hosted SharePoint site and, again, ThinkGrid's assistance has been crucial to the success of the project. "It hasn't needed to be the most complex of SharePoint sites, but it's been great knowing that ThinkGrid are there to help answer my questions as and when they come up. What's more, I can manage both the site and its users in tandem with the main Exchange deployment as it's all handled through the same Control Panel. When I look at the efforts of ThinkGrid, together with those of Tony and myself, we've really achieved a huge amount with limited resources."

The Result

Painless Migration
Process

First Class Technical
Support

Enhanced End User
Experience

Converting Heythrop College to ThinkGrid's Hosted Exchange from the cloud platform has ultimately been a great success for both parties. "It's always hugely important as an organisation to know that you can win business in direct competition with some of the biggest names in the industry, particularly when you're put under intense scrutiny", say Account Director Richard South, "and, having done that, I think we've given Nadeem and Tony good cause to feel they made the right decision".

"At the end of the day, this whole project was about improving the service delivered to our staff and we've done that in spades", say Nadeem Ahmad. "The second issue has been ensuring I can manage the service in line with our own, bespoke requirements and that's about more than just a one-off deployment, it's an on-going process. Getting direct assistance from people who are both experts at their own services and also familiar with the specifics of our deployment. That's invaluable".

"It's been a great decision – in fact, I've subsequently moved more services over to ThinkGrid and still find they deliver the same first-class service."

Rob Lovell, CEO of ThinkGrid, says, "We're very proud to have Heythrop as a customer, and glad that Nadeem and Tony were very forward thinking in recognising that a technology such as cloud computing could bring about such benefits to their organisation and increased levels of reliability necessary for a client of their standing."

Contact

If you'd like to speak to ThinkGrid about our solutions or to talk to a partner please feel free to call us on [+44 \(0\) 20 3393 7320](tel:+442033937320) or email sales@thinkgrid.com. Alternately, please see the website for more detail – www.thinkgrid.com

