

Modern Workplace Microsoft 365



'Moving to Microsoft cloud services enabled us to adopt flexible working far more effectively during the pandemic. Having previously relied on static servers and fiddly VPN connections, it has been a breath of fresh air to fully embrace M365. Our IT partners, Smartdesc, have been instrumental in helping us with this move, indeed we couldn't have done it without them. Their affinity with the Not-for-Profit sector has proven invaluable at such a challenging time for charities in general'

Michael Joseph, Chief Finance Officer



the project

Background

Volunteering Matters (VM) bring people together to overcome some of society's most complex issues through the power of volunteering. They partner with communities to overcome adversity, tackling social isolation and loneliness, improving health, developing skills and opportunity and making sure young people can lead change.

VM approached Smartdesc as they wanted to move away from ageing on-premise Remote Desktop services to a modern, agile technology platform that can grow and adapt with their needs.

Situation

In the face of a global pandemic, outdated Remote Desktop setup was no longer fit for purpose.

As VM were also involved with the national Covid response, moving to Microsoft 365 was an ideal fit. As a charity, they would also benefit from greatly reduced software costs, and better adaptability to the new distributed ways of working from home.

Solution

The non-profit sector is the sole focus of Smartdesc, and having helped many other charities adopt this technology, it was an ideal fit.

Smartdesc helped the VM team plan and design a new platform, with Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive at the heart of the organisation.

Data was migrated away from Remote Desktop servers into the dynamic Microsoft 365 ecosystem, all machines were moved to Azure Active Directory for centralised, cloud based access control, and staff training was provided to all 100+ members of staff.

The legacy finance application was also moved away from a proprietary system to one built upon Microsoft Dynamics Business Central, opening the door for improved automation and integration.



The VM team (pre-COVID)

Outcomes

The charity is now running a fully cloud-based infrastructure, that scales up and down - without the need to ever do mass upgrades again.

Software is always up-to-date, and VM benefit from new features and functionality as it is rolled out across the Microsoft ecosystem.

M365 has greatly simplified operations, allowing seamless remote working from anywhere, just at the time when it was needed most, as we all had to pivot to new ways of working.

Benefits

- **Future-proof, scalable platform, with continuous updates and a consistent user experience.**
- **Highly resilient, removing single point of failure servers and outdated Remote Desktop experience.**
- **Centralised cloud management of Users and Devices, without the need for any VPN.**
- **Microsoft Teams acting as a central collaboration hub for voice, video and file sharing.**
- **Microsoft non-profit grant scheme provides licensing that reduces operating cost.**
- **A Microsoft Partner that specialises in the sector and works collaboratively as a trusted advisor.**