

First class honours for this major digital transformation project

About Bath Spa University

Based in stunning countryside just a few minutes from a World Heritage City, Bath Spa University is a leading UK university with professional creativity at its core. With over 1,100 staff supporting 15,000 students studying a variety of different courses across art, sciences, education, social science and business, this higher education establishment is dedicated to ensuring its students graduate as engaged, global citizens who are ready for the world of work.

Business Drivers

Central to the University's ambitious programme of digital transformation is to transform the student and staff experience with feature-rich, streamlined and easy to use digital tools to support greater collaboration and productivity.

Bath Spa University was running its cloud-based collaboration services using Google Workspace to provide mailbox and personal data storage to around 42,000 users made up of staff, students and alumni.

The University was also running a variety of different software solutions, some on-premises and some in the cloud. Over time, this multi-vendor, multi-system IT environment had become complex to maintain. Collaboration with external partners in the HE and FE space was challenging, upgrades and integrations were time consuming, and there was an array of older technologies requiring too much resource. A core aspect of the University's digital transformation programme was to therefore reduce technical debt and simplify the digital estate, to ultimately offer a more streamlined user experience for students and staff.

To achieve all of this, the University's IT team had developed a clear business plan, which proposed bringing all users together, under one directory and one single Microsoft 365 tenant, to better manage all services both on and off campus. **Explains Rachael Johnson, CIO at Bath Spa University:** "This project represented a major organisational change for us - which was met with both lots of appetite and apprehensions. We had already prepared a comprehensive business plan, but we knew we did not have the resource nor technical expertise in-house to deploy such a complex migration project."

A core aspect of the University's digital transformation programme is to offer a more streamlined user experience

Key Benefits



Modern digital tools



Centralised, single vendor environment



Increased productivity



Greater collaboration



A seamless, integrated user experience

The AspiraCloud Solution

The AspiraCloud migration plan followed a phased approach. We commenced with the planning and migration of around 24,000 alumni from Google Workspace onto the new Microsoft 365 tenant.

Once complete, the team went on to migrate around 2,000 core staff and 15,000 students to Microsoft 365 including distribution lists, calendars, shared mailboxes and other associated data. In total, 42,000 users were migrated from Google Workspace onto the Microsoft 365 tenant between January and July 2023.

This included the move of 20,000,000 files, personal network drives and shared network drives, accounting for a grand total of 114tb of data migrating onto OneDrive and SharePoint. AspiraCloud also implemented Multi-Factor Authentication using Conditional Access to maintain the highest level of security for the University's students, staff, lecturers, alumni and other guests.



Working with AspiraCloud on our Microsoft 365 migration has enabled us to capitalise on their expertise in planning and delivering migrations in complex environments.

- Rachael Johnson, CIO, Bath Spa University



Finally, the AspiraCloud team also delivered an extensive series of online, on-site and hybrid training sessions. All staff had the opportunity to attend workshops to help them familiarise themselves with the new tools, including Email, Calendar, Teams and SharePoint, discover smarter ways of working and could get any questions and uncertainties answered prior to go live.

Subsequently, additional training webinars were delivered post-migration. These tailored sessions were based on specific use cases experienced by the Bath Spa team, including Microsoft Flows and Power Automate, advanced features of Microsoft Teams, such as channels and apps, as well as how to effectively introduce and manage personal bookings.



Business Benefits

Bath Spa University now has a more flexible and integrated service for all users. User experience has significantly improved, and feedback has been really positive across the University. The University teams are now much more connected than ever before, which has in turn improved productivity and enabled the introduction of new ways of working.

Students and staff are now well-equipped and confident with the digital tools they need to thrive in the contemporary era of learning and working, which supports the University's commitment to futureproofing everyone's digital skills.

"Microsoft 365 offers a useful suite of tools that allow users to engage more productively, collaborate better and work smarter," **explains Chris Stedham, CTO at Bath Spa University.** "With this common platform in place, we can also engage better with external contacts, partners and other bodies across the sector. And from an IT strategy perspective, this new centralised environment has significantly reduced duplication of effort, removed the complexity of maintaining multiple systems and has enabled us to really streamline our digital estate."

Why AspiraCloud

Having reviewed several solutions providers, Bath Spa University selected AspiraCloud to support them with this digital transformation project. With many years of experience in the edtech sector, AspiraCloud can offer qualified advice support on the implementation of cloud migration. **Rachael continues:** "Working with AspiraCloud on our Microsoft 365 migration has enabled us to capitalise on their expertise in planning and delivering migrations in complex environments. The ability to confidently place this project in their capable hands meant we could focus on other valuable activities, such as working with key stakeholders, sharing use cases and helping everyone understand the value of this strategic project."

"It represented a huge learning curve and brought all hands to the pump," **adds Chris.**

"We initially faced a few challenges around moving calendar items and our chosen migration tool didn't work as well as expected, but AspiraCloud was able to quickly address these challenges and suggest valid, alternative options – including the introduction of Sharegate to speed up the migration process – they were with us every step of the way."

"This has been a major IT project for the University," **concludes Adrian Edgar, CEO at AspiraCloud.** "As their strategic partner, we proposed clear recommendations and introduced relevant technologies to support a successful migration plan. Available and adaptive, we worked hand in hand with the University team, to ensure the successful delivery of this modernisation project, and support the University on their digital journey."

Future Plans

Moving forward, the University will continue to streamline its digital environment, including the removal of older applications, and add anti-virus and endpoint protection to the Microsoft platform, alongside a focus on Azure.

Chris explains: "Following the migration, we will look to reduce technical debt and simplify the University's digital environment in line with our digital transformation programme. To achieve this, we plan to introduce a 'one-vendor focus' to avoid the numerous software challenges caused by working with multiple vendors."

With a reduced number of platforms to manage, internal IT resource will be freed up to provide more value-added services. The University can also look forward to reduced power consumption on premises and contribute to the University's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.



AspiraCloud empowers organisations with the best-in-class productivity of Microsoft 365 Cloud solutions and services, such as Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, and Azure, to confidently kick start your cloud journey for today's modern workplace. Combined with advanced security and device management capabilities to help safeguard your business, we can work with you to build the right, most cost effective and productive Microsoft Cloud solution.

Trusted Digital Delivery.