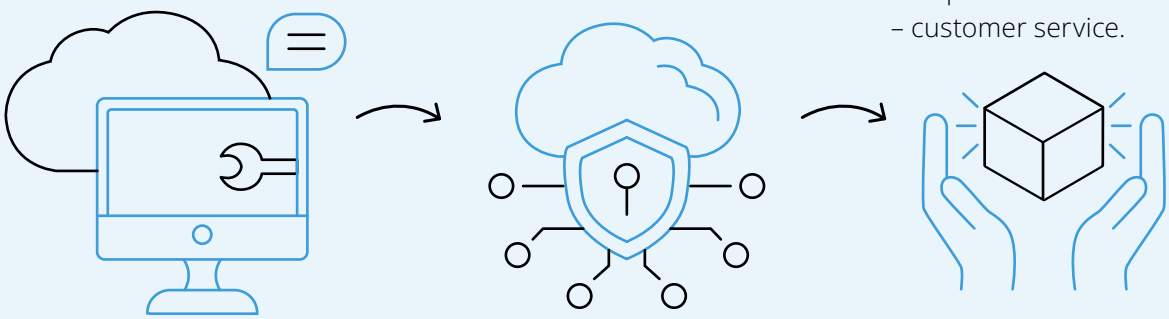
Case Study

The College of Medicine and Dentistry takes finance to the cloud

The IONOS Cloud provides a secure and highly available infrastructure for the college's mission-critical finance applications, backed by exceptional – and accessible – customer service

+++ Featured learnings +++

- Moving IT to the cloud liberates organisations to focus on their core mission. In this case: education.
- Locking applications down to approved IP addresses helps to protect data from unauthorised access.
- To ensure your cloud migration is a success now and in the future, choose a cloud provider that offers exceptional – and accessible – customer service.



The College of Medicine and Dentistry was founded in 2018, when it split from the BPP University School of Health. With just two internal IT staff remaining after the split, the college needed to build its own IT capabilities to support existing applications, as well as 200 students and a multinational faculty. The answer was the cloud, specifically infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) from IONOS Cloud, which offered the reliability and security required, alongside a high standard of customer service. For the college's implementation partner, Serviceteam IT, the IONOS Data Center Designer made it possible to launch the finance application in the cloud within 24 hours. Working with IONOS Cloud has been more cost-effective than hosting in-house, and the college is now preparing to migrate more applications to the cloud.

The challenge

A vision to move to the cloud

Headquartered in Birmingham, the College of Medicine and Dentistry educates and trains the next generation of dentists and healthcare professionals. This private college was previously part of the BPP University School of Health, which was founded in 2013. In 2018, the College of Medicine and Dentistry was established as an independent organisation.

Today, the college has over 200 students. They study for diplomas and postgraduate qualifications using the college's clinical facilities and cutting-edge simulation centre. The college offers courses based on the latest research, including digital dentistry.
The split from the BPP University School of Health required the College of Medicine and Dentistry to acquire its own IT capabilities. The college did have servers, but didn't want to support on-site IT in the long run. The vision was to adopt the cloud for any business functions ancillary to the college's educational mission.

"With just two internal staff dedicated to IT, we needed a supportive implementation partner," said Lee Nabbs, Head of IT, College of Medicine and Dentistry. "It was also vital that we choose a cloud provider that would be readily accessible to us when we needed support, and offered a high standard of customer service."

The college prides itself on the quality of services it offers to staff and students, so security and availability were also high priorities in the choice of hosting provider.

The solution

Choosing trusted IT and cloud partners

The college chose Serviceteam IT as its trusted partner for IT support and consultancy. Serviceteam IT recommended IONOS Cloud as the cloud hosting partner, primarily because of its excellent customer service.

"I wanted to be able to speak with somebody in support, whether to do with the initial setup, ongoing availability management, or other aspects of the service," said Sebastian Jesson-Ward, Managing Director, Serviceteam IT. "With hyperscale providers, the service is commoditised and hands-off. That's great for organisations that have internal IT teams – or big budgets for consultants – but most businesses don't have the time, money, experience, or broad knowledge to manage these services directly."

Sebastian Jesson-Ward
Managing Director, Serviceteam IT

The new IT solution needed to be highly-manageable and offer a smooth migration from legacy systems the college had used before, so a good first step was having easy-to-manage virtual machines. "Hyperscale providers can have a broad spectrum of services, which makes their clouds difficult to consume," said Sebastian. "You could go into a menu of a thousand services and not know which one to use. It often makes it intimidating to take that first step into the cloud."

With its easy-to-understand offer, backed by excellent customer service, IONOS Cloud stood out.

Securing sensitive financial data

The college's finance system contains highly-sensitive information, to which access must be tightly

managed, making security a priority. The IONOS Cloud IaaS solution enabled these applications to be locked down so they can only be accessed from IP addresses coming from within the college's site. Authorised users were expected to be on the Birmingham campus or, if offsite, connected through a virtual private network (VPN).

"IONOS Cloud also helped us with data sovereignty, guaranteeing the college's data will be stored in the UK, which will be important for patient data later on in their cloud journey," said Jesson-Ward. "With hyperscale providers, you often have no idea where your data is being stored and processed."

The implementation

Launched in 24 hours

As a first step, Serviceteam IT migrated the college's finance system to IONOS Cloud's IaaS offering. The migration was achieved within 24 hours of the college signing off on Serviceteam IT's recommendation.

To build and launch the environment, Serviceteam IT used IONOS Cloud's Data Center Designer, which provides an intuitive, browser-based, drag-and-drop interface for configuring and modifying the virtual IT infrastructure. The Data Center Designer checks that the cloud configuration is viable as you design it. This allowed Serviceteam IT to easily specify the required storage units, RAM, and processor cores required for the college's application.

The finance system went live on IONOS Cloud in February 2021, and the college has been using it successfully ever since. The bandwidth available to connect to the IT on campus was originally 30 Mbps, since upgraded to 100 Mbps. However, now that the finance system is hosted in the cloud, the bandwidth is 10x greater (1 Gbps), giving users easier access, lower latency and faster data transfer. During the pandemic, this was particularly important as staff were working from home more.

Conclusion

Next steps in the cloud

The college has taken the first step into the cloud with the migration of its financial application. The combined support of Serviceteam IT and IONOS Cloud gives the college an infrastructure it can rely on, backed with the support they need to maximise it. The new infrastructure is significantly more cost-effective than it would be to run similar capabilities on site.

The college is considering migrating telephony and cloud desktop to the IONOS Cloud next. In the future, the college also plans to migrate some of its specialist clinical IT to the cloud. For example, its digital imaging and x-ray services create large files that would be easier to manage and faster to access in the IONOS Cloud.

"We wouldn't be able to function fully without the IONOS Cloud," concluded Lee. "We have services that are comparable with the large hyperscalers, but they're backed with support where we can actually speak to real people. During lockdown, while our team was working from home, it was difficult to communicate with some larger organisations. IONOS Cloud is always there for us when we need help. It gives us the features, security, and reliability we need."

About IONOS

IONOS cloud is the European cloud alternative from IONOS, the leading European provider of cloud infrastructure, cloud solutions and hosting services.

Our product portfolio includes Compute Engine, an IaaS compute engine with its own virtualized code stack; Managed Kubernetes for container applications; a private cloud powered by VMware; and S3 object storage. Our solutions provide established medium-sized and large companies, regulated industries, the digital economy and the public sector with all the services they need to be successful in and with the cloud.

We are convinced that data sovereignty is essential for successful digitisation. That's why we are committed to ensuring that our customers retain control over their data and applications. As a German company, we offer full GDPR compliance, and thus maximum protection against access based on the US CLOUD Act.

Treating our customers fairly is very important to us, so we offer transparent pricing and by-the-minute billing, no vendor lock-ins and the best price/performance ratio in the IaaS market. Ease of use is another priority, so we provide highly flexible solutions and easy, drag and drop configuration through our patented Data Center Designer and APIs.

We also attach great importance to customer needs. Dedicated account management, tailored cloud architecture consulting – including support with proof of concept by professional services – and free 24/7 enterprise-level support with certified system administrators are available to help users in any situation.

Our history

For over 30 years, IONOS has been developing innovative, reliable and high-quality solutions that help companies of all sizes to digitise their business processes.

These include web hosting products and office applications, proprietary data centres and innovative cloud solutions. In addition, we have continuously enhanced our portfolio through strategic acquisitions.

Since its foundation in 1988, IONOS (formerly 1&1) has become Europe's largest hosting provider. In 2010, Achim Weiß, the current CEO of IONOS, founded an IaaS provider, which is now the basis for IONOS cloud. With 8 million customer contracts and georedundant data centres in Germany, Europe and the USA, we provide intelligently coordinated products for every phase of a company's development.

IONOS cloud is a sub-brand of IONOS, a United Internet AG company.

More information is available at
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