zoom

Case Study

'Conversation and Collaboration': How Zoom Supports the University of Sydney's Delivery of Higher Education

Founded in 1850 as Australia's first university, the University of Sydney has been recognized for its tradition of academic and research excellence. The University has earned a reputation for producing important leaders and thinkers over its 170 years of operation, including five Nobel laureates, seven Australian prime ministers, and nine Australian state governors.

The university also has various locations across the country, including teaching hospitals, campuses, and research stations. With these locations and a robust online learning platform, the university is able to expand the delivery of its curriculum to students across Australia and the globe.

Challenge

With over 80,000 students and staff globally, the university relies on video communications to deliver its curriculum to remote students and collaborate with researchers and staff that are off-campus.

The University of Sydney sought a user-friendly solution to maintain the integrity of its online learning environment. However, most other solutions only ran using proprietary equipment and software, which required a significant investment to implement and maintain.

"The other solutions we looked at required large investments in infrastructure to get them running and maintain them," Catling said. "And that didn't work for us. We also wanted a solution we could deploy quickly and make available to our students and staff."

Solution

Catling and his teams sought a cloud-based solution to avoid the high cost and maintenance of an on-premise solution. Catling and his team found Zoom to be a flexible and cost-effective video solution.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

The University of Sydney

Founded: 1850

Location: New South Wales, Australia

Industry: Higher education

Challenges: Friction in the user experience, significant support required to use legacy solution, cost of implementing a video conferencing solution

Solutions: Zoom Meetings, Zoom Rooms

Business benefits: Improved user experience, reduced need for support, affordable implementation

"Zoom is very straightforward to use, which has been beneficial from a support perspective. ... Instead of the technology becoming the centerpiece of the meeting because it's so difficult to use, we wanted the conversation and the collaboration to be the centerpiece of the meeting. Zoom enables that type of experience."

Jordan Catling

Associate Director of Client Technology
University of Sydney

"It's cloud-native, so it doesn't require a huge upfront investment to implement. No matter what device you're using, no matter where you are, it just works."

Zoom's intuitive interface led to a more seamless experience for the University of Sydney's users and reduced the amount of support people needed to effectively use a video communications solution.

"Zoom is very straightforward to use, which has been beneficial from a support perspective," Catling said. "It's very intuitive and requires very little user guidance, so we can put it in front of just about anyone. Instead of the technology becoming the centerpiece of the meeting because it's so difficult to use, we wanted the conversation and the collaboration to be the centerpiece of the meeting. Zoom enables that type of experience."

Students, professors, and university administrators now regularly use Zoom to coordinate group projects, deliver lectures to remote students, and communicate with colleagues across the world. And with the university moving to online classes due to safety concerns about the coronavirus, Zoom has played an even larger role at the university.

"At this time, we're facing some really unique challenges that we haven't faced before," Catling said. "Our No. 1 priority is making sure that we can continue providing the highest-quality education during this time, and Zoom has been particularly useful in that aspect. Zoom provides us with a flexible set of tools to allow our organization to continue teaching, learning, researching and working together no matter where they are."

The University of Sydney has seen a significant increase in the use of Zoom's platform since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. Due to Zoom's cloud-based design and baked-in scalability, the platform can handle increases in demand and usage without requiring any infrastructure changes or added management.

"Over the past two months, we have increased our use of Zoom by 20 times," Catling said. "And it didn't require us to do anything on our end to handle that increased usage. We didn't need to quickly scale up or need to concentrate specifically on this platform to keep it running. Zoom has been scalable from the word 'go.' "

Results

In implementing Zoom, the University of Sydney deployed an intuitive, flexible, and easy-to-manage solution that readily integrated with the school's existing technology. Zoom also provided a scalable and intuitive solution that has allowed the University to continue providing high-quality education despite the unique challenge of connecting with remote students and staff.

The university is still expanding its use of Zoom across the organization.

"Zoom has been a true partner through the entire process," Catling said. "They've been really responsive to our questions and very flexible with enabling us to do different things with the platform at short notice. It's been an important platform for the University since its implementation, but it's become particularly important to us in light of the challenges we're facing."

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