

University of Aberdeen saves 10 weeks of deployment time with **Acronis**

Acronis Snap Deploy cuts image deployment time in half, enhancing the university IT team's productivity.

BUSINESS BACKGROUND

Located in Northeast Scotland, the University of Aberdeen is at the forefront of teaching, learning and discovery, as it has been for 500 years. Known as the 'global university of the north,' this research-driven university is committed to excellence in everything it does and currently sits 129th in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

The University of Aberdeen's Service Delivery Division is responsible for the installation and management of over 250 software applications on 1,700 publicly accessible PCs, including lecturers' PCs. These are used daily in a teaching environment by staff and students across the university's various campuses.

Over 20% of the software applications on these PCs need to be local – installed on each individual computer, with the remainder being accessed over a network or deployed via Active Directory. These applications require annual updating. Derek Findlay, Computing Support Officer for the university, explains, "new service pack upgrades, security updates and newer versions of software are released continually."

If these are not implemented and regularly maintained, the outdated software could pose security risks to the university and hinder the teaching progress. Additionally, during the annual update, new software applications requested by the teaching staff are installed.

A MASTERFUL APPROACH

Initially, the classroom deployment team used early imaging products to create a master image that could then be deployed on all PCs. However, these products were using DOS technology, which meant the master image could not exceed 4 GB in size. With software upgrades leading to an increase in data size, and with new software solutions designed to enhance teaching appearing all the time, the classroom

INDUSTRY

Education and research.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Maintain consistent environment on 1,700 PCs.

PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT

- 1,700 publicly accessible PCs, including lecturers' PCs.

KEY BENEFITS

- Time taken to deploy a single PC cut in half.
- Up to 10 weeks worth of IT deployment time saved each year.

team was finding it hard to stay within the 4 GB size restriction. Findlay notes, “Software applications going onto the local PCs had to be restricted and prioritized so as to not bloat the image size. We had to develop ways of installing software that wasn’t going on the local PCs. Many man hours were spent trying to find software solutions that could work over a network.”

A new solution was needed, but most of the services being considered were ruled out due to technical issues or because they were prohibitively expensive. After a thorough evaluation process, Findlay started a trial of Acronis Snap Deploy for their workstations. “I did my research and saw some very positive Acronis Snap Deploy product reviews. Not only is it affordable, but there is no limitation on image size. After trialing the software for a month, we were happy with the results and purchased 200 licenses, and another 1,800 a few months later. We found the software easy to use and the Acronis support team was there to help us utilize and configure the product for the university’s specific needs. The Acronis support team was really helpful during the development phase,” recalls Findlay.

ACRONIS PROVIDES DEPLOYMENT IN RECORD TIME

Acronis Snap Deploy has halved the time taken to image existing PCs, saving the Service Delivery Division up to 10 weeks of IT deployment time each year. “Prior to purchasing Acronis Snap Deploy, it would take us up to two hours to image a single PC, not to mention the time taken to create a master image that was under 4 GB,” notes Findlay. “Using Acronis, it now takes us just under one hour to image a PC and we no longer have to worry about the master image size.”

The classroom team can now create individual master images containing the operating system, settings and all the applications required, and place them on any of the 1,700 PCs that they maintain. The key advantage for Derek is that Acronis Snap Deploy does not place a size restriction on the master image. The classroom team no longer has to spend hours searching for network solutions when

it comes to software, as all the software can now be placed on the local PCs prior to rollout.

Findlay explains, “As part of the technology replacement program, the university does not keep PCs for more than four years. Every year, roughly 25% of the existing PCs get replaced with new ones. We rely on the additional Acronis licenses to help us get these machines up and running as quickly as possible so there is very little downtime. Acronis Snap Deploy is very cost effective and easy to use. The additional functionality it offers makes it a clear winner.”

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Derek Findlay,
Computing Support Officer

ABOUT ACRONIS

Acronis unifies data protection and cybersecurity to deliver integrated, automated [cyber protection](#) that solves the safety, accessibility, privacy, authenticity and security ([SAPAS](#)) challenges of the modern digital world. With flexible deployment models that fit the demands of service providers and IT professionals, Acronis provides superior cyber protection for data, applications, and systems with innovative next-generation antivirus, [backup, disaster recovery](#), and endpoint protection management solutions powered by AI.

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