

Education

Advancing knowledge in land-based industries

Writtle University College

Writtle University College delivers unique learning experiences through new audio-visual capabilities, supported by high-performance Lenovo and VMware solutions.



Lenovo

Powered by

vmware®
by Broadcom

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Who is Writtle University College?

Founded in 1893, Writtle University College (WUC) offers land-based, environmental, animal, and sport courses, including graduate, postgraduate, further education, short courses, and apprenticeships. From cow behavior tracking to sustainable development, more than 3,000 students and around over 250 staff contribute directly to improving the world around us. At the end of February 2024, WUC will become ARU Writtle.



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The Challenge

The WUC team is always looking to enhance the learning experience for students. It realized that students were not always able to attend valuable laboratory demonstrations and essential lectures, missing out on in-person opportunities. The natural answer would be to record presentations and take advantage of multiple cameras, providing additional insight and even close-up views that would otherwise be unavailable.

However, the new video project would impose significant new demands on the College's data storage infrastructure and could create administration headaches for an already stretched IT team.

“Working with limited IT resources, we looked for easy-to-manage infrastructure with low admin overheads to support our ambitions” says Richard Brotherton, IS&T Operations Manager (Development & Infrastructure) at Writtle University College.

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“As part of the redevelopment of our campus, we wanted to bring in lecture capture, roving cameras and audio and video recordings.”

Richard Brotherton

IS&T Operations Manager (Development & Infrastructure),
Writtle University College

Building the foundations for innovation

WUC worked with its technology partner Getech to specify and select a new storage system that could handle the predicted, very large, data volumes, and meet the restricted budget.

Richard Brotherton says: “Getech were great. We’d done some calculations, and they were one of the only companies that used our figures and met our precise specifications, rather than what they thought we should have. It was refreshing.”

Hardware

Lenovo DM5000H
storage appliances
Lenovo ThinkSystem
SR650 V2 servers

Software

VMware vSphere®

Services

Lenovo Premier
Essential Service

**High
performance,
high
efficiency**

At Getech's recommendation, WUC opted for two Lenovo DM5000H storage systems to replace four older devices. Getech showed how the Lenovo systems offered scalability capable of meeting likely future storage volumes, as well as providing exceptional performance combined with low administration workload. With an intuitive user interface, the WUC team soon became familiar with the capabilities of the new solution, with a very rapid and smooth onboarding process. Richard Brotherton adds: "The installation and deployment was easy and quick; in essence, the solution just worked."

The new Lenovo storage platform is divided into storage for virtual machines and file shares. For virtualization, WUC relies on VMware vSphere® hypervisor software, which improves resource utilization and simplifies management.



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“Lenovo’s interface is a big step up from our previous one—it allows us to do a lot and there was no learning curve, so it’s a win-win for us.”

Richard Brotherton

IS&T Operations Manager (Development & Infrastructure), Writtle University College

WUC gradually migrated existing files to the Lenovo systems, ensuring that data and materials were always available to students and staff during the process. The College implemented the two storage systems at separate campus sites, replicating data between each location to ensure protection against disaster.

Based on impressive results and the ease of migration, when other IT infrastructure was due for renewal, WUC opted for Lenovo technology as its go-to choice. Specifically, the College selected two Lenovo ThinkSystem SR650 V2 servers to replace three legacy machines. The new servers support WUC's virtualization and consolidation strategy, providing additional compute capacity in a smaller physical footprint.

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Results

With the Lenovo solution in place, WUC has seen marked improvement in system performance, enabling students and staff to work much more productively.

“Previously, any time you’d run a report, it would take so long that you would walk away, make a cup of tea and hope it had completed when you came back. With the Lenovo solution, for some file stores the system is up to four times faster, and in some cases is ten times faster,” says Richard Brotherton.

WUC now has the right foundations for video capture of thousands of lectures and can manage the predicted growth for storage space for around five years. With this capacity and performance, lecturers can use multiple roving cameras to show all angles of an experiment or a dissection, providing greater detail for their students, and creating a precious future study and revision resource.



Increased performance by up to 10x



50% reduction in number of storage units



33% reduction in number of servers



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“Lenovo is by far the most cost-effective solution for higher education providers looking to upscale their systems.”

Richard Brotherton

IS&T Operations Manager (Development & Infrastructure), Writtle University College

Why **Lenovo**?

The WUC team was delighted to discover the quality and breadth of Lenovo's enterprise solutions. Richard Brotherton comments: "We were under the impression that Lenovo was just for retail, so we were very pleased when we found out that not only were we mistaken, but the Lenovo proposal delivered better price-performance than the competition."

Moreover, the team was impressed by Lenovo's approach to sales. Richard Brotherton adds: "There were no repeated visits from the salespeople; we were left to make decisions at our own pace, and subsequently we selected Lenovo to upgrade other parts of our infrastructure because we were so happy with the service."



A photograph of a modern library or computer lab. In the foreground, several students are seated at long white tables, each with a computer monitor. They are focused on their work. The background is filled with tall wooden bookshelves packed with books. The floor is made of light-colored wood. The lighting is warm and focused on the workstations.

Partner perspective: Getech

“Getech is one of Lenovo’s leading partners serving the UK educational sector. The project with Writtle University College is a prime example of how Lenovo technology combined with our expertise can help an organization get maximum value from its IT investments and achieve its future-facing goals.”

Martin Bedford

Data Centre Sales Consultant, Getech



How can higher-ed institutions improve the learning experience?

WUC deployed Lenovo and VMware technology to support high-definition video capture of demonstrations, presentations, and dissections.

[Explore Lenovo Storage Solutions](#)