



INFORMATICS ACADEMY MODERNIZES EXISTING IT INFRASTRUCTURE TO FACILITATE BETTER COLLABORATION ACROSS GLOBAL CAMPUSES



INDUSTRY EDUCATION

LOCATION SINGAPORE

KEY CHALLENGES

- Difficulty in enabling global UK team to access data center in Singapore
- Keen to reduce CAPEX and convert to OPEX
- Lacked expertise to identify and manage a suitable virtual infrastructure

SOLUTION

- VMware NSX®
- VMware vSphere®

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Significant cost and manpower savings
- Leaner IT team
- Resource sharing between teams in the UK and Singapore

To better connect, secure, and coordinate operations across its global campuses in Singapore and the United Kingdom (UK), Informatics Academy Pte. Ltd. (Informatics) decided to modernize its IT infrastructure. The student-centric institute worked with VMware to virtualize physical server infrastructure with VMware vSphere® and adopt network virtualization with VMware NSX® to provide students with a highly available, secure, and reliable IT experience.

Established in 1983 to address Asia's need for IT expertise, Informatics Academy Pte. Ltd. (Informatics) has transformed through the years to become a center of excellence in higher learning. With its strong global presence, the institute also collaborates with foreign universities and institutions in the UK to provide more academic opportunities for its students. Offering diplomas and degrees in various disciplines, Informatics equips its students with critical skills and knowledge to be leaders in the marketplace.

The Challenge

Since its inception 35 years ago, Informatics has relied heavily on physical servers to support its business operations. As the hardware was reaching end of life, Informatics had to decide between purchasing new hardware or investing in an advanced cloud solution.

In an effort to coordinate IT operations with its global team outside of Singapore, Informatics was keen to consider cloud migration for users to access Informatics' virtual data center, regardless of location. The team also leaned towards virtualizing their servers as they wanted to reduce capital expenditure (CAPEX) and convert to operational expenditure (OPEX), which would not happen with a costly hardware refresh.

Despite seeing the benefits of virtualization including automating IT operations and securing app infrastructure, Informatics' UK team had conducted an unsuccessful cloud migration in 2016 with another vendor and had to revert to its previous system for all IT operations. Although the team in Singapore wanted to integrate a cloud solution, they did not have the expertise to manage a virtual infrastructure. Presented with a variety of existing and new solutions available in the market, Informatics also had difficulty identifying the best IT solution to address its needs.

“With VMware, we can enhance real-time communication with our teams in the UK, which has increased our collaboration efforts and enabled Informatics Academy to be truly global. As cities like Singapore continue to work to overcome an IT skills gap, Informatics is committed to nurturing local IT talents, empowering our graduates to make a real difference in the industry.”

KWOK LON LEE
IT MANAGER
INFORMATICS ACADEMY

APPLICATIONS VIRTUALIZED

- Finance GP System
- Institute Management System
- Exam System
- Student Management System

PLATFORM

- Windows Server 2003 – 2012

PARTNER

- Infofabrica Pte. Ltd

The Solution

Looking to avoid the same challenge faced by their UK team, and having to work against a tight timeline before the hardware devices had to be refreshed, Informatics engaged Infofabrica Pte. Ltd. (Infofabrica), an IT consultant, to manage its entire virtualization process. Informatics wanted to explore solutions that featured minimal application change, zero vendor lock-in and seamless migration.

Infofabrica recommended IBM SoftLayer, VMware vSphere and VMware NSX. Using the IBM SoftLayer platform as a foundation, and with proven VMware solutions like the VMware vSphere, Informatics can easily move VMs in and out of the public cloud.

VMware NSX, a network virtualization and security platform that enables the creation of entire networks in software, enabled Informatics to virtualize its networking layer and integrate IP in the cloud. This configuration isolated workloads through micro-segmentation provided by NSX and provided a secure connection between the campus network and IBM Cloud via IPsec VPN.

Kwok Lon Lee, IT Manager, Informatics Academy, said, “Even though we have migrated our IT operations to the cloud, there is no lag and our virtualization experience has been positive. With VMware, we now have more effective cloud infrastructure, which value adds to our operations as our UK team can now access our IT operations outside of Singapore.”

Business Results and Benefits

By modernizing its IT infrastructure, Informatics has achieved significant business benefits including cost savings, increased security, and a leaner and more efficient IT team.

With vSphere and NSX, Informatics can reap up to 30% more savings in five years when compared to previous capex models for a hardware refresh. By transitioning to an opex model, Informatics can also re-align its budget to provision for new services and to enhance the end customer experience.

IT security has also improved with NSX solution, and its secured configuration now provides Informatics’ students with an available and dependable network across its global campus.

Previously, Informatics had stationed three engineers to support operations at its data center. However, since automating its IT system, Informatics now requires one engineer to conduct overall monitoring and to manage its global network, freeing up additional manpower resources for other priorities.

Separately, by implementing the IBM SoftLayer and VMware technologies, Informatics can now set up a virtual classroom and allow Informatics teams in the UK and Singapore to share resources.

“It is incredible how quickly we have enhanced real-time communication with our global teams in the UK, with the support of VMware technologies. This has increased our efficiency levels and we are now also able to move forward with our plans to develop virtual classrooms to provide a greater user experience for our students. This is a game changer for Informatics,” said Kwok.

Looking Ahead

Now that Informatics has set up and strengthened its virtual network, Informatics is keen to integrate virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and will require its UK team to build up its IBM SoftLayer platform to bring the idea to fruition.