

The 4C service 'is always of high quality' says Thames Valley University

With three campus locations spread across Ealing and Berkshire, the Thames Valley University (TVU) faces a range of technological challenges delivering services to its students in the most flexible and effective way. The University is one of the largest providers of technical and vocational education in the UK, and has a student body of over 44,000, including a significant proportion of mature students.



4C has worked on data storage and back-up across the University's three campus sites

Review and revise to improve

Senior personnel at TVU realised that there were issues that needed to be reviewed and addressed in order to move forwards. They identified the need for a comprehensive strategic review, including an appraisal of the provision of live data storage as well as the facilities for historical data storage, backup and archiving.

The key drivers for the project were identified by TVU as follows:

- An absence of centralised facilities for data storage or backup. The existing sever infrastructure was based on multiple platforms which were all managed separately.
- The lack of a scalable and flexible way to provision storage.
- An increasing need to provide applications and services to departments to agreed SLAs
- The need to rationalise arrangements for backup to enable compliance with legislation, greater flexibility and quicker response times for restore requests.

With their extensive experience of working with higher education organisations on a range of projects, TVU retained 4C Strategies to advise on and assist with the development of appropriate storage and backup strategies. The brief also included assisting with the subsequent procurement and implementation projects arising from the new strategy.

4C Strategies



4C Strategies was able to help TVU with their identified needs by developing a comprehensive strategy for the provision of data storage and backup. The key recommendations of the strategy outlined in detail the technical infrastructure that TVU would need to have in place in order to ensure suitable arrangements for centralised data storage and backup.

The 4C strategy also defined a number of 'service tiers' which would enable TVU to classify all of its applications and services. This would also enable the University to supply these applications and services to departments and users at agreed service levels.

Putting first class technology into place

Once the strategy had been agreed, 4C was able to work with TVU in procuring the new technology platforms that it would need to have in place in order to operate inline with the defined strategy. In addition, key staff at the University were so impressed with how the 4C team worked throughout the project, that the ICT consultancy were also retained to assist during the implementation phase and migration of the new technology platforms, ensuring that all the new systems operated as they should.

The new strategy has fulfilled the aims that TVU originally had and has enabled the University to:

- Provide SLAs to internal departments for application provision, data storage, backup and integrity
- Rationalise existing infrastructure
- Improve data integrity
- Enhance levels of service
- Improve performance
- Enable disaster recovery and business continuity strategy
- Cease manual transport of tape-based backup
- Reduce power consumption and reduce physical space
- Provide a solid platform for future server virtualisation deployment

The perfect partnership

As expert consultants on the project, 4C Strategies assisted the University in a range of areas including developing data storage backup and server virtualisation strategies. The company was also able to prepare the procurement specification in full detail to ease the process, as well as managing the procurement and preparation of the tender evaluation report. Once these stages were in place, 4C was also able to offer support and project management during the all important rollout of the new infrastructure.

The fact that TVU has used 4C on several occasions is testament to the quality of service that the consultancy provides for its clients and Maggie Stephens, Director of Learning and Information Services at the University has nothing but praise for the company. "4C has undertaken a number of assignments on behalf of the University including a strategic review of our data storage. During those assignments, 4C has always demonstrated a rare ability to bring together technical expertise with business acumen and tight project management skills. Its service is always of high quality as evidenced by our continuing usage of the company."

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