

Keck Medicine of USC takes pioneering first steps to the cloud

The path to cloud computing

Managing the technology infrastructure of a major healthcare system isn't easy. Empowering employees to work remotely, removing the complexity from IT, mitigating business risks, and marching toward cloud computing requires a fearless entrepreneurial mindset and a measured, staged approach.

IT professionals at Keck Medicine constantly assess and refine the technology infrastructure that serves as the foundation for medical and business operations. Implementing a digital backbone that delivers a great employee experience, secures the technology environment, and ensures the flexibility needed to deal with business disruptions and changes in strategy are all crucial.

Christian AbouJaoude, Chief Technology Officer with Keck Medicine, notes, "Until several years ago, we were using the Citrix stack in a very traditional fashion. Picture a great deal of on-premises infrastructure and different apps delivered via a virtual desktop model," he describes. "In 2019, we invested in [Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops](#) service in order to accelerate the move to a hybrid cloud model – a strategy that is comprised of a combination of on-premises and virtual technology."

Today's Keck environment

With the help of technology partners, the IT team has now begun to expand the use of its existing Citrix technology. "In Keck Medicine's current digital technology suite, everything is managed from the Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops service environment," AbouJaoude says. "We started out with the view that the transition from Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops on-premises to Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops service would be a way to make advancements," he adds. "We were keen on leveraging our existing portfolio and expanding the use of it."

With the pre-COVID investment in moving to the cloud, Keck Medicine was able to implement and ramp up a core Azure footprint. With the onset of the pandemic, and additional investments in Citrix, IT was able to ramp up even more. This Azure and Citrix system design, currently in its early inception, now includes virtual apps and virtual workstations or virtual desktops.

Keck Medicine of USC

Industry
Healthcare

Location
USA

Citrix products

- Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops
- Citrix ADC
- Citrix SD-WAN
- Citrix Workspace

The disruptions of a pandemic

There is no way that the team could have foreseen the disruptions of a pandemic. It just happened. “Surprisingly, we were able to capitalize on the timing and the mandates that materialized during the pandemic to make a more rapid transition to remote and work from home (WFH) models than we originally planned. We created a workspace that had the look and feel of the tools we had built and deployed on-premises,” AbouJaoude notes. “Our top-of-mind goal, to institute secure mobility, was realized ahead of schedule.

“Providing access to electronic health records and other clinical apps and managing these platforms through Citrix was another benefit,” AbouJaoude elaborates.

The Citrix and Azure solution was new, so there was no past history to use as a point of reference.

Benefits for IT

In a world coping with one of the largest and most complex business disruptions in over a century, digital technology provided a host of welcome benefits – both to IT and to workers.

“For IT, a digital infrastructure not only delivers automation and easier system maintenance but also the ability to adapt to new challenges,” AbouJaoude shares. “Stringent safeguards for intellectual property and Protected Health Information (PHI) are also a critical value-add.”

Now, Keck Medicine IT professionals can alleviate many of the routine tasks they face and concentrate on their core competencies. The business result is an overall simplification of IT operations.

Benefits for workers

“Not only does our digital technology serve the needs of those in a host of different types of clinical and non-clinical job roles but employees actually get most of what they want from technology for work: simple remote access, a consistent work experience regardless of device type or network, and a familiar, follow-me digital desktop experience,” describes AbouJaoude.

The Citrix and Azure solution supports numerous personas across the various specialties throughout Keck Medicine. Not only does this include hospital workers but employees in clinics, rehabilitation facilities, and even entities such as the remote call center. Add to that the IT staff population and the employees who use workstations-on-wheels as they roam from room-to-room. The clinical and non-clinical use cases are numerous and varied.

Key Benefits

- [Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops](#) service securely delivers access to users’ apps and data regardless of time, network, device, or work location
- [Citrix ADC](#) securely provides visibility and simplicity of a single code base
- [Citrix SD-WAN](#) (PoC) optimizes the delivery of your applications on a secure, flexible WAN
- [Citrix Workspace](#) empowers companies to securely deliver the apps and data people need to be as productive as possible – no matter where they work or which devices they use

The contact center client

The contact center client that runs through Citrix now enables a remote call center, allowing employees to work from home. This is another use case developed out of necessity during the pandemic; it really took hold after the most serious health concerns abated.

The cornerstone of the solution: Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops

Even with the strides the Keck Medicine IT team has made, there is much more to do. Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops, a component of Citrix Workspace, is currently in use; however, Citrix Workspace Cloud service is not yet fully deployed. That means there is not yet a cloud.com URL for employees to access, though this is part of future plans.

The technology implementations made at Keck Medicine will lead to more infrastructure enhancements. Citrix hybrid cloud deployments deliver centralized, cloud-hosted management. They capitalize upon on-premises investments.

Summary

The first stage of the Keck Medicine journey to cloud computing can be characterized as a trade-up-and-transition scenario. The team has capitalized on existing technology and added more solution components and safeguards to become cloud-ready. Employees and IT professionals already have seen better work experiences.

“Not only does our digital technology serve the needs of those in a host of different types of clinical and non-clinical job roles, but also, employees actually get most of what they want from technology for work: simple remote access, a consistent work experience regardless of device type or network, and a familiar follow-me digital desktop experience.”

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