

InnoTech College Provides Hands-On Software Training Using CloudShare Virtual Labs

SUCCESS STORY



Company Background

With two campuses in Alberta, Canada, InnoTech College is a private vocational college focused on preparing students for a career in software, web and database development. Courses are designed specifically to provide the entry-level programming skills and knowledge relevant for today's employers. Founded in 2015, InnoTech currently offers an 8-month Computer Programming diploma program with a SharePoint specialization.

www.innotechcollege.com

The Challenge: Providing Cloud-based Virtual Labs for SharePoint Training

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Shaundra Bruvall,
Program Delivery Coordinator at
InnoTech College

With plans for a SharePoint Specialization program, it was important to InnoTech to provide students with access to SharePoint software. Not only would the college need to provide students with access to SharePoint during the instructor-led courses on site, it also needed to provide students with easy and reliable access to the learning environment from outside the classroom for homework assignments and practice.

Shaundra Bruvall, Program Delivery Coordinator at InnoTech College, was in charge of finding the best solution. Bruvall realized that buying and maintaining an on-site SharePoint system would not be cost effective for the budding college. Accordingly, she began looking for a cloud-based alternative.

"We needed a ready-made template for SharePoint 2013 All-Up WorkStation and built-in licensing for use in Canada. As it turned out, this was a greater challenge than expected as several US-based and international companies were not able to meet this requirement. Luckily, CloudShare had the template and licensing we needed," explained Bruvall.

Additional requirements for the college included the ability to create and manage individual student environments. To ensure independent hands-on work and to enable the instructor to assess each student's individual progress, it was important to make sure that each student had his/her own account and SharePoint environment.

CloudShare Solution: Fast, Convenient and Cost-Effective

"CloudShare is a game changer when it comes to saving time and overhead costs for class setup. I have one central administrator account from which I can add users and take care of any issue, as well as get usage reports for any student."

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After a thorough search process, InnoTech found that CloudShare met all of the college's functional and operational requirements. Specifically, CloudShare was able to provide the exact SharePoint 2013 All-Up template InnoTech required, including software licensing and the rights to operate in Canada.

InnoTech initially signed up for CloudShare's self-service plan as the small college needed only one administrator. While CloudShare's interface was very intuitive and easy to use, Bruvall found that manually creating and setting up each student account for a class of 20 was a cumbersome process. In addition, although in-class lab time was easy to calculate, students' out of class usage pushed them over their plan limits, increasing the college's expected costs.

Upon hearing about their issue, CloudShare's associate worked with InnoTech to develop a custom enterprise plan that would meet the college's growing requirements. Not only did the new plan solve InnoTech's overage concerns, it enabled Bruvall to quickly create accounts and set up hands-on learning environments for registered students with a single login. So instead of taking two days to set up accounts for a class of 20 students, she could do it in less than an hour.



Students easily access the SharePoint labs through a simple link. There was no need for InnoTech to install any special software or plugins on their laptops. During certain times of the year when courses overlap, up to 40 students use the learning environment concurrently.

"CloudShare is a game changer when it comes to saving time and overhead costs for class setup. I have one central administrator account from which I can add users and take care of any issue, as well as get usage reports for any student," said Shaundra Bruvall. As Bruvall is responsible for overseeing instructors, curriculum development, and student enrollment activities, reducing the overhead related to these administrative tasks was a huge benefit.

Bruvall added that one of her favorite features in CloudShare is that everyone has access to their own environment. "Other solutions we looked at had everyone using the same account. This doesn't work in a college environment, because it encourages weak students to copy from stronger students rather than working through the exercises on their own."

In addition, as instructors use an identical environment as that being used by students, it is easy for them to show students how to work through a certain process or exercise from the instructor's screen.

CloudShare's virtual hands-on labs are available for students round-the-clock for homework assignments and to practice in their spare time. In parallel, InnoTech also takes advantage of CloudShare's auto-suspend policy to curb costs by saving a session and shutting down service after a set period of inactivity.

Results and Benefits

CloudShare worked with InnoTech to tailor a cost-effective solution taking into account InnoTech's needs, current scale of operations and expected growth.

By using CloudShare's virtual training labs solution, InnoTech College has achieved concrete benefits, including:



Quick class setup

Using CloudShare's central admin account, InnoTech's administrator can perform the entire class setup process, including account creation and environment setup for more than 20 students, in less than an hour, saving substantial time and costs.



Custom-tailored solution

CloudShare worked with InnoTech to tailor a cost-effective solution taking into account InnoTech's needs, current scale of operations and expected growth. Cost-saving features, such as auto-suspension of idle labs and automated setup processes, help control costs and focus resources on teaching.



Better student experience

Students can access the CloudShare hands-on learning environment from any internet-connected computer with a single click and without installing plug-ins or software. Login is quick and easy, and students report a seamless user experience using the cloud-based service.



Flexible functionality and customized templates

CloudShare enables InnoTech administrators and instructors to create and manage classes and labs with ease and flexibility. Fully-customizable SharePoint templates with automated software package installation facilitate environment setup and enable instructors to tweak the environment as needed for their students.

About CloudShare



As the leading supplier of virtual IT environments in the cloud, CloudShare provides its clients with specialized solutions designed to meet a wide variety of business needs – including lab environments for virtual training, development and testing, and sales demos and POCs. All CloudShare environments are completely customizable and offer on-demand access to infrastructure resources such as servers, storage, networks, and software.

CloudShare customers include many leading software and cybersecurity companies, such as Palo Alto Networks, Atlassian, ForgeRock, Sophos, Dell and HP.

To learn more about how CloudShare's advanced lab solutions can benefit your business, visit us at www.cloudshare.com.

