TEST PREP SERVICE INCREASES BUSINESS REVENUE WHILE ELIMINATING COSTS

JULY 2014

AT-A-GLANCE

CUSTOMER'S BUSINESS:
Preparatory Test Service

OPPORTUNITY: Cambridge needed a more reliable LMS hosting company

SOLUTION: Moodle hosting and support from Lambda Solutions

RESULTS: Cambridge significantly increased enrollments and reduced costs

moodle

ORGANIZATION

Cambridge Educational Services provides school-based college and career preparation and supplemental curriculum services to roughly 6,000 students a year. Founded in 1990, the Chicago-based company aims to make college readiness and preparation for tests such as the ACT, SAT, and LSAT both accessible and affordable.

THE CHALLENGE

Cambridge had already begun transitioning its print and CD-based products online to a Moodle learning management system (LMS) with outsourced, cloud-based hosting. "We're a smaller company—hosting in-house would cost lots with infrastructure setup, higher internet bandwidth requirements, and other technical obstacles. We decided a dedicated host would be easier for us time-wise and provided us with Moodle experts rather than trying to figure things out on our own," says Charles McShane, Cambridge's systems administrator.

The promises of managed hosting, however, proved only as reliable as the hosting company. Unexpected outages were frequent, and technical support was unhelpful and slow. "I would usually have to wait two or three days to get a response," says McShare, "The company was difficult to deal with. We had Moodle, but it was not an enjoyable experience."

Outages posed a significant problem, not only to Cambridge's IT staff, but also to users. "Students often only have 40 minutes to complete a practice test, so even an hour-long outage can disrupt progress for hundreds of users." The final straw came with a completely unexpected and unexplained five-day outage. Cambridge knew, to protect the quality of their product and reputation, their original host company needed to be replaced.

THE SOLUTION

Cambridge had previously contracted with Lambda Solutions to write custom scripting for some of their Moodle courses. They had enjoyed the high level of service, and decided to give Lambda's managed hosting a try. "We thought, we're already using Lambda, they always turn things in on time, and their prices are great for what we get—why use another middle man?" recalls McShane.

Migration to Lambda Cloud Hosting

"At any given time we are running up to 40 or more courses and have 1,000 active users. We migrated everything and everyone. It was a big move, and Lambda was on point the whole time."

99.9% Uptime Cloud Hosting

"I don't think we've had any unscheduled downtime … I couldn't recommend Lambda hosting enough."

Responsive Support

"I get a response from Support within 30 minutes at the latest. And they never talk down to me, tech-wise. As an IT guy, I really appreciate that."

Course Customization

"We use Moodle a little bit less traditionally. Even when we come up with ideas to customize our courses that are very unorthodox, Lambda comes back to us with implementation solutions we love." Example customizations include a way to pause tests—a feature Moodle is not supposed to support—and an adaptive learning functionality that allows tests to automatically react to how well a student is doing.
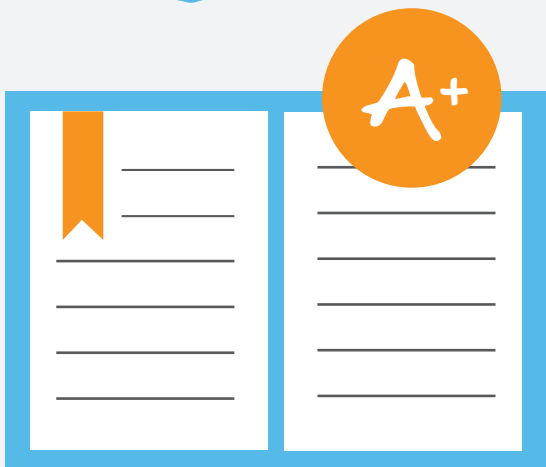
RESULTS

15 – 20% Increase in Users

Because Cambridge now has dependable LMS hosting, they feel safe pushing sales—and have increased their users by 15 to 20%. "We actually had to jump up to a bigger Lambda hosting package than we'd started with," says McShane.

Decreased Costs and Improved Margin

Thanks to the customizations Lambda has made to Cambridge's Moodle LMS, the company is able to stop printing CDs with big cost savings. Several course offerings that were too expensive to be offered in print or CD format can now be made available online at a profit.

ABOUT LAMBDA SOLUTIONS

Founded in 2002, Lambda Solutions provides learning and talent management solutions based on an open technology platform. Lambda Solutions works with both institutional and corporate clients to help them achieve better learning outcomes and develop the value of their human resources. Focused on healthcare, education and government, Lambda Solutions provides expertise, systems integration, customization, training and support to customers, including Four Seasons Hotels, Mt. Sinai Hospital, CGI, Rutgers University, and the Canadian International Development Agency. The company has offices in the United States and Canada.

Contact our team

We want to talk to you if you're looking for reliable Moodle or Totara hosting and support, or if you need customization and consulting for your existing system. Our solutions combine a choice of robust hosting platforms, seamless integration with your enterprise applications and friendly, easy to access support.

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