

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

AT-A-GLANCE

CUSTOMER'S BUSINESS:
University

PROBLEM: One of Canada's premier universities needed to dramatically scale-up online learning offerings, but didn't have the resources to manage it internally.

SOLUTION: Provide managed hosting for the university's Moodle LMS, as well as support services, training and development.

RESULTS: St. Francis Xavier University rapidly expanded its capabilities so that thousands of students and faculty are using Moodle to enhance learning.



“They said they’d guarantee 99.9 percent uptime and they’ve kept to that. It gives us a very reliable backbone infrastructure for teachers when they want to give quizzes, do marking or other things.”

- James Stewart, STFX University Supervisor of Academic Technology & Pedagogy Support.

Students and faculty at this premier Canadian university were demanding more access to online learning. The IT department had to scale up their pilot program rapidly and needed the support of experts to make it happen.

ABOUT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

Recognized as one of the finest schools in Canada, STFX is meeting the needs of today’s undergraduates through outstanding teaching, exceptional hands-on research experiences, the very best in a residential community, and unique opportunities to make a contribution to communities at home and abroad.

PROBLEM

By 2012, St. Francis Xavier University had already begun experimenting with Moodle, hosting the Learning Management System on its own campus servers to provide limited eLearning capabilities for a small number of faculty. “At first, it was just a few keepers using it, but demand for Moodle was increasing and we wanted to roll it out to the wider campus,” says STFX University Supervisor of Academic Technology & Pedagogy Support James Stewart.

“We knew we would need to get support externally for the server, so we would have coverage for bigger usage. The major obstacle was the time it would take to implement, and we’d need to pull resources, equipment and personnel into the project. To have experts come in and do the heavy lifting seemed like a very practical option.”

EVALUATION PROCESS

STFX was looking for a trusted partner who had credibility in the eLearning space already. Since Lambda Solutions was an official Moodle partner, they knew they would be in good hands.

Another significant issue was the need for managed hosting and support services provider to be available when needed. “We wanted a west coast provider because during peak hours, the offset would work better,” Stewart says. “If something goes wrong in the evening when our department was off, we didn’t want support to be missing for those evening classes. Their peak times are different from our peak times.” Lambda Solutions’ location in Vancouver and their ability to provide 24/7 support helped STFX make their

decision to move ahead with the project.

SOLUTION

In 2012, STFX contracted Lambda Solutions for managed hosting, training, custom development, support and integration. “On the integration piece in particular, we’re very happy we went with Lambda Solutions,” Stewart says. “Their expertise was invaluable. There are many companies that just could have done hosting, but Lambda Solutions’ flexibility, commitment and level of support when issues came up were extremely valuable.”

RESULTS

Moodle LMS is very reliable for students and faculty. “The uptime has been fantastic,” Stewart says. “They said they’d guarantee 99.9 percent uptime and they’ve kept to that. It gives us a very reliable backbone infrastructure for teachers when they want to give quizzes, do marking or other things.”

Enhanced learning opportunities. The scaling up of STFX’s LMS was done according to high student demand and now a very high percentage of them are using it, meaning thousands of university students access the system every term. Faculty can trust that the system will be there when they need it, making it easier for them to allocate more effort and creativity into online lessons.

Confidence in an LMS that works the way it is supposed to. A very reliable service has been added without a lot of support needing to be done on campus. “We’ll be expanding on our implementation in the coming school year. This first stage has been huge in building confidence for us, students and faculty. Now we see what’s possible.”

ABOUT LAMBDA SOLUTIONS

Exceptional Support has made Lambda Solutions a leader in Moodle Managed Hosting and Professional Services. We believe that support is a critical component to any successful implementation and use of any technology. Since 2002, we have helped many organizations deliver great e-learning experiences. We combine offerings in managed hosting, application support services, development and integration expertise, as well as training to customers in Education, Corporate Training, Healthcare and Government. Lambda Solutions is an official partner of Moodle, the world’s leading Open Source Learning Management System.