



Manager  
for Enterprise

velocity-eu

# CASE STUDY

Learn how UK-based Velocity EU used Nerdio Manager for Enterprise to migrate 1,400 higher education users to the cloud in just a week.

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Learn more: [getnerdio.com/nme](https://getnerdio.com/nme)

# About Velocity EU

Velocity EU is at the forefront of helping all types of organizations deploy managed, remote computing and communications services to employees, partners, and users. As its name suggests, Velocity EU's business model is focused on scalability and speed.

Velocity EU started in 1998 using Microsoft Windows Terminal Server to connect a thousand users to a FoxPro database. Since then, they have developed deep expertise in remote desktop solutions and unified communications. Over the years, Velocity has helped hundreds of companies, from enterprises to education institutions to small businesses, rapidly deploy integrated data and communications workspaces.

Velocity's products, such as Velocity Cloud Desktop, seamlessly integrate a corporate phone system (or PBX) with a managed corporate desktop. Velocity Cloud Desktop is a Microsoft Windows-based solution that enables companies to easily deploy and manage Windows 10 cloud desktops anywhere. The solution is a combination of Microsoft AVD, a communications platform, hardware devices, and a managed environment. The product is supplied as a managed subscription service that includes everything a user needs to operate their virtual desktop.

Velocity's solutions, including Velocity Cloud Desktop, are designed to enable remote workers to set up and start using fully integrated cloud desktop and communications capabilities in minutes. It is a capability that ended up being very important at the start of 2020.

## Situation

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in the spring of 2020, Velocity's integrated products were perfect solutions for remote work and enabling remote access to business-critical systems. While the solutions were ideal for any company, large or small, that wanted to securely enable remote workers, Velocity recognized that it needed to immediately assist educational institutions to find ways to keep students learning remotely.

"On the day the pandemic started shutting organizations down, our phones were ringing off the hook," said Al Green, CCO, Velocity EU, Inc. "We needed to help our higher education

customers figure out how to scale up remote access with limited budgets and technology limitations.”

A perfect example of this situation was BSix Brooke House College. BSix is a central London college with approximately 1,400 students and 200 staff. It offers instruction in a range of levels and subjects, including vocational courses.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020 and it became apparent that students and staff would have to be working remotely for months or longer, BSix recognized it needed to completely revamp how it delivered its services. Specifically, it needed to find a way to rapidly (in a matter of weeks) provide a comprehensive remote learning environment that would support its students and teachers.

*“At the time, none of us expected the demand for enabling remote connections to be so urgent. Or how quickly we’d need to deliver those systems. Our customers were asking for something the next day, or the next week.”* – **Al Green, CCO, Velocity EU, Inc**

An additional challenge for BSix is that like many other educational institutions, it had not traditionally designed its internal systems and communications architecture around remote learning. Instead, it had focused on on-premises hardware and software. BSix had about 1,000 traditional desktop computers and about 40 mobile devices. For telephone communications, the college was entirely dependent on a legacy PBX phone system located on premises. The only existing remote connectivity the college had was a virtual private network (VPN) implemented via Zscaler for a limited number of staff. Scaling up this solution was prohibitive because of cost and technology limitations.

However, the college was lucky in that, in conjunction with Velocity, it had already started to put in place a hybrid architecture with good connectivity and hardware that could enable a migration to full cloud infrastructure. The infrastructure was based on the Microsoft stack, from Microsoft Windows to Microsoft Active Directory, Microsoft Azure, Office 365, SharePoint, and more. The college relied upon on-premises file storage and additional client/server applications to manage and deliver the curriculum.

To survive the pandemic and support its students, BSix needed to migrate its existing on-premises IT infrastructure to a cloud-based infrastructure through which it could redeploy those 1,000 traditional desktops as cloud-based virtual services to students and teachers. It also needed to find a way to enable cloud-based telephone communications in a scalable and cost-effective way.

And, to top it off, all this had to be done almost instantly.

## **Solution**

To get started, BSix engaged Velocity to help them design an integrated, cloud-based infrastructure that would support remote learning and teaching, as well as seamlessly integrate telephone communications.

While Velocity had plenty of experience in the education, health care, and enterprise markets enabling remote workers, it never had to do it in such a compressed time frame.

The first part of the solution was straightforward. Velocity first examined cloud-based options for BSix, including Amazon Workspaces. However, since BSix was already using Microsoft solutions, Velocity made the recommendation to move the existing college desktop computers to Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) running on Azure to provide a virtualized Windows environments for remote students and staff.

## **Migrating to the Cloud**

In a short period of time, Velocity was able to migrate all of BSix's existing applications (including bespoke ones) into the new AVD environment. It also moved all the college's teaching resources from the on-premises network to a cloud-based SharePoint instance, enabling all remote teachers and students to access them.

Another consideration for BSix was how to enable digitally challenged students who didn't currently have access to a computer. To manage that, Velocity procured, supplied, and deployed three hundred laptops for low-income students. It also supplied two hundred new managed laptops for BSix staff.

On the telecom side, Velocity was also able to transition BSix from their legacy PBX platform to a fully managed, cloud-based PBX solution that worked seamlessly across many multiple remote locations.

But once Velocity had the infrastructure, hardware, and telephone infrastructure figured out, it still had a critical challenge ahead to meet BSix's requirement for getting students and staff back up and effective in the new virtual learning environment as fast as possible.

## Management

While the new cloud infrastructure could support a thousand or more virtual users, Velocity needed to find a way to quickly scale up the deployment and management of those users and virtual environments. Otherwise, BSix would have to invest enormous amounts of resources in time and staff to manage each of the 1,000+ virtual azure desktop instances.

Using the native Microsoft capabilities would provide a solution for BSix, but one that would require significant time and resources. Another alternative would be to use Velocity's internal automation toolkit in combination with expanded internal and technical support, but with time constraints so tight, and the need to get students and teachers back up and engaged with the educational process as quickly as possible, it wasn't an ideal solution.

Additional analysis provided Velocity with a third alternative: to partner with the best automation tool vendor and partner closely with them. That's the route that Velocity chose.

*“After careful evaluation of automation vendors and tools, we decided that the Nerdio Manager platform was the best solution for BSix. Nerdio is comprehensive, and it did exactly what we needed. – Al Green, CCO, Velocity EU, Inc*

## Results

For Velocity and BSix, a key part of coming up with a solution was leveraging Nerdio Manager for Enterprise's capabilities for easily and automatically deploying and managing Microsoft virtual desktops. “Nerdio was on the same page with us. We engaged right away with key

people at Nerdio and were able to get it to do everything we needed it to do,” said Green.

The results were almost immediate. Even under rapidly changing circumstances brought on by the pandemic, Velocity was able to use Nerdio Manager for Enterprise and the Microsoft stack of technologies to deploy a proof-of-concept within twenty-four hours for a complete re-platforming of BSix’s core systems from an on-premises architecture to a cloud-based architecture.

After careful testing and analysis, BSix gave Velocity the authorization to proceed with the full project.

*“Within one week, Velocity had used Nerdio Manager to scale BSix’s cloud deployment to a full production of 1,400 users.”* – **AI Green, CCO, Velocity EU, Inc**

The project was tremendously successful, and all students and teachers were able to complete the rest of the year with full, integrated access to BSix’s educational systems.

“Nerdio was a core part of our success story with BSix college,” said Green.

In fact, the unexpected transformation to a cloud-based infrastructure was so successful, that BSix has extended the project with Velocity to additionally replace all its desktop computers with AVD terminals in areas of heavy use, such as libraries and labs.

In addition, BSix has also chosen to standardize their desktop delivery going forward on the Velocity Cloud Desktop platform.

*“Our customers absolutely love the cloud-based solution using Nerdio Manager. The fact that everything we now deliver going forward for them will be based on AVD just demonstrated how successful this solution has been.”*  
– **AI Green, CCO, Velocity EU, Inc**



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## About Nerdio

Nerdio empowers IT Professionals to deploy, manage, and auto-scale Azure Virtual Desktop. Created to address the technical and security requirements of enterprise customers, Nerdio Manager for Enterprise is ideal for IT Professionals looking to deploy and manage large AVD environments and can be connected to an existing AVD setup or used to stand up a new AVD deployment. Nerdio Manager for Enterprise is an all-PaaS Azure application that runs in a customer's own Azure subscription, making it one of the most secure and compliant solutions on the market. For more information, visit [www.getnerdio.com/nme](http://www.getnerdio.com/nme).

Contact Us:

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Email: [hello@getnerdio.com](mailto:hello@getnerdio.com)

Website: [getnerdio.com/nme](http://getnerdio.com/nme)

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