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Pomona earns top marks in IT:
80% cost savings and a 90% drop in complexity with Nerdio

Pomona College

Industry: Higher Education
Platform: Nerdio Manager for Enterprise
Region: Clairmont, California

RESULTS

80%
Cost savings by switching to Nerdio Manager for Enterprise.

10
Servers eliminated— reduced to a single, one-click environment.

Zero
Major disruption for end users—transition completed with minimal help desk impact.
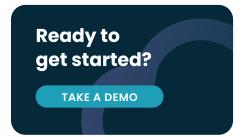
Challenge

- Urgent pivot to remote desktops overnight during the pandemic for a previously all on-campus college.

- Complex, overbuilt legacy solution that was costly and painful to support.

- Escalating license fees even as usage needs declined post-pandemic.

Solution

- Simplified setup: No extra servers, cloud connectors, or packaging infrastructure—just install, point, and manage.

- Automated maintenance: Patching, image updates, and host pool refreshes run effortlessly.

- Freed up IT time & reduced stress, shifting from "just getting by" to proactive innovation with AVD + Nerdio.

Ready to get started?

TAKE A DEMO

"With Nerdio, it was just: install the app, tell it what to manage, and you're off. No cloud connectors, no separate packaging servers, no clutter."

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For Steven Hurtado, Pomona College isn't just a workplace—it's home.

"I've been at Pomona for over 16 years. I started as a student worker in the IT department, and I never really left," he said, laughing.

Now serving as Manager of Digital User Experience, Steven sits at the intersection of infrastructure and end-user support, ensuring that faculty, staff, and students can connect to what they need—without friction. But back in 2020, the IT team at Pomona, a small liberal arts college in Southern California, was facing a problem no one had anticipated.

"We're a residential campus. Everyone is physically here. Before the pandemic, we had almost no need for virtual desktops," Steven explained. "And then, overnight, we had to pivot."

A fast fix that didn't last

In the rush to support remote access, Pomona looked at available options. At the time, Azure Virtual Desktop (then still in beta as Windows Virtual Desktop) wasn't mature enough for production use, so Pomona selected another tool.

> *"It got us through the pandemic. But it was clunky, overengineered for our needs, and support was a nightmare. If I didn't mark a ticket as urgent, I'd get a callback in the middle of the night, regardless of time zones."*
>
> **Steven Hurtado, Pomona College's Manager of Digital User Experience**

The cost didn't help. As Pomona's needs decreased post-pandemic, they looked to reduce license count to match usage, but renewal prices went up. It was time to look for other options.

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A new path forward—with a familiar name

As Pomona evaluated alternatives, Azure Virtual Desktop was now a stable, full-featured option. Their managed services provider suggested adding Nerdio to the mix.

"Our MSP told us, 'If you're going with AVD, you'll want Nerdio.' And they were right."

From the beginning, Nerdio impressed.

"They onboarded us for free, helped us get everything set up, and never pressured us. It showed confidence in the product. That kind of investment from a vendor means a lot."

From 10 servers to one click

Previously, Pomona needed eight to ten virtual servers just to run the environment—on top of their AVD workloads. Nerdio eliminated that complexity.

"With Nerdio, it was just: install the app, tell it what to manage, and you're off. No cloud connectors, no separate packaging servers, no clutter."

Steven Hurtado, Pomona College's Manager of Digital User Experience

Better still, Nerdio automated the most time-consuming tasks—like monthly patching, image updates, and re-imaging host pools.

"That first month where everything updated automatically—the image, the apps, the host pools—it was a moment of: wow. It just worked."

A seamless switch—and a better experience

Steven expected some pain during the transition. Instead, it was smooth—even for end users.

"From the user's perspective, it was basically the same. You go to a portal, click your desktop, and get to work. We didn't get flooded with help desk calls. Just a few questions here and there. That was a huge win."

And compared to their previous licensing costs, Pomona found Nerdio much more affordable.

"With Nerdio, we get exactly what we need—for a fraction of the cost."

Looking ahead: Intune, imaging, and the art of the possible

Now that Pomona's virtual environment is running smoothly, Steven is thinking bigger. Inspired by NerdioCon, he's exploring advanced image optimization, smarter app deployment, and potential integrations between Nerdio and Microsoft Intune.

"We used to be in survival mode—just keep things working. Now we can actually think about how to do things better."

He's particularly excited about packaging applications more dynamically and using Nerdio to potentially manage physical devices that fall under their minimum license threshold.

"If we're already under the spend limit, why not use Nerdio to manage some of our on-prem PCs too? It's something we're definitely looking at."

A full-circle moment

For Steven, the story comes full circle: a former student who now helps lead Pomona's digital transformation—bringing simplicity, speed, and value to a college he knows better than anyone.

"Nerdio's helped us shift from just getting by to actually improving. It's freed up our time and reduced our stress. For a small college like ours, that makes a real difference."

Steven Hurtado, Pomona College's Manager of Digital User Experience

Get in Touch

Learn how Nerdio Manager simplifies and cost optimizes the deployment and management of native Microsoft cloud technologies.

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CS71525000

WEB   www.getnerdio.com
EMAIL   hello@getnerdio.com