

Oregon State University:

College of Business shifts to smart lab management with Nerdio and AVD



Industry: Education

Platform: Nerdio Manager for Enterprise

Region: United States

RESULTS

Reduced

Costs by only running compute when needed

Delivered

Twice the compute power to students

40%

Of the IT team's time using automation saved



Challenges

- Needed a flexible, cost-effective solution to modernize its student lab.
- Existing on-premises Omnisca Horizon environment was costly and inflexible.
- Current systems unable to meet the dynamic needs of students.



Solutions

- Transitioned to Azure Virtual Desktop with Nerdio Manager for Enterprise
- Enabled on-demand access to resources for students and faculty.
- Implemented automated scaling for cost-effective management.

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"The flexibility and customization we have now weren't possible with our previous solution... We're saving at least 40% of our time, and it's changed our work-life balance."

Oregon State University

Oregon State University's (OSU) College of Business found itself at a crossroads: stick with a complex Omnisys Horizon setup or take a bold leap with Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) and Nerdio. By choosing the latter, OSU transformed its student labs into a flexible, scalable powerhouse—perfectly tuned to meet the demands of modern learning.

With only four full-time staff plus student helpers, the lift became burdensome from both resource and cost perspectives, prompting a move to Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD).

"For the past 30 years, we have run an open-use computer lab where students come in, log in, and use a machine out of a pool of machines," explained Alan Sprague, OSU College of Business IT Manager. "The hardware churn of running an on-premises Horizon environment was just starting to kill us."

Transitioning to the cloud

The team needed a flexible and scalable virtual desktop environment to manage an open-use computer lab with 120 machines that weren't tied to dedicated users but rather used as a resource pool for students logging in and out throughout the day.

While exploring Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop, they were introduced to Nerdio, and quickly learned that Nerdio was not only a premier Microsoft partner but also a game-changer for transitioning to AVD.

Automation to the rescue

One of the core benefits of Nerdio's platform was automation. In traditional setups, virtual machines (VMs) would remain on, racking up expenses regardless of usage. Nerdio, however, automated the scaling process so that machines powered up when a student logged in and powered down when no longer needed.

"We only needed ArcGIS for one term a year, and the cost of maintaining Nvidia-powered infrastructure year-round was astronomical," Noah Estes, OSU College of Business operating system network analyst explained. "Leveraging Azure and Nerdio's automation, we were able to significantly reduce these costs, renting compute power only when needed. Spinning up services, using them during class, and spinning them back down afterward gave us the agility we never had with Horizon."



Going beyond simple on/off functionality, Nerdio Manager's automation allowed them to swap between high-performance SSDs during active use and lower-cost storage afterward, further driving down costs.

"The flexibility and customization we have now weren't possible with our previous solution,"

Noah Estes, Operating System Network Analyst at OSU College of Business

Cost control and scalability

Moving from a CAPEX-heavy model with VMware to an OPEX model with AVD and Nerdio gave OSU budgetary predictability and allowed them to forecast technology spend more accurately.

"Instead of requesting \$70,000 every five years, we now have a manageable annual line item," Sprague explained. This shift gave the IT team peace of mind and allowed them to direct funds toward other strategic initiatives.

A blueprint for campus-wide efficiency

The success of the College of Business's implementation has set a precedent across the Oregon State University campus. Other departments, some still managing on-premises systems and manual computer imaging, have begun to look toward Nerdio as a viable solution.

As Sprague said, "We're the proof of concept, and now the campus can leverage our efforts. We've already done the heavy lifting, which will help other schools go from zero to live labs in a week."

A more efficient, empowered IT team

Nerdio's platform has transformed the way the team manages resources, allowing them to focus on higher-value tasks rather than hardware maintenance. They no longer face the late-night calls to troubleshoot server issues.



"I don't have to run to the labs at odd hours or sacrifice weekends," Noah reflected. "We're saving at least 40% of our time, and it's changed our work-life balance."

Enabling the next era of learning

Ultimately, Nerdio has provided a solution that's tailored to the team's unique needs and sets them up for future growth. With Nerdio's help, the College can deliver twice the compute power to its students—providing enhanced services and capabilities in a streamlined, cost-effective way.

We've gained control, flexibility, and scalability without sacrificing the autonomy we need to support our students," Sprague concluded.

About Oregon State University College of Business

Founded in 1908, the Oregon State University College of Business serves about 4,500 undergraduate students and 400 graduate students, offering more than 25 business and design degrees designed to produce graduates that are "profession-ready."

About Nerdio

Nerdio is a leading provider of powerful, simplified cloud management solutions for businesses of all sizes. Trusted by managed service providers (MSPs) and enterprise IT departments alike, Nerdio equips organizations with seamless, cost-effective management tools for Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), Windows 365, and comprehensive Modern Work solutions.

With thousands of customers worldwide, Nerdio accelerates cloud adoption, enabling companies to thrive in an era of hybrid work by providing modern, future-proof technology that adapts to evolving workplace needs.

For more information, please visit **www.getnerdio.com**.



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