

Benefits of Migrating to the Cloud

How UAT successfully migrated Anthology Student from on-premises to the cloud and enhanced processes.



Founded in 1983, the University of Advancing Technology (UAT) is an intimate community of learners, educators, and staff in Tempe, Arizona. Focused on educating students in advancing technology who desire to innovate for the future, UAT uniquely integrates the values of a traditional institution with a modern technology campus.

INSTITUTION TYPE:
FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE

LOCATION:
TEMPE, ARIZONA

ORGANIZATION SIZE:
900

GRADUATE ENROLLMENT:
100

ANTHOLOGY PRODUCT:

Student 



The Challenge

With a name like University of Advancing Technology, there's an added expectation that the institution continually seeks opportunities to improve processes through advanced technology. One such chance came in the form of migrating **Anthology® Student** from on-premises to the cloud. UAT had adopted the student information system (SIS) early on and, over the years, evolved it into a more customized version. This investment in and familiarity with the on-premises system created some reluctance to migrate to the cloud. "I think the biggest, most intimidating hurdle for us is we're losing that control we grew so used to having. The easy thing we used to fix in the back end is now being executed by Anthology," said Tyler Walling, client system administrator at the University of Advancing Technology.

However, as an on-premises user, UAT could not take advantage of the Anthology Student tools optimized for the cloud. It was time for the institution to embrace the cloud to meet security regulations, enhance processes, and access features in the Student Web App.

"The biggest challenge of getting an on-prem customer to go to the cloud when they're not completely switching systems is what are they going to do now that they've lost this control. And the answer is: sleep at night."



Raymond Blackwood

Vice President of Product Management, Anthology



The Solution

The migration from on-premises to the cloud is not a question of if, but when. With the future of Student in the cloud, UAT began taking steps to start the transition. With the support of Anthology, key leaders of UAT initiated a steering committee and started the process of modernizing their SIS. Anthology partnered with the institution to help create a project plan, including moving data over to the new location, changing security and user interfaces, and migrating reports that were written in the legacy technology into the new technology. (Post migration, UAT continues to hold weekly committee meetings to review release notes and any issues.)

"The committee was comprised of people who could represent the different departments of users . . . to make sure that we were covering all of our bases," said Valerie Cimarossa, chief marketing and chief technology officer at the University of Advancing Technology. "Not forgetting about your customizations or not forgetting about this report or making sure that this is still going to be there. What do you need to have up and running immediately once it kicks over?"





We want institutions to just be consumers of the application, not administrators. At the end of the day, it's so much less stress and so much less work and so much less cost on the institution to maintain those systems that make the application work behind the scenes."

Raymond Blackwood

Vice President of Project Management, Anthology

Around 80% of Anthology Student users are fully embracing the cloud version at UAT. "When we did this migration, one of our main goals was to get everybody using the web client to its fullest capacity," said Walling. "That's what we've been pushing towards. We hope to lure people away from using the desktop version, especially since enhancements or features kind of go away; they're going to be created in the web client version instead." For the remaining 20%, Walling and other members of the IT team will sit down with them as much as possible to work through some of the processes—assisting them with, for example, scheduling payments in the web client version.

"The biggest fear was all the customization we've done over the past however many years that we've been using on-prem, getting those to migrate or figuring out if we even need those customizations anymore, most of which we really didn't, which is great because we were able to get rid of those things," said Jeff Verbus, IT manager at the University of Advancing Technology. "It was primarily the fear of, is it going to work when we move? But it did."

For any institution on the fence about Anthology Student cloud migration, Verbus offered this advice: "Just do it. Everything will fall into place. Just make sure you cover all of your areas. If you have customization, make sure that that's going to move, or you know how to work around it with a procedure or something that's already built into Anthology."



**Insights
Delivered**

Moving from on-premises to the cloud means that UAT no longer has the burden of managing the infrastructure, security, access controls, and system upgrades. "We were always a couple of versions behind for whatever reasons, which is usually our end using something custom and trying to figure that out, whereas now we're on the latest version, everything's good," said Walling.

UAT also benefits from cloud features like report builder, data view, and a fully functional and searchable help menu. "If there's something missing on the fly, I know we have a number of people that go through the web client and say, 'Hey, I need access to this feature' and will literally send us a screenshot using the help menu," said Walling.

While it's important to consider a range of views and get buy-in for any institution making the move to the cloud, UAT recommends identifying one party or department to make the final decision.

“It’s cleaner and less scary for IT these days because before, we had everything so customized, and it required somebody using SQL or some other tool to make that happen for all of the complicated little things that we had in our processes.”

Valerie Cimarossa

Chief Marketing and Chief Technology Officer
University of Advancing Technology



Epilogue

After 10 years of development, web application features continue to grow for Anthology Student, with a focus on financial aid, compliance, automation, and student advising. In the near future, the cloud will enable more innovations for institutions, including the power to access AI. The next steps for UAT include considering the automation piece of the platform for financial aid. “It’s going to be a fantastic opportunity to get that up and running and help out the people in financial aid and where they can do their job a whole lot better,” said Walling.

The Anthology product management organization comprises individuals who have spent some time working on campuses. Understanding an institution’s operations and needs is the foundation for a stronger partnership and deeper support. While Blackwood and his team prioritize every customer, Blackwood’s connection with UAT runs deep. An alumnus and former University of Advancing Technology employee, Blackwood was recently awarded **UAT’s inaugural Lifetime Impact Award**.



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Student 

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