Case Study

University of Alberta Lowers IT Costs While Increasing Value using ComSci

upland
ComSci

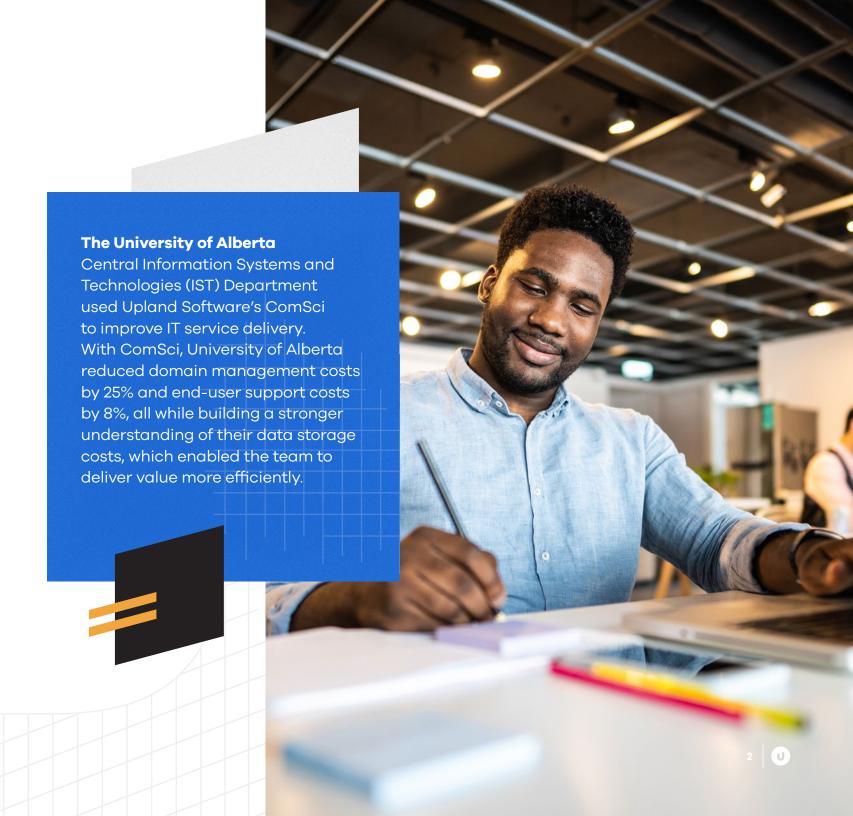The University of Alberta in Edmonton is one of the top teaching and research universities in Canada, with an international reputation for excellence across the humanities, sciences, creative arts, business, engineering and health sciences.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The University of Alberta Central Information Systems and Technologies (IST) Department used Upland Software's ComSci to improve IT service delivery. With ComSci, University of Alberta reduced domain management costs by 25% and end-user support costs by 8%, all while building a stronger understanding of their data storage costs, which enabled the team to deliver value more efficiently.

How can you meet increased service demands with a smaller budget?

Problem

Lack of visibility into service costs made it difficult to identify cost-saving opportunities. Facing significant funding cuts, the University of Alberta knew it needed to consolidate IT resources and service provision, but didn't have a breakdown of services and costs. A cost model built in Excel provided a detailed look, but the data in it was static and wasn't integrated into other systems, making the document both unwieldy and lacking in credibility.

Solution

ComSci supported the development of an IT service catalog along with best-practice cost allocation methodology. The ComSci IT Financial Management (ITFM) product gave UAlberta's IST department unprecedented visibility into their IT costs and made it possible to identify opportunities to improve. Now, existing time-tracking, service management, and HR management software feed into ComSci, replacing cumbersome Excel spreadsheets with timely, up-to-date, and credible data. The IST team uses ComSci's Service Costing, IT Planning, and Cloud Cost Management modules to work more efficiently and provide 15 separate people with monthly service and labor cost allocation reports.

> *"Upland ComSci is fantastic to work with. They've become a partner to us and have helped to demonstrate value and conduct more informed conversations within IST and with our clients."*
>
> **– Cheryl Earle**
> Director of Finance, Administration and Human Resources, IST, University of Alberta.

UAlberta reduced costs by 8% in end user support and by 25% in domain management using Upland ComSci.

High-touch, onsite implementation and support

Due to disparate data from multiple data sources, the University of Alberta's IT department was not able to uniquely identify individual departments for service and cost allocation. The ComSci team collaborated with Cheryl Earle to create a unique key and to leverage automated ingestion of department data. The team also conducted onsite training sessions on maintaining the new ITFM model.

Post-implementation, the industry experts in ComSci's Managed Services team not only continue to perform all back-office tasks, but they also meet regularly with UAlberta to recommend best practices and process improvements, and to advise on any new use cases. The meetings were held weekly for the first year, and then switched to monthly based on UAlberta's preference. The meeting cadence will increase as needed as we work together on UAlberta's future strategic initiatives, one of which is setting up a Bill of Services to provide visibility of technology costs back to the various business units.

Results

University of Alberta's IST department is now viewed as a valued business partner. It aimed to reduce end user support costs by 11% over two years, and after just one year with ComSci ITFM, it was well on its way. Unprecedented visibility into IT costs shined a spotlight on opportunities for improvement, such as moving to remote support that saves the team both travel time and costs.

As a result, conversations with IST clients have become more strategic. ComSci visibility has allowed the department to demonstrate the value of consolidating IT domains in the central University of Alberta domain and to replace many separate, resource-intensive hardware environments that once required regular upgrades. UAlberta IST has slashed the per-account cost of maintaining domains by a full quarter and has rationalized storage practices to save thousands of dollars per year.

Results for UAlberta

25%
reduction
per-account cost of domain maintenance

8%
decrease
in end-user support costs in the first year after implementing ComSci

Upland Software (Nasdaq: UPLD) is a leader in cloud-based tools for digital transformation. The Upland Cloud enables thousands of organizations to engage with customers on key digital channels, optimize sales team performance, manage project and IT costs, and automate critical document workflows.

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