

# Case Study



**MCPHS**

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE of PHARMACY and HEALTH SCIENCES

## Customer Profile

**U.S. Region:** Northeast

**Industry:** Education

**Founded:**

**Number of Students:** Over 5,000

**Number of Employees:**

**Web Address:** [www.mcphs.edu](http://www.mcphs.edu)



## Background:

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS) is Boston's oldest institution of higher education. This majestic institute of higher education is spread over three campuses offering more than 47 degree and certificate programs that guide students toward successful, sustainable careers and leadership positions in a wide range of health care fields. MCPHS is continually challenged to enhance the research and learning opportunities for its approximately 5,000 students, who are spread across three geographically diverse campuses.

Medicine and technology go hand-in-hand. The Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences is committed to attracting the best faculty and student success. As technology and health sciences continue their rapid pace of innovation, MCPHS is continually updating its own technology. The College's

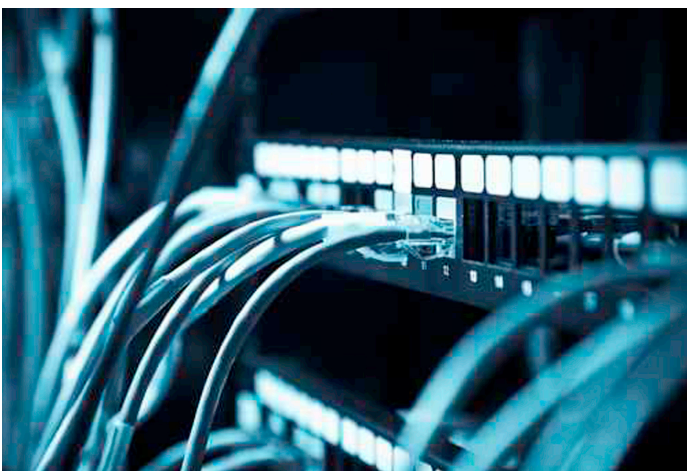
state of the art laboratories and classrooms are described by students as exciting movie theater environments. MCPHS also has an increasingly mobile student and faculty population that needs to be able to access personalized information whenever they are within the campus system.

It is a challenge to keep three campuses, numerous laboratories, and computer environments up-to-date with the latest software. The success of the IT department's mission has broad implications for the college. If the students are to succeed, they need access to research and the right software applications.



## Business Challenge:

The rigorous demands of the technology environments within the college meant that the information services team needed every available minute during the summer semester to update the computer systems. This process required a lengthy period of research, planning and physical installation that inevitably



encountered problems. Additionally, with a growing user population, the cost to support this high-tech educational environment was becoming unwieldy.

Further, for the college, its research, data, and applications are its lifeblood. As the first institute of higher education in Boston, the college has a strong heritage of leadership in advanced learning and technological innovation. MCPHS determined it needed to strengthen its disaster recovery systems to protect its critical assets.

MCPHS strives to keep its operational costs contained and relies heavily on its small IT staff

to optimize the student learning experience. MCPHS augments its internal team with critical partners. The college had worked previously with Mosaic Technology on its storage environment and had seen firsthand Mosaic's dedication to its customer's success.

## The Solution:

The college's focus on pharmacy and health sciences meant that the desktop must accommodate a broad range of applications, including online tools that are used heavily. It was clear that finding a way to streamline the management of applications and users' desktops would deliver significant benefits to the college.

The decision to deploy a virtualized desktop infrastructure (VDI) became the obvious choice. In a college environment, the IT systems need to be nearly always accessible. For students and faculty there isn't a typical 9am – 5pm workday. The network is also flooded with requests for information every 90 minutes when classes end and users are concurrently accessing the network.

*“Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences is committed to the most progressive standards in teaching and learning. That approach also applies to technology.”*

*Tom Scanlon, Chief Information Officer,  
Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.*



Mosaic conducted a thorough examination of the MCPHS network to determine the best approach for a new virtual desktop infrastructure and disaster recovery system. The program's success was dependent upon Mosaic understanding the profile of the users accessing the network and performance metrics.

Mosaic's analysis of the network considered the activities of students and faculty during the busiest time of the year when students are registering for courses, ordering books, and setting up their network preferences for the coming semester. These processing intensive tasks occur concurrently during the first of the semester and needed to be considered when designing the College's VDI system.

Mosaic used the data captured during these peak workload periods to test the new VDI environment being created for MCPHS. To ensure a seamless migration for the college, Mosaic set up the new VDI network in its own facility and initiated a rigorous series of tests emulating a production environment. There was some initial hesitation about the transition to VDI given the college's workloads and processing intensive applications. Mosaic was able to demonstrate that the new VDI environment could support MCPHS concurrent users, reduce costs, and provide the same levels of reliability the students and faculty expected. The in-house testing environment that Mosaic created for MCPHS allowed Mosaic to integrate all the necessary hardware and applications to ensure that when the system was deployed, it was ready for production instantly.

In addition, Mosaic designed and deployed a new disaster recovery solution and storage

system that was designed to improve its business agility well into the future. The solution ensures that if one campus encounters an issue, the information will remain accessible. The disaster recovery system is located at one of the campuses not housing the production network.

Mosaic was also tapped to supply and integrate VMware's VDI with the college's new Dell EqualLogic storage system, disaster recovery solution, and various other software components. By simplifying the deployment of a new physical and virtual infrastructure, Mosaic created a technical foundation optimized for performance and availability, and—most importantly—helped MCPHS enhance the overall student experience.



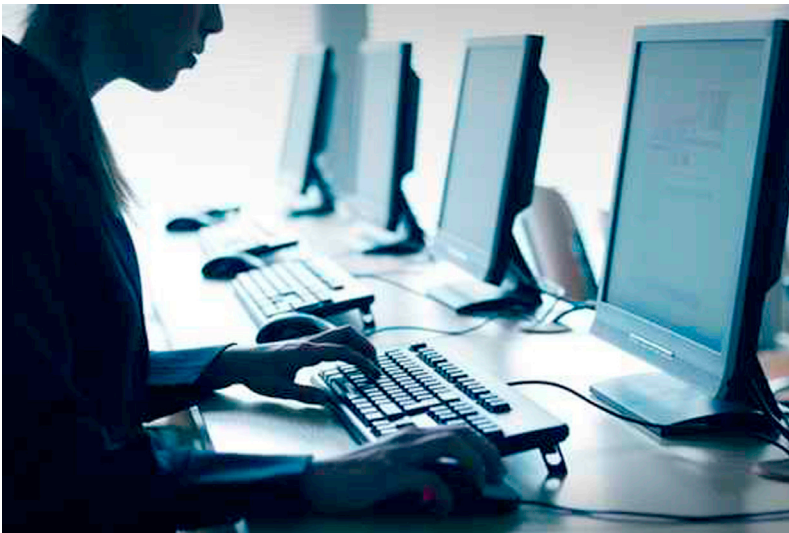
## The Benefits:

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Services deployed 500 virtual desktops throughout its three campuses. The results were impressive from both an IT and user perspective.

MCPHS has been able to streamline its data center resources, reduce infrastructure costs, and transform the way students and teachers access and share information. The new architecture has dramatically improved the college IT department's response time. Applications can be installed, upgraded and patched, then securely delivered over the network to any student's virtual desktop. This reduces costs for MCPHS by eliminating the financial and time investment previously required to manage and support individual computers. In the future, MCPHS plans to roll out Windows 7 with VDI, and replace the majority of staff desktops with thin clients and VDI.

*"We really appreciate everything about doing business with Mosaic. They were there for us in the beginning, the end, and then some. That's a value that's not always there."*

*Tom Scanlon, CIO, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences*



## Mosaic Partners Deployed:

- VMWare
- Dell

## Mosaic Partner Products Deployed:

- VMWare View
- Dell Equallogic Storage

## Hardware

- Dell Equallogic Storage at 10GB

## Results

- Provided VMWare View architecture which streamlined data center resources, reduced infrastructure costs, and transformed the way students and teachers access and share information.
- Demonstrated that the VMWare platform was able to dramatically improve the college IT department's response time.
- Built confidence among Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences' end-user community about the performance of larger workloads on Dell Equallogic and VMWare.
- Brought Dell Equallogic and VMWare best practices to the table in the analysis and tuning of applications to facilitate large-scale adoption.
- Reduced costs for MCPHS by eliminating the financial and time investment previously required to manage and support individual computers.