Cloud Deployments @Institutions

Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI)	HEAnet/ Ireland	November 2017

Why the cloud?

QQi needed to improve a vital, mission-critical legacy application that was operating on outdated hardware, inefficient software and overburdened databases.

The application was extremely visible; spanning multiple systems, educational course information, public data and a high traffic public interface.

Microsoft Azure

QQI decided to move away from the costly data centre-based solution and embark on a gradual migration of the application to the cloud with Microsoft Azure, alongside

significant peaks and valleys in capacity demand.

QQI evaluated more methods to simplify infrastructure and support models, and to reduce costs. The launch of the GÉANT IaaS Cloud Framework in 2017 brought even more advantages HEAnet helped QQI realign their existing contractual arrangement with Microsoft. Using GÉANT's framework agreement brought significant cost savings, through usage discounts and data traffic arrangements. Microsoft's licensing plans were further optimised by transferring existing on-premise educational license agreements

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adoption of Office 365. The Azure model gave them the flexibility and scalability they needed. While the software application remained the same QQI was able to refine and gradually upgrade components, move from a single front-end to three, and manage the

into the Azure cloud. The 'Bring Your Own License' element of the GÉANT framework, which Microsoft offers through their Azure Hybrid Benefit program, helped maximise value from existing server licenses.

Offering

- Microsoft Azure

Next Steps

QQI plans to strengthen their reliance on cloud based IT solutions. Recognising the momentum created, new functionalities are constantly being asked explored.

Mitigating Risks

Like most R&E institutions, QQI was concerned about data protection and security. The GÉANT framework agreement ensured vendor compliance with EU data protection law. Microsoft's efforts to ensure they pass all security audits were welcome and QQI felt they could not have achieved such a high level of security on their own.

Lessons Learned

QQI's use of the GÉANT IaaS framework, with usage discounts, reduction of data traffic costs and transfer of existing on-premise server licenses, brought the actual total costs down by 33%. With the deployment of other services on Azure, the cost savings are probably even higher.

"After moving 98% of our infrastructure in Azure, we don't have to worry about the physical hardware and administrative and contract costs are much lower," says Dr. Ray O'Neill, Head of ICT and Procurement. "Taking all this into consideration, the value of HEAnet facilitating our migration to the cloud is really immeasurable."

NREN Support

HEAnet played an important role helping QQI maximise the GÉANT framework. HEAnet is more than just QQI's connectivity provider; they are considered a trusted advisor. "Using GÉANT's framework agreement with Microsoft brought QQI significant cost savings," says Garvan McFeeley, HEAnet's Brokerage Services Manager. "Usage discounts and data traffic arrangements led to a significant reduction in costs".
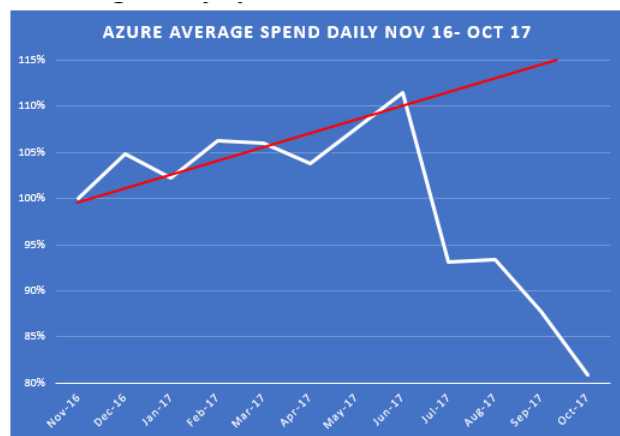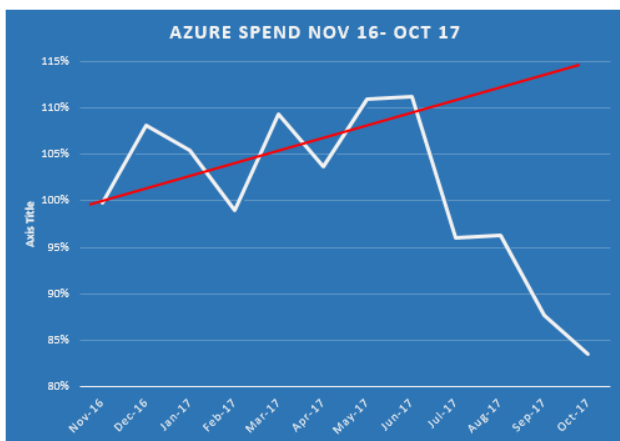
For more information, please visit https://clouds.geant.org/