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Storage innovation fueling research and university expansion

Deakin University accelerates research innovation, student growth and digital learning with scalable, high-availability storage

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
eSolutions

Higher Education | Australia

Organization needs

Innovative research, teaching and digital learning have contributed to Deakin University's growth from 25,000 to 60,000 students in 12 years. With Dell EMC PowerScale, Deakin's IT team has managed tenfold storage growth, satisfied explosive demand for research storage capacity, and spent more time on software innovation.
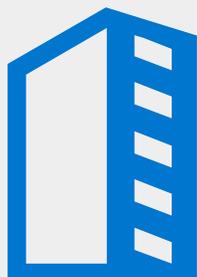
Solutions at a glance

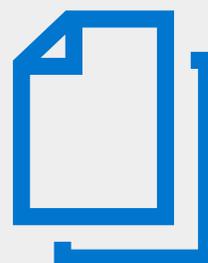- Dell EMC PowerScale

- VMware

Organization results

- Smooth path toward expanded digital learning

- Storage automation enabled more time for software innovation

- Swift response to explosive demand for research data

- Minimal staff time required for significant migration

- 1-petabyte migration without any disruption to staff, students or services

Managed
tenfold storage growth
with ease

High-availability
access
to files

Deakin University in Australia has cause to celebrate. In 12 years, the award-winning institution grew from approximately 25,000 to 60,000 students and is now ranked in the top 1 percent by the Academic Ranking of World Universities. Deakin's robust investment in innovative research, teaching and digital learning has contributed to its success. With increasing data requirements, Deakin's Dell EMC PowerScale storage infrastructure also grew from 240 terabytes to 2.4 petabytes—a tenfold increase.

Craig Warren, deputy chief digital officer, Deakin University, states, "We've stayed with Dell Technologies for 12 years because the solutions have met our technical needs extremely well. PowerScale has helped us deliver exceptional service and software innovation to Deakin while managing exponential infrastructure growth with ease."

Deakin's PowerScale systems store student file shares, Blackboard online learning, home directories and research data, among other environments. The infrastructure is virtualized with VMware solutions.

Upgrading the airplane in flight

Deakin's IT team has handled four PowerScale migrations. The most recent one was the biggest yet. Ryan Parker-Hill, systems leader, Deakin University, recalls, "It took two weeks of staff time to move roughly 1.3 petabytes of data to PowerScale, and there was absolutely no disruption to any of our staff, students or services. It was like replacing every part on an aircraft in flight and landing with a brand-new plane. A junior systems administrator without existing PowerScale product experience led the migration. It was amazing and reinforces why we love PowerScale."

"*We've seen innovation and evolution continue at a rapid pace with PowerScale, which has really benefitted the Deakin community. Dell's commitment to us has been exemplary.*"

Craig Warren
Deputy Chief Digital Officer, Deakin University

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Never saying no to storage requests

With an explosion in demand for research data and digital learning, Deakin places high value on PowerScale's scalability. Warren says, "We swiftly respond to massive jumps in storage demand by researchers. For example, we easily handled a request by a researcher whose funding doubled, and their daily storage requirement went from 15 to 30 terabytes. PowerScale helps us deliver the performance, capacity and high availability researchers need."

"The value of data at Deakin is immeasurable," continues Warren. "Deakin research led to a cure for a rare leukemia that has improved quality of life for 7,000 patients. We store such high-value data on PowerScale with confidence."

Software innovation moves to center stage

With a small IT team serving 62,000 students and 9,000 faculty and administrative staff, Parker-Hill appreciates PowerScale's simplicity and ease of management: "We are no longer moving storage across file systems, adding disks and tweaking things. The PowerScale technology does a lot of the work for us, so we can focus on software innovation."

"We have a team of strong IT generalists rather than specialists," he adds. "PowerScale fits perfectly with our structure because it's so easy to learn and manage."

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>
> Craig Warren
> Deputy Chief Digital Officer, Deakin University

Partnership focused on evolution and commitment

Deakin's close partnership with Dell Technologies also has delivered significant value. Warren explains, "We've seen innovation and evolution continue at a rapid pace with PowerScale, which has really benefitted the Deakin community. Dell's commitment to us has been exemplary."

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