

Leveraging the flexibility of Cherwell and AWS, university customizes ITSM solution to address unprecedented enrollment numbers



The Challenge

As it celebrates its 50th year, the University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas) is a rising research powerhouse. It has eight schools and more than 140 academic degrees, including top-ranked programs in business, engineering, science, audiology, and arts and technology. At almost 30,000 students, UT Dallas had yet another record-setting year for enrollment.

Along with rapid growth have come the predictable strains on the IT infrastructure. University leadership knew that it needed to find creative solutions to manage the influx of users on campus, and that started with the central help desk. They wanted to find a tool that would capture data and turn it into something meaningful. The goal was to figure out how technology impacts end users and put intelligence behind that to enable better workflows, automate manual tasks, and ensure consistent information across the organization.

Turns out, they already had the ideal tool in place - Cherwell ITSM on AWS.

“At UT Dallas, our bottom line is really our students, making sure they get a great education,” explains Pulin Bhatt, director of Client Services for University of Texas at Dallas. “The way Cherwell plays a part in that is by ensuring that’s where the focus stays. We’ve solved a lot of business challenges with Cherwell, and we continue to do that every single day.”

The Solution

UT Dallas decided it was time to fully leverage its existing Cherwell ITSM solution to address the challenges of growing enrollment. And because the Cherwell platform is so intuitive, it was actually a UT Dallas student who was the first administrator.

The use of Cherwell at UT Dallas is unique. University IT worked closely with Cherwell to customize the platform, enabling a “tenant model.” Central IT owns the Cherwell deployment, and each college within the university is a tenant. This arrangement keeps things consistent across the entire organization and allows the colleges to tailor ITSM to fit their specific needs. This customization was possible, and in fact simple to accomplish, thanks to the flexibility of the Cherwell platform.



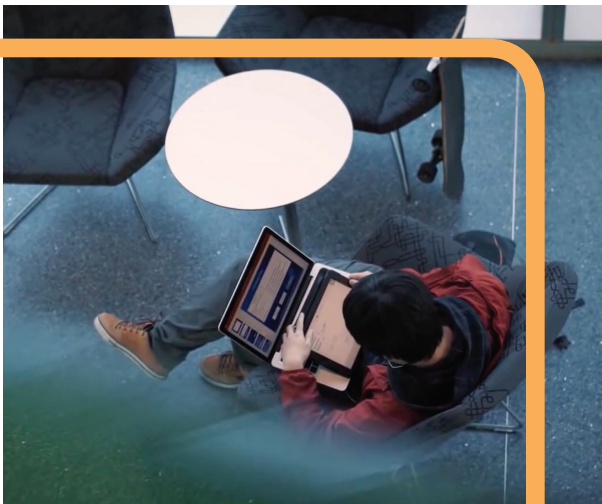
Now that this model is in place, UT Dallas IT is harnessing the power of the data it collects to provide better service for users, and save time and money. When students or faculty call in for help, skill-based routing connects them to the most appropriate resource. Cherwell has empowered the UT Dallas help desk to provide resolutions instead of just assigning tickets.

The self-service portal, which has seen a sharp uptick in use, and the expansive knowledge base are bringing users the resources they need in the way they prefer to access them. Reporting on the number of times knowledge base articles are accessed, as well as the ability to give instant feedback, is continuously improving that store of information.

Amazon Web Services (AWS) is fast becoming almost ubiquitous on university campuses, so it was important that UT Dallas to be able to integrate it with Cherwell. It has automated cloud services in the AWS Service Catalog through the Cherwell self-service portal, which users are already familiar with, and has enabled workflows that help them manage AWS on campus.

Cherwell's flexible solution on AWS is taking extra burden off of the IT department, allowing them to focus on serving students. And for future anticipated growth, Cherwell will scale seamlessly as needed.

“When I talk about why we need Cherwell, I talk about the cost of not having it as being something a lot more expensive,” says Bhatt. “When you have all sorts of data coming in, if you’re not analyzing that data, you’re adding more people to your help desk, you’re adding more staff to all the support units on campus. And that’s where it really provides a great benefit in terms of cost.”



Business Impact

- Flexible ITSM solution that address challenges of rapid growth
- Improved understanding and analysis of data, resulting in better student, faculty and staff experience
- Cloud-based solution frees up IT time to focus on student success