



Kingston University Fully Adopts Microsoft 365 with AvePoint's Hassle-free, Flawless Data Migration as a Service

Kingston University
London



Customer Location

London, England

Industry

Education

Platform

Microsoft 365

Critical Needs

- Expediated migration from cloud and on-premises file shares to Microsoft 365
- No disruption to day-to-day university hours
- Training for staff, students, and faculty (20k+ users) on the value of Microsoft 365
- Maintain data fidelity, retention, and metadata

Solution

- AvePoint Migration as a Service
- AvePoint Microsoft 365 Training

★ Success Highlights

- Anticipated cost savings on license and existing storage platforms with fast migration timeline
- Tailored M365 training and onboarding to boost adoption and ensure long-term adoption
- 400 TB of full-fidelity data will be completely moved by the 16-month target

🔍 Customer Profile

Kingston University is a prestigious higher education institution based in London, supporting and educating more than 18,000 students from the UK and abroad each year. Its flagship Town House building was awarded the 2021 RIBA Stirling Prize, recognizing it as Britain's best new building.

The University is rolling out a progressive new model of education through its sector-leading Future Skills program, ensuring students on every course are equipped with the skills most valued by industry to meet the challenges of the modern world of work.

A growing force in research and a pioneer in entrepreneurship, developments in teaching, learning, and facilities have all contributed to positioning the University at the heart of education and economic development both in the capital and across the surrounding region.

⚙️ The Challenge

During the pandemic, it became clear that there was an immediate need for Kingston University to fully migrate to the cloud. "Working remotely highlighted the pinch points in services that could only be delivered onsite or a virtual desktop session," says Steve Britton, Head of IT at Kingston University. "To continue to support agile working and teaching practices, our services and data needed to be securely available to our users wherever they needed."

Steve's team evaluated their current service offerings and identified several service overlaps and duplications. Consolidating to a single platform (Microsoft 365) would not only reduce costs but better integrate end-user experiences and improve collaboration with colleagues and students in a platform they already preferred.

Ultimately, Kingston knew a data migration was necessary to build a simpler and safer cloud ecosystem. However, data migrations are notoriously difficult, and with more than 300 TB in other cloud and on-premises file shares and more than 20,000 users, the University wanted to partner with a migration expert to ensure a smooth transition and properly onboarded users.

The AvePoint Solution

Kingston University needed a migration partner who could meet their capability requirements, such as scheduled, off-peak jobs and full fidelity of metadata. More crucially, they sought a partner who could help ensure long-term user adoption through user education. CSI, Kingston's IT managed services provider and strategic technology partner, recommended AvePoint as the perfect partner.

"As a company, our goal is to ensure our customers get the right technology to achieve the outcomes they are looking for," says James Carmichael, Client Director of Public Sector at CSI. "We knew AvePoint had performed many successful migrations and could help deliver the results Kingston needed. Due to the breadth of capability of AvePoint's solutions and the fact that there were other requirements that the University wanted to address, we recommended the partnership."

AvePoint's Microsoft Gold Partner status and expertise in the cloud were also appealing to the University, and the Microsoft 365 training gateway sealed the deal.

"We trusted AvePoint to ensure our data migration was compliant, comprehensive, and quick," says Steve. "Beyond the 20-year success rate with migrations, AvePoint's experience in user adoption and the off-the-shelf Microsoft 365 training were huge pluses. With it, we can quickly tailor a range of training content in line with the University's needs and deliver them before the migration completes, ensuring our users are properly and successfully onboarded."

AvePoint started the project with a discovery, identifying important, relevant, and sensitive content. This provided Kingston University with insight into what content needed to be migrated into M365 and how to manage that data moving forward, in support of the University's strategy and compliance.

Phase one has focused on migrating Kingston University's professional services staff (IT, HR, finance, and backend teams) – including data in personal files, folders, and shared files to Microsoft 365. Though their migration is still underway (so far they have moved 150 TB of data), Kingston University is very happy with their migration results thus far.

Meanwhile, Kingston's training and communication program launched to begin educating staff members on best practices, techniques, and functionality necessary to leverage M365 for better communication and collaboration. The content is personalized to staff members, students, and academics and built from real-life user scenarios so groups and departments better understand the impact these new tools will have.

The Bottom Line

Kingston began their data migration in September 2022. It is estimated to take 16 months to migrate 400 TB of data to OneDrive, Microsoft Teams, and SharePoint Online.

As the University looks to the future, Steve has some big plans for their digital workplace. He says, "We don't just want to be cloud-first in our thinking but more cloud-smart and user-centric. We want to ensure data is securely available to the right people, easy to collaborate and share with the right audience and ensure that lifecycle management and retention is in place to keep things organized, backed up, and protected."

By choosing AvePoint as its migration partner, the University can use the Microsoft 365 training content to sustain user adoption post-migration, enabling them to meet these goals and more. This helps Kingston maximize their investment and truly harness the value of the cloud.

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- STEVE BRITTON, HEAD OF IT, KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

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