



YMCA

YMCA DEPLOYS DROPLET COMPUTING TO ENABLE 40,000 USERS TO BECOME EQUAL DIGITAL CITIZENS

OVERVIEW

Founded in 1844, YMCA has over 58 million members in 119 countries worldwide.

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. They create supportive, inclusive and energizing communities, where everyone can belong, contribute and thrive. Since it was established, YMCA has adapted to the changing needs of the time. Today the YMCA works with people of any race, gender, age, religion or culture. In every corner of the world, YMCA is helping young people to build a future.

In the UK, John Hotham is Head of Information Technology and Systems for Central YMCA Group. In his role for 1½ years John inherited a project to look at his disadvantaged learners where technology is not readily available. The project was to supply a model that enabled access to technology for these users that was a cost viable solution.

“Droplet Computing is a true digital disruptor and, frankly, has ripped apart the rule-book. Enabling everyone to be a digital citizen, particularly many of our under privileged communities, is a key requisite for the YMCA. With Droplet Computing’s semi-connected technology, we can enable our communities to work and/or learn where the Internet is restricted or unavailable. Plus, we can now provide low-cost devices, such as \$50 tablets versus expensive laptops, ensuring cost savings and fiduciary responsibility as a not-for-profit organization.”

John Hotham, Head of IT and Systems, Central YMCA Group.

CHALLENGE

Providing access to applications and online learning via laptops or tablets was not an option due to cost, plus would be extremely expensive to replace if they were damaged or stolen.

Alongside this challenge, the YMCA Awards organization has accreditations that are still 80% paper based. These centers have no incentive to become digital assessment centers, and for some government organizations they work with, do not allow Internet connectivity. YMCA wanted to provide access to learning management facilities that could operate on and offline.

SOLUTION

Droplet Computing's containerization technology allows applications to be decoupled from the OS for online and offline use, on any device.

"Droplet Computing enables us to provide our disadvantaged learners with very, very cheap hardware so they can commit to courses we expect them to take. We can control what apps are on what devices and at £50 per tablet, if they get lost, stolen or damaged, they can be replaced quickly," explained Mr. Hotham.

For government organizations that YMCA works with that don't allow Internet connectivity, John explains, "We can create a semi-connected model - live stream when connected, and when the Internet is not accessible the applications are still available. Then, when reconnected users can sync their work. The encryption technology in Droplet Computing allows them to overcome the organizations' restriction rules."

Mr. Hotham looked at various options to deliver on his project's stringent requirements. "I looked at laptops as well as low cost tablets, and application delivery options, but none of the technology platforms allowed semi-connected status. Droplet Computing gives the power to deliver what my user segments need."

BENEFITS

The two main business benefits derived from deploying Droplet Computing are, according to Mr. Hotham, "Scalability and Flexibility."

"Droplet Computing enables us to provide a low cost way to deploy hardware to digitize our entire user base. The software layer, i.e. the Droplet Computing piece, is about giving control to deploy applications to people that don't have connectivity. If they have no online access, Droplet Computing enables them to still work until they do."

Mr. Hotham continued, "Droplet Computing is a true digital disruptor and, frankly, has ripped apart the rule-book. Enabling everyone to be a digital citizen, particularly many of our under privileged communities, is a key requisite for the YMCA. With Droplet Computing's semi-connected technology, we can enable our communities to work and/or learn where the Internet is restricted or unavailable. Plus, we can now provide low-cost devices, such as £50 tablets versus expensive laptops, ensuring cost savings and fiduciary responsibility as a not-for-profit organization."

Asking what he believes the relevance of this solution will be to the charity/not for profit sector, Mr. Hotham responded "Massive! It's not just education. The power of this semi-connected technology, sitting on low cost hardware, opens it up to all charity and not-for-profit organizations."

Organizations' field operations' representatives commonly need high cost devices - durable to their environment - that can cost in excess of £1000 per device, or tough devices could be £600. Now, with Droplet Computing, they can deploy a £50 tablet. If it gets smashed, just replace it. Medical environments can dictate £600-700 per device, as they need to be durable, sanitized etc., now a low cost device can fit requirements model much better, with durability no longer the key requirement. Rural and hard to reach areas with poor connectivity are also well served by the Droplet Computing technology.

SUMMARY

Mr. Hotham gives the following advice to his peer group, "Be open-minded."

The reason why traditional investment models are so high is because organizations don't want to replace devices and be seen to be wasting people's money. Cash investment can be a problem, as well as our fiduciary responsibility to donators. I highly recommend looking at Droplet Computing as a way to deliver your applications, in a controlled fashion, on inexpensive devices. It really is a game-changer."