

CASE STUDY

Turning Data Into Decisions: How Nerdio Empowered the Government of Alberta to Improve Remote Access

Discover why the government of Canada's fourth largest province partnered with Nerdio to accelerate its transition to the cloud and better support end-users throughout the province, all while saving almost 50% a month.



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The [Government of Alberta](#) (GoA) serves the fourth most populous province in Canada. It provides administrative resources, such as registry and financial services, as well as access to resources for critical services, like family and child protective services, severe weather and other environmental events, and much more.

Canada, of course, is renowned for its vast expanses of wilderness and natural beauty. The GoA remote access team needed to ensure its employees and service providers were able to access their workspaces, communicate, and share government resources from anywhere in the province, country, and around the world. Furthermore, the personnel involved in ice river predictions and wildfire management are often based in harsh and extreme areas where robust and reliable services are essential.

“We needed to be able to facilitate efficient omni-channel support to help our end-users access their workspaces from anywhere,” said Deryck Webb, Senior Remote Access Analyst, Government of Alberta. “Providing employees with a physical laptop is not sufficient should that singular channel or method of access fail. We knew we required a more sophisticated, cloud-based desktop infrastructure to ensure the best possible service for the people of Alberta.”

Originally, the GoA had been leveraging on-prem Citrix and VMware solutions but found that Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) was already an entitlement of its Microsoft 365 licensing agreement. AVD would provide a much larger and robust platform to facilitate remote access without requiring a significant infrastructure investment.

IMPROVING AND STREAMLINING DATA ANALYTICS

Webb worked closely with Microsoft on the development of GoA's Azure environments, and he quickly found a sea of data provided in the Azure portal.

“As an analyst, I loved all those numbers and was eager to dive in, but after months of manipulating the reams and reams of data using applications like Excel or Power BI, we realized the amount of work required was unsustainable,” said Webb. “What we really needed was a dashboard to not only track usage, consumption, utility, et cetera, but also to present a snapshot to executives that immediately communicates whether or not Azure-based services are operating efficiently.”

Accordingly, Webb and his team reached out to Microsoft to inquire about solutions that would enable them to pull real-time insights from their Azure data. The manual system Webb had in place simply took too long to analyze and was much too cumbersome, which prevented him from being able to make proactive recommendations to improve performance and efficiency.

The Microsoft account rep introduced Webb to the Nerdio Manager for Enterprise platform.

THE NERDIO SOLUTION

As soon as Webb received a demo, he knew Nerdio Manager would solve the Government of Alberta's issues. They no longer had to reinvent the wheel with makeshift spreadsheets and endless Excel formulas. The Nerdio platform was able to spit out the exact intel the team required, including detailed consumption reports that could inform recommendations on virtual machine upsizing, downsizing, and purchasing of reserved instances and compute.

Following its proof of concept (POC), the Government of Alberta began implementation of AVD alongside Nerdio leveraging a multi-session environment for maximum cost savings and efficiency. The organization sought a slow rollout to end users so as not to disrupt or change their experience.

"Nerdio was able to ensure everything ran smoothly in the background with no loss of performance. They were incredibly communicative about when actions should take place (best practices) and how they might impact our users, which was exceptionally valuable," recalled Webb. "On top of that, once AVD was up and running, our service providers also benefited from a more intuitive, user-friendly interface compared to our older on-prem VDI solution."

"The Nerdio team has been instrumental in our smooth transition to the cloud," Webb noted. "They have advised us every step of the way — from ingesting host pools to deciding on the first iteration of auto-scaling. We have regular touchpoints with their support and customer success teams and are continually impressed by their depth and breadth of knowledge."

DIVING DEEPER

Webb has also been able to leverage Nerdio Manager for Enterprise to better understand exactly how personal virtual machines are being utilized. He and his team can utilize the new recommendation feature from the Nerdio platform to inform their decision making and right-size accordingly.

"If a user requests a machine with 8 CPUs and 32 GBs of RAM, it's not for me to determine if that is really appropriate for their use case. But if I can see that they're not operating that VM to the capacity it's been provisioned to, it makes it much easier to have that conversation," said Webb. "One of the most exciting things about Nerdio is that they are constantly innovating and adding new features. I look forward to seeing what's coming down the pipe in 2024 and beyond."

IMMEDIATE RESULTS

At the beginning of September 2023, Webb and his team activated storage auto-scaling for the multisession environment and immediately saw positive results that impressed leadership. By leveraging auto-scaling for both virtual machines (compute) and storage, the GoA saw monthly savings of over 30% or CAD \$25,000.

In October, the remote access team applied the same auto-scaling to GoA's personal desktops, which make up a much larger footprint than multisession (pooled) ones. Today, the Government of Alberta has over 3,000 monthly active users with 31,000 named users, resulting in a total of 46% or \$36,000 CAD savings for AVD storage.



ABOUT NERDIO

Nerdio adds value on top of the powerful capabilities in Azure Virtual Desktop, Windows 365, and Microsoft Intune by delivering hundreds of features that simplify management, ensure efficient operations, and lower Azure compute and storage costs by up to 80% via automation.

Enterprise IT professionals can deliver and maintain a wide range of virtual Windows endpoints and Windows applications across hybrid workforces with ease and fine-tune end-user computing (EUC) approaches for maximum effectiveness using powerful monitoring and analytics capabilities.

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