



Skytap Virtual IT Labs Case Study:

NUARI supports scalable virtual labs for graduate degree program with Skytap

Background

To support an interactive virtual graduate degree program with students all over the world, NUARI needed a virtual labs solution that would allow fast connection speed from any location, make it easy for instructors to design course templates, and require little administrative support.

Challenge

NUARI supports the Norwich University College of Graduate and Continuing Studies. When the school decided to add more hands-on learning to its online program, NUARI needed to find a solution to deliver interactive lab environments for students anywhere in the world. Norwich University offers in-person classes for students at its Vermont campus, and for labs, students can go to a computer lab room and log into computers to complete their coursework. This environment is both easy to administer and easy for students to access. NUARI wanted to replicate this experience for remote learners in the online graduate programs. With its previous solution, NUARI ran into the challenge of setting up virtual machines for students with varying types of computers and browsers. There were many access and speed issues that led to headaches for both students and IT.

Overview

INDUSTRY:

Education

OBJECTIVE:

Support remote virtual learning

USE CASE:

Virtual Learning

About the Company

Norwich University Applied Research Institute (NUARI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that serves the national public interest through the interdisciplinary study of critical national security issues. It is partially funded by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense and federally chartered under the sponsorship of Sen. Patrick Leahy. NUARI is co-located with Norwich University in Northfield, VT, and shares their ideals of academic excellence, innovation, and service to the country.

Solution

NUARI knew it wanted a cloud-based virtual labs solution to accommodate learners located globally. In considering a solution, NUARI selected Skytap Virtual IT Labs due to the following product features and capabilities:

- Scalability and usability
- On-demand delivery and latency
- Easy instructor access and controls
- Global availability
- Ability to quickly provision environments and build and re-use templates

NUARI got up and running on Skytap quickly and has been successfully delivering virtual labs on the platform for ten years. Using a custom plugin, Skytap seamlessly integrates with Moodle, the university's LMS, where students access all tools related to their classes and coursework. Each time a student enrolls in a course, a Skytap environment is automatically created for them and the student simply logs into Moodle and clicks a link in a browser to access their virtual lab.

When courses need to be updated, instructors can easily log into Skytap to make edits or adjust the environment. Instructors save courses as a template and then the Skytap administrator makes it available in Moodle for use. At times, courses are updated in the middle of the semester, which can easily be accomplished in Skytap.



“Skytap answers any questions quickly and resolves problems almost immediately. Customer service managers are responsive and Skytap support is good.”

– Tom Paulger, Cyber Security Subject Matter Expert, NUARI

Outcomes

A Skytap customer since 2012, NUARI has continued to use Skytap Virtual IT Labs to:

- Deliver 10 to 15 virtual courses per semester
- Eliminate student virtual lab connection issues
- Integrate Moodle with Skytap to improve the user experience
- Support learners across the globe with high speed of delivery and no latency issues
- Support virtual lab components of undergraduate in-person courses

By using Skytap, NUARI no longer faces the challenges of helping students access virtual labs from varying locations and with different computers and browsers. “With Skytap we have no problems with scalability or bandwidth connections to the instance. One of the big advantages is a lot less complication of messing around with the computer to get the lab to work,” says NUARI Cyber Security Subject Matter Expert Tom Paulger.

In addition to supporting the online graduate programs for the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies, NUARI also uses Skytap to support one-off virtual labs for on-campus Norwich University classes.



Learn more about how Skytap can help your organization provide virtual IT labs to support virtual training, demos and POCs

Skytap is a cloud service purpose-built to natively run traditional systems in the cloud. Our customers use Skytap for running production, disaster recovery, virtual training labs, and development workloads. We are the only cloud service to support AIX, IBM i, and Linux on IBM Power together with x86 workloads, enabling businesses to accelerate their journey to the cloud and increase innovation. To learn more about Skytap or schedule a demo, visit www.skytap.com.