Oracle brings a more realistic vision for cloud in higher education

Ovum view

Summary

The institutional IT landscape is complicated, and few institutions have the ability to make a wholesale migration to the cloud, particularly in the area of student information systems (SIS). Oracle's hybrid strategy across the solution landscape and the technology stack offers a more realistic and value-rich option for institutions.

A hybrid approach is more realistic for higher education

The combination of years of customizations and underinvestment, and the need to support a consensus-driven decision-making process, has created an exceptionally complicated IT landscape in higher education. The premise that colleges and universities, motivated by the SaaS vision of efficiency and modernity, will simply cast off this IT complexity with a shrug and dive into the cloud, particularly for SIS solutions, is unrealistic, bordering on reckless. Few institutions have the capacity to contend with the inevitable pain from the "rip" in the "rip and replace" of an SIS. Oracle is taking a far more sophisticated, sensitive approach to these realities. Certainly, "sensitive" and "Oracle" are not typically used in the same sentence, but the quality, rigor, and completeness of the solutions and services it is bringing to higher education suggest that this is in fact the case. Hybrid is king, not just in terms of applications, but across the infrastructure as well. Oracle might not have been the first to embrace the cloud, but it is the first to truly understand how institutions will migrate to the cloud and ultimately realize value from it.

Over the coming months it will be critical for Oracle to articulate in compelling and easily understood ways the value of its technical approach to non-technical users, particularly in areas related to the infrastructure. Pure SaaS players are focusing more exclusively on these influencers, speaking the language of higher education but leaving the deeply technical elements under the waterline and out of the conversation. This is an area of risk for institutions and opens a door for Oracle. Ovum believes that if Oracle can get the language right for its hybrid approach, it will win the game in higher education.

Appendix

Further reading

"The higher education industry will enter a brave new world of analytics in 2016," IT0008-000252 (October 2015)

"Unit4 Student Management heats up the SIS competitive landscape," IT0008-000253 (October 2015)

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We hope that this analysis will help you make informed and imaginative business decisions. If you have further requirements, Ovum's consulting team may be able to help you. For more information about Ovum's consulting capabilities, please contact us directly at consulting@ovum.com.

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