

# Centrify facilitates Morehouse College Move to Microsoft Office 365



Morehouse is a liberal arts college with over 2,000 students and faculty members in Atlanta, Georgia. A National Science Foundation study named Morehouse College the fifth biggest producer of African Americans who earn PhDs in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.



## The Challenge

Deploy an Active Directory-based access and authentication solution across multiple platforms that helps maximize the value of cloud technologies, maintain regulatory compliance and dramatically improve the security posture.

In the process of upgrading traditional user apps to cloud solutions — including the replacement of Microsoft Exchange with Office 365 — Morehouse College CIO Clifford Russell knew that multiple new log-ins would be challenging for staff, faculty and the student body, and could have a negative impact on an already stretched IT department. In order to eliminate key redundancies, maintain business continuity, and exploit cloud solutions to the greatest degree possible, the college would need a strong single sign-on solution capable of weaving in all their cloud providers and vastly improving the security stature of the campus network. The solution would need to:

- Leverage Active Directory across diverse platforms including Windows, Mac and Linux
- Extend beyond Office 365 to manage access to any number of apps and websites
- Provide capabilities that addressed mobile apps and mobile devices
- Offer security and reliability through an off-premise, cloud-based platform
- Help to ensure compliance with PCI, HIPAA, FERPA
- Seamlessly authenticate and manage PCs and Macs remotely through group policies

While Microsoft's ADFS could provide access management for Office 365, the tool's server and network implementation requirements demanded ongoing IT participation. The department realized they needed a more easily deployed, more comprehensive solution that would cover other critical apps including Box, Unison, Blackboard, and a handful of start-up applications. The goal was to get as much management off premises as possible so that IT staff would be freed up to unlock the power of the college's other technology investments.

“Centrify will put us head and shoulders above the previous process—it will feel revolutionary to our users.”

**Clifford Russell**  
CIO, Morehouse College



## The Solution

Centrify Identity Service for Office 365 is a Microsoft-validated, Azure-based cloud service for native single sign-on and user provisioning. The Centrify Server Suite and Centrify Identity Service were also selected for essential complementary functionalities.

After extensive research, Morehouse opted to run trial versions of two identity management providers. “It was a shootout between Centrify and Okta, and while they're both solid platforms, it came down to the fact that Centrify gave us quite a bit more functionality, including extensive access control through Active Directory as well as essential audit and roll-back capabilities,” says Russell.




Morehouse selected the Centrify Server Suite to centrally manage authentication, access controls, privileged identities and policy enforcement, thereby securing the college’s most critical servers from identity-related insider risks and outsider attacks. The solution would further allow the school to address regulatory compliance—a key issue for schools bound by FERPA, HIPAA and PCI requirements.

Morehouse selected the Centrify Identity Service to provide a single Active Directory-based login to school resources and cloud apps like Office 365 from PCs, Macs and mobile devices. Several additional elements played a role in the selection of the Centrify solution:

- Centrify Identity Service for Office 365 is an Azure-based solution that has passed Microsoft’s validation process.
- Centrify Identity Service for Office 365 can be deployed in a few hours, without opening perimeter firewall ports or installing additional servers in the DMZ.
- “Zero Sign-On” empowers mobile users with one-click access to apps through mobile device management features.
- Centrify does not export or replicate customers’ AD user identities.

“If you’re looking to tie Active Directory deeply into a heterogeneous environment and provide single sign-on to cloud applications, Centrify is the clear solution.”

**Clifford Russell**  
CIO, Morehouse College



### The Results

Centrify is helping to decrease the cost of deploying and managing Office 365 and other cloud apps while at the same time improving user adoption and productivity. A strategic risk mitigation program has emerged with minimal impact on IT.

Despite a very small, thinly stretched IT staff, the switch from Microsoft Exchange to Office 365 facilitated by Centrify was smooth. “We got the support we needed every step of the way, and this fall, we’ll extend the Centrify and Office 365 system to the returning 2,000 member student body. We’re going from zero to 60 miles per hour — fast,” says Russell.

Today, the Centrify and Microsoft solutions have been introduced to the entire campus through Russell’s quarterly Tech Town Hall meetings where reception has been positive and early users are finding the solution easy to understand and the Centrify portal simple to use.

In terms of ultimate value, Russell points to risk mitigation as a primary component. While the college hasn’t done a lot of risk modeling in the past, today’s increasing online threats and evolving regulatory requirements necessitate a rapid and aggressive response. And Russell intends to articulate that risk in terms of dollars, particularly where compliance is involved.

“The whole idea behind cloud solutions is that you have business continuity and disaster recovery options that did not exist previously. Centrify in the cloud will allow us to provide critical access to our team no matter where they are, even if the whole campus goes dark.”

While he hasn’t had much time to spend measuring costs, Russell feels this project will play a key role in illustrating his own worth, and the value of the decisions he’s made. “I feel extremely comfortable that ultimately tying everything to AD through Centrify will generate an unquestionably strong ROI.”

“Centrify is the vehicle that ensures that all the systems we implement into the Morehouse environment tie in effectively and securely with Active Directory.”

**Clifford Russell**  
CIO, Morehouse College



Centrify provides **unified identity management** across data center, cloud and mobile environments that result in single sign-on (SSO) for users and a simplified identity infrastructure for IT. Centrify’s unified identity management software and cloud-based **Identity-as-a-Service (IDaaS)** solutions leverage an organization’s existing identity infrastructure to enable **single sign-on**, multi-factor authentication, privileged identity management, auditing for compliance and enterprise mobility management.

CST000110EN-02202015

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