

CENGAGE GROUP

About Customer

For more than 100 years, Cengage Group has helped students enrich their lives and achieve their dreams through the power of learning. Today, the innovative education technology company makes education more accessible and affordable for millions of learners worldwide.

www.cengagegroup.com

Geo

North America

Industry

Education

Solution Area

Enable Multi-cloud
Accelerate Core Applications
Activate Real-time Analytics

Pure Storage®

Products in Use

Evergreen//One™
FlashArray™
FlashBlade®
Pure1®
Evergreen Storage™

Cengage Group: From Textbooks to Digital Learning Pioneer

Transforming an industry may seem like a tall order, but not for education innovator Cengage Group. Founded as a textbook publisher more than a century ago, today Cengage Group is one of the world's largest education technology providers. The company is advancing the way people learn through accessible and affordable digital education resources.

To deliver on its mission, Cengage Group expects a lot from its technology. When its existing storage struggled to perform as needed, the company sought a more reliable solution that could scale with growing student and educator demand. Cengage Group selected the Pure Storage platform to support its journey and empower learners' success.

"Our goal is to make education accessible to anyone who wants to learn, and technology makes that possible. We depend on Pure to make sure our critical systems are not just safe and secure, but also scale and perform well."

JIM CHILTON,
CIO, CENGAGE GROUP

Impact on Cengage Group



Supports transition to industry-changing digital learning subscription service



Saves students more than \$330 million in textbook fees since launching its digital subscription



Positions Cengage Group for growth, with more than 70% of revenue now purely digital

Challenges



Ensure uninterrupted access to academic learning and research materials



Provide fast, scalable storage to meet spikes in demand



Enable a flexible hybrid cloud environment

Results



Reduces storage footprint by 80% while doubling performance



Provides greater scalability and predictability with Evergreen//One



Provides an agile, strategic approach to hybrid cloud

Innovative learning services change lives

Cengage Group is on a mission to make education attainable for anyone who wants to learn. In a dramatic business model shift from traditional textbooks, the company launched Cengage Unlimited, a first-of-its-kind digital subscription service, providing affordable online access to more than 10,000 products, including eTextbooks, online platforms and more.

At the beginning of the company's journey to digital learning, when students logged in to Cengage Unlimited to access their grades in a real-time grading engine running on an open source database platform, the existing storage environment couldn't keep up with the demand. This was challenging for students and fell short of Cengage Group's vision to transform into a modern digital education content provider. The IT team sought a better solution and, after testing several options, they replaced the previous storage with two Pure Storage FlashArrays.

"When a student signs in, it has to be fast," says Alan Rees, Infrastructure Architect at Cengage Group. "With our database running on Pure Storage FlashArrays we're providing high-performing content delivery and the fast access to subscription information students expect."

With Pure, performance has improved significantly. "We replaced several racks of storage with 20% of one rack," adds Rees. "We're saving on space, power, and cooling while also seeing double to triple the performance of our previous storage."

Cengage Group also entrusts the Pure Storage platform to provide fast, reliable access to Gale, its industry-leading research resource used by libraries worldwide. FlashBlade, delivered via the Evergreen//One (formerly Pure as-a-Service) subscription model, accommodates massive volume – billions of files and petabytes of data— with unparalleled speed.

"Evergreen//One gives us a predictable and consistent operating expense model, allowing us to pay based on usage, yet scale easily as data volumes increase," says Jim Chilton, CIO, Cengage Group. "It also reduces the burden on our IT team in managing storage product lifecycles."

With SafeMode™ snapshots, the IT team can create read-only copies of its data, providing critical protection in the event of a ransomware attack. And Pure1 storage management helps the IT team monitor and optimize use from anywhere, including mobile phones. These features, along with Pure's Evergreen Storage non-disruptive upgrades, allow the IT team to focus on other projects instead of constantly managing infrastructure.

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Hybrid cloud model enables flexible service delivery

Cengage Group has adopted a hybrid cloud approach to run its business, hosting some applications in the cloud, and running many critical systems, such as Gale, on the Pure Storage platform in its data centers.

According to Rees, meeting customer expectations for fast and reliable access to content is a priority. That's why critical customer-facing data and apps run on Pure. "Students need performance, and our systems need to be highly available, so we put them on our tier 1 storage — Pure," says Rees.

But that's not all that Cengage Group needs for its business to continue to prosper. The company also maintains a large data warehouse that accommodates back-office functions. Behind the scenes, teams run analytics to gain insights into the business, too. "In the past, long-running queries meant we couldn't easily get the information we needed to run our business," Rees says. "Since we moved to Pure, we're able to get to those real-time business insights quickly."

Building on a tradition of innovation

When the pandemic abruptly shifted learning online, Cengage Group offered everyone, including students and educators who were not customers, free access to its digital learning platform to ensure that learning was not interrupted. Cengage Group had already started transforming from texts to digital platforms with the support of Pure Storage, so it was unfazed by the dramatic increase in demand. "Even when demand increased by 70%, Pure handled the load without an issue," Rees says.

Since launching its first digital learning service, Cengage Group's digital revenue is now more than 70% of its business, and students have collectively saved more than \$330 million in textbook costs.

"We're building on our tradition of innovation as we deliver more online services, subscriptions, and digital solutions that students will need in the future," says Chilton. "Pure is a critical partner in our journey toward making education accessible to anyone."

purestorage.com

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