Microsoft

SAFARI Montage Reimagines South Carolina Department of Education's Curation and Distribution of Learning Resources with LOR Cloud

INDUSTRY: EDUCATION
VERTICAL: K-12
INDUSTRY PRIORITY SCENARIO: HYBRID & BLENDED TEACHING AND LEARNING

To provide high-quality instructional materials in more than 75 public school districts across the state, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) needed a digital library of learning resources which seamlessly integrated with each district's digital learning ecosystem. Using the power of Microsoft Azure, SAFARI Montage partnered with the SCDE to develop its Learning Object Repository (LOR). Today, the SCDE uses LOR Cloud to manage all of its resources and ingest new content for automated distribution to every school district in the state.

Envisioning equity in education

As a government agency serving more than 780,000 students in 1,221 K-12 public schools and 75 school districts across the state, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides leadership and support so that each public education student graduates prepared for success.

In order to provide a world-class education for all students, the SCDE needed to address the issue of uneven distribution of learning resources across the state. The agency sought a way to create and provide each school with equitable access to up-to-date digital courses and materials.

Results

Serves 780,000+ students in 75 South Carolina K-12 School Districts

Enables all districts to integrate solution with their own LMS, SIS and procured resources

Lays groundwork for lesson plan and course sharing throughout the state

Its vision for this innovative strategy included the following goals:
- Increase the number of high-quality resources for teachers to use
- Create digital learning opportunities for students in the classroom and beyond
- Save teachers time in planning and preparation
- Assemble a library of professional development resources for educators

> *Our State Superintendent had the vision to deliver high-quality digital resources to teachers and students throughout the state, and in particular for those schools and districts who were lacking not only the resources, but the devices and infrastructure as well. The SAFARI Montage LOR has helped make this all a reality for South Carolina."*
> Dr. Lee D'Andrea, Learning Object Repository (LOR) Project, Division of College and Career Readiness, South Carolina State Department of Education

Leveraging cloud technology

The SCDE chose to partner with SAFARI Montage, using LOR Cloud to develop its Instruction Hub. As the agency's LOR Facilitator, Dr. Lee M. D'Andrea, explains, "In the rubric analysis, SAFARI Montage came out as the clear leader in both capacity for us to build it, and at the same time, enough flexibility to customize it to our state needs."

LOR Cloud, which is hosted by Microsoft Azure, seamlessly integrated with existing learning management systems and student information systems. With support from Microsoft, Instruction Hub became the first SAFARI Montage statewide cloud implementation in the country, creating a model for other state agencies to consider.

SAFARI Montage deployed this statewide solution in a matter of days. Once engaged, Instruction Hub was immediately accessible and ready for customization in all 75+ school districts.

Building a strong statewide community

Instruction Hub is now implemented across 99 percent of the state's schools. Its meta tagging system makes it easy to find content by grade, subject, and keywords, which can then be shared through the school's learning management system, whether Canvas, Schoology, Blackboard, Google Classroom, or Microsoft Teams.

Dr. D'Andrea reports that the professional development part of the platform is gaining traction, with usage increases weekly. She adds, "We know that those districts that had the most limited resources are now playing ball on a whole new field. You can look at the usage and the accessibility and see that."

Through Instruction Hub, teachers and students have access to licensed resources from SAFARI Montage, Discovery Education, Math Nation as well as content from South Carolina Educational Television (ETV). While the SCDE continues to work with other content providers, departments within SCDE along with education departments in several South Carolina state colleges and universities are also currently developing lessons and curating resources for Instruction Hub. As Dr. D'Andrea explains, "We want undergraduate students and our graduate students to become as familiar with this product and this project as possible so that it's systemic to their repertoire of resources in the classroom."

By laying the groundwork for teachers and students to share resources, SCDE is building a strong digital foundation to support high quality teaching and learning across the state. "The South Carolina Department of Education has perfectly leveraged the full value of a statewide Learning Object Repository by not only developing lessons from curated, procured and created resources but also actualizing the use of one LOR to service multiple LMSs simultaneously," says Andrew Schlessinger, CEO and Co-Founder, SAFARI Montage.

About SAFARI Montage

SAFARI Montage provides K–12 districts with an interoperable Learning Object Repository (LOR) designed for in-person and remote engaged instruction, plus a Video Streaming Library and IPTV & Live Media Streaming. The platform offers teachers and students equitable access to procured, created and curated educational digital resources and a place to search and manage learning objects and create playlists to feed an LMS and other enterprise systems. SAFARI Montage LOR Cloud offers all of the refined features of the LOR without any need for hardware inside a school district.