

Empired and Expose Data give Flinders Uni a data boost during pandemic

The usefulness of the 18-month-long project has shone during the current pandemic



Credit: Flinders University

Microsoft partners Empired and Expose Data have played a hand in stepping up Flinders University's data insights prowess, which is now being used to track the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on operations.

The analytics upgrade, which utilises Azure Data Factory, Databricks and Power BI, can track key data at the university to help it model revenues and make future plans.

Additionally, a variety of architectural mechanisms are in place to ensure storage and processing costs are kept as low as possible while maintaining performance – a key component of the new upgrade, Luke Havelberg, associate director for planning and analytical services at Flinders University, which is based in Adelaide.

“A lot of focus has gone into this particular element of the platform and we have been pleasantly surprised with the continuing low cost of the platform as we build up the size of our data assets within the ecosystem,” he said.

Empired was brought on to support the building of the Azure platform foundations, while Expose Data assisted with governance related aspects of the analytics ecosystem, which Havelberg considers to be important.

“Empired supported the establishment of the Azure tenancy for Flinders University to ensure the tenancy was set up in a way that was enterprise grade,” he said.

“Expose Data [has] provided various governance related support such as the development of a Power BI operational framework as well as a Power BI Governance Data Model to enable a more mature approach to how we govern important data domains for the university.”

The new system was brought in over an 18-month period, with the project still taking place, to replace an existing on-premises Oracle data warehouse and business intelligence stack.

The project, however, has been found to be a helpful ally during the coronavirus pandemic, while the old system would have proven to be a hindrance had it still been in place.

“We have been able to respond to information requests around students, from international numbers to the impact of the move to online lectures, and inform the scenarios planning for the University. We can turn that around much faster than before, often in hours,” Havelberg said.

“We would have been scrambling to do it on the old platform and would not have as much confidence in the results either.”

The analytics captured in the new system can then be shared to key personnel through its existing integration with Office 365, SharePoint, Livetiles and Teams.



