TEXAS
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin Shared Data Center

SYSTEM MIGRATION PROCESS

A data center migration is a strategic project that must be executed without significantly impacting business operations, SLAs, performance/availability and data protection requirements.

The University of Texas at Austin Data Centers team has performed 60+ migration projects ranging from a single server to a full data center life-cycle decommission, with multiple phases and moving 100+ servers at a time. Over 1000 pieces of equipment have been successfully migrated over the past seven years.

ASDC treats each migration as a unique project with a dedicated Customer Liaison and Project Manager. Every environment has its own challenges and we've developed processes to ensure a successful migration with minimal disruption to business services.

Step 1 – Evaluation

- Begin with a kick-off meeting to perform an inventory and disposition analysis of hardware, applications and network dependencies. Identify Risks Early.
- Document all equipment information from analysis in standardized templates.
- Produce schedules based on customer's business and service availability objectives.
- Define conditions of a back-out plan to restore services within acceptable tolerances should the migration run into issues restoring services at the new location.

Step 2 – Preparation

- Perform a survey of the customer site; labeling all equipment, cables and peripherals.
- Design exit strategies including parking and evaluating multiple paths to get equipment out of the building safely and efficiently – include a police escort if necessary!
- Model equipment to verify sufficient rack space, power and cooling parameters.
- Stage network configurations, patch cabling and power connections at destination in the data center.
- Create a Playbook (or work script) to coordinate activities for Migration Day.

Step 3 – Quality Assurance

- Perform a full review of all labels and information against the documentation created during the Preparation phase.
- Record any inconsistencies then rectify and reassess.
- Review Playbook tasks with all stakeholders during a dry-run migration meeting.

Step 4 – Execution

- Execute migration day activities according to the Playbook with dedicated technicians performing the removal and installation of equipment.
- Communicate a play-by-play status of the migration to all stakeholders throughout event.
- Perform a final Quality Assurance step to ensure all equipment / cabling has been installed correctly and prior to turn over to customer for start-up and acceptance.
- Gain customer acceptance once services have been restored and the project is completed.

Step 5 – Review

- Follow-up with a Lessons Learned meeting to evaluate the project's performance.
- Document successes and improvement areas in a Knowledge Base, for review prior to future projects.
- Track action items derived from the Lessons Learned through to completion.
- Make improvement adjustments to processes and procedures – Repeat!