

Oxford Instruments Seamlessly Navigates COVID Remote Access Challenge

Oxford Instruments is a leading provider of high technology research instruments, tools, and services. Their customers include leading academic institutions, as well as government and private R&D centers across the globe. They pride themselves on pushing the boundaries of what's possible and enabling momentous scientific advancements.

Generally, Oxford Instruments creates cutting-edge tools that researchers use to collect previously inaccessible information and data. When the company realized that software would revolutionize the field of scientific research, they were eager to expand their software capabilities.

In particular, the nanoanalysis business unit within Oxford Instruments directed significant resources towards advancing a range of software tools aimed at specific industry use cases. Over time, the software proved to be a vital tool. But while providing value is important, it can't single-handedly support growth. To continue advancing, Oxford Instruments needed to maximize revenue from software sales. For that, they needed a partner who could help them along the software monetization journey.

Feature-Focused Revenue with Reliable Security

Oxford Instruments was offering valuable tools, but if they wanted to continue advancing in the field, they needed a reliable way to secure revenue from software sales. At the same time, the market that purchases their software is very sensitive to data security issues. Oxford Instruments couldn't risk implementing a monetization solution that could scare away customers.

Oxford Instruments established a system to embed their proprietary software into a PC or a research instrument that is disconnected from the internet. Under the hood, Oxford Instruments used Thales Sentinel licensing and entitlement management to monetize individual software features.

Essentially, all customers received equipment loaded with the same software. Depending on what they ordered, customers were able to utilize certain functions while others remained hidden. By segmenting their offering in this way, Oxford Instruments created revenue around the most valuable and in-demand aspects of their software. Oxford Instruments also saw huge success with a try-before-you-buy model. Customers were able to utilize certain features on a trial basis, and then either buy the license to gain perpetual access, or the feature would disappear. The two-pronged method of disconnected deployment and customization and monetization of features helped Oxford Instruments satisfy their customer base and capture revenue at the same time.

Covid Creates Remote Research Quandary

Oxford Instruments had a solid software monetization strategy that worked well within their market. Then came the pandemic and the Covid-19 lockdowns of 2020. Until that point, Oxford Instruments' software users were always physically located in a research lab. The lab was where researchers collected, organized, analyzed, and interpreted data. Then, overnight, everything changed.



Researchers still had to do their jobs, but there was no guarantee they could physically work in a lab. For example, a university student might have a few precious hours in front of a microscope at the lab, but they had to go home to analyze their data. This same scenario played itself out across R&D centers in every major sector. Researchers worldwide suddenly needed their software to function in remote environments.

Agile Licensing and Entitlements Solve the Problem

For Oxford Instruments, the challenge was finding a way to provide a continuous experience for a customer base whose needs shifted overnight. Users once demanded software that was only accessible under strict parameters. Now, they were desperate for easy remote access.

Luckily, Oxford Instruments has long partnered with Thales for its licensing and entitlement mechanisms. Had they implemented a homegrown or otherwise inflexible system, the challenge could have been insurmountable. But Oxford Instruments' investment in licensing and entitlement technology meant they were well positioned to pivot and serve their market in a time of crisis.

"As soon as we realized we had a huge customer base in trouble, we provided emergency licenses to those who now had to work at home. Our quick response far exceeded their expectations. We could only do that because the technology was in place."

The same technology they used for security and monetization now instantly enabled a remote workforce. Within days, Oxford Instruments adjusted the entitlements and supplied remote licensing keys to their existing software customers. Critically, they did this without changing any code on their offering. They implemented a time-based licensing model that initially gave users three months of emergency access to the applications. Oxford Instruments extended the time limit when it became clear that the remote work reality would last longer than initially projected. Each set of updates was quick and painless, both for Oxford Instruments' developers and the researchers who relied on accessing the software.

In a time of great uncertainty, Oxford Instruments used agile licensing and entitlements to help their customers continue working without any significant disruption.

Challenge:

- Generate revenue from software sales
- Ensure data remains extremely secure
- Address customer needs during Covid work-from-home shift

Solution:

- LDKaaS
- HL
- SL
- CL
- Premium Technical Support

Result:

- Created a reliable revenue source with feature-based licensing
- Established customer trust by ensuring tight security
- Delighted customers with flexible access during Covid

About Thales

The people you rely on to protect your privacy rely on Thales to protect their data. When it comes to data security, organizations are faced with an increasing number of decisive moments. Whether the moment is building an encryption strategy, moving to the cloud, or meeting compliance mandates, you can rely on Thales to secure your digital transformation.

Decisive technology for decisive moments.

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