A SURVEY ON ADOPTING A CLOUD-ENABLED MODEL FOR THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

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University World News reports that by 2025, "the global demand for higher education will double to approximately 200 million students per year, mostly from emerging economies." In Sri Lanka, 86,321 undergraduates were enrolled in the 2015 intake under the University Grants Commission and 345,744 Open & Distance Learning (ODL) undergraduates were enrolled for higher education. The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) was established in 1980, under the purview of University Grants Commission of the Ministry of Higher Education, to promote Open & Distance Learning in tertiary education. It is a member of Asian Association of Open Universities and The Association of Commonwealth Universities. The purpose of this study is to identify the possibility of adopting a cloud-enabled model for OUSL, based on perspectives of staff at the university. An online survey was conducted in the Departments of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Computer Science and the IT Division. There were nine quantitative questions and one qualitative question included in the survey to collect respondents' experience and perspectives. The findings revealed that there was interest in moving to a cloud-based model due to the mobility and recovery options it offered. These advantages of a cloud-based model respondents felt will provide an extensive learning support environment to registered students and flexibility to the staff to extend their core services. The OUSL staff, could, with a clear understanding of cloud computing, move to a cloud-enabled model for LMS and remain in the communication platform of the cloud. However, IT skills and infrastructure are pre-requisite for the successful implementation of a cloud-based model within the OUSL.

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