

Medical Research Institute – protecting lives begins with protecting data

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**Medical
Research
Institute of
New Zealand**
Rangahautia
Te Ora



Success Story
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**4x faster
device setup**

from four hours to
under one



**76 forms updated
in 10 minutes**

Technical + relationship
support from CodeBlue



**Cyber insurance
premiums reduced**

external validation of
stronger security

Background

For the Medical Research Institute (MRI), data is more than a resource—it's the foundation of every breakthrough, every protocol and every promise to patients. As a leading health research organisation, MRI manages large-scale clinical trials and produces academic insights and scientific contributions that improve modern medical practice. The integrity, accessibility and security of the organisation's data are central to delivering those outcomes and securing funding. But, more importantly, it must protect its participants' most sensitive information.

Behind the scenes, the infrastructure holding MRI's systems together was beginning to show its age. On-premise servers were nearing the

end of their life cycle, creating a single point of failure and putting data at risk.

"We've always understood the value of our data," says Alex Semprini, a deputy director at the Institute. "But if it escapes, it becomes a liability. That's not just a reputational risk—it could undermine the very reason people trust us with their health information."

So, the Institute turned to its long-term IT partner, CodeBlue, to assist in migrating fully to a comprehensive Microsoft Modern Workplace setup. The result? Powerful security, simplified IT, and remote work capabilities to enable research at a global scale.

Modernising for security, resilience, and reach

MRI had taken some steps into the cloud. But the organisation was still primarily dependent on an outdated physical server running legacy software. This made it challenging to incorporate hybrid working arrangements.

“It had become very clear that we were wasting time using paper and not leveraging the remote digital options to facilitate what we do,” says Alex.

It also left the organisation’s data vulnerable. Even a minor breach could compromise

participant privacy, damage public trust, and threaten future funding.

“The data we collect is similar to what your GP holds—maybe more. We have contact information and complete medical histories. If we were breached, there’d be legal consequences and serious reputational damage,” Alex explains.

CodeBlue moved quickly to help MRI reframe its technology roadmap around three priorities: modernisation, security and business resilience.



4X
faster
device setup



From ageing infrastructure to agile operations

By migrating MRI’s physical infrastructure to Microsoft Modern Workplace, the Institute would gain a flexible and secure way to scale its operations, while staying ahead of emerging threats. CodeBlue then went even further, replacing ageing hardware and layering in advanced cybersecurity protection.

“If you think of a clinical trial as a race, we’re now in the driver’s seat—and CodeBlue is the seatbelt,” says Alex. “They’ve given us the tools

and the structure to do something genuinely world-leading, and to do it safely.”

CodeBlue’s support doesn’t stop at implementation. A refreshed security awareness training programme is being rolled out across MRI to tackle the most common vulnerability in any system: human error. Beyond that, regular penetration testing and disaster recovery rehearsals ensure that systems are battle-ready and continuously improving.

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Alex Semprini

Deputy Director, Medical Research Institute

IT that just works: faster setup, lower support costs

One of the most tangible wins from the Microsoft Modern Workplace rollout is the significant reduction in time and complexity associated with IT management. MRI's small internal IT team—just 1.5 FTEs—can now focus on strategic projects rather than firefighting issues. The environment is simplified, standardised and low-touch, which has also reduced ongoing support costs.

Device setup times have dropped from four hours to under one, with some machines able to self-deploy entirely. With Autopilot and Intune, new machines can now be pre-configured and shipped directly to staff, ready to use as soon as they log in.

From paper chaos to decentralised trial capability

Before engaging CodeBlue, MRI's research operations were limited by paper-based processes and outdated digital tools. Critical forms were stored in physical files, staff spent days searching for documents, and decentralised trials were logistically impossible.

"I once had to manually replace 76 copies of a consent form because a single data point had changed," Alex recalls. "Now, that would take ten minutes."

With digital systems, MRI can now run decentralised, participant-led trials, with central coordination and real-time, secure data collection. It can also explore novel research models, like partnering with community

pharmacies for large-scale patient trials, and attract the attention of international academic and biotech institutions.

"It's not just about saving time or redeploying FTEs," says Alex. "It's about being able to do research in ways no one else can. We're more efficient, more flexible and more globally competitive."

Leading the way in global clinical compliance

MRI is on track to become the first research organisation in Australasia to achieve certification from the European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network (ECRIN)—a major international benchmark of excellence in clinical research data management.

ECRIN certification involves meeting over 120 stringent standards, including 41 specific to IT systems and data processing. CodeBlue's implementation of Microsoft Modern Workplace and supporting technologies is central to achieving this milestone.

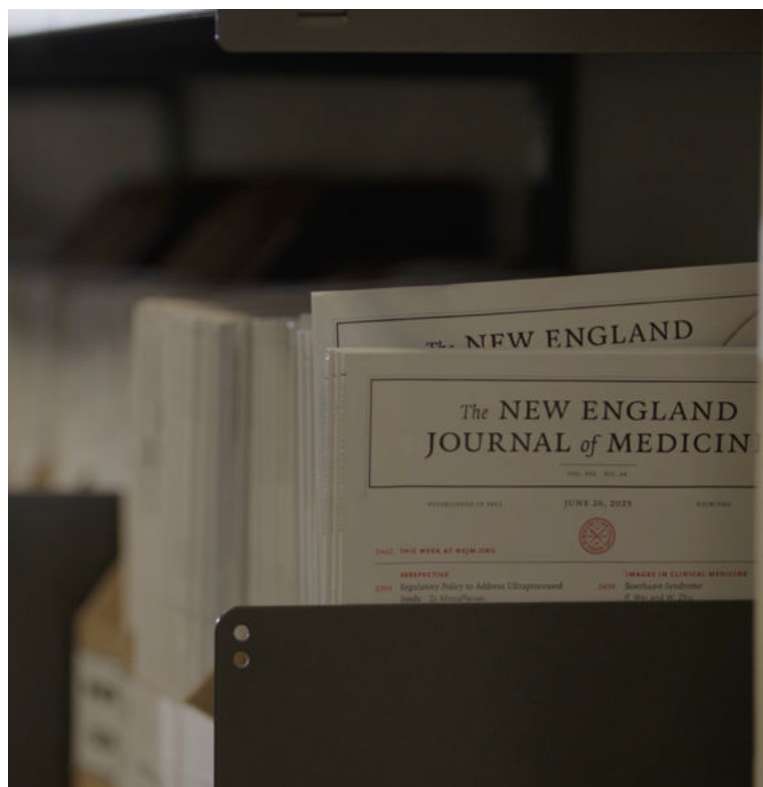
"It's a bit geeky," Alex admits, "but it's incredibly important. The certification gives us credibility with funders, universities and regulators. It opens doors to participate in Horizon Europe—a €93.5 billion research initiative—and lead pandemic preparedness work on behalf of New Zealand."

Following the project, the Institute saw a reduction in cyber insurance premiums—an external validation of its improved risk profile.



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Alex Semprini
Deputy Director



Security that can be unwaveringly trusted

Clinical trials often involve the highly sensitive disclosure of personal health information—including names, contact details and medical histories. The stakes are high. Data must be safe, confidential and accessible only to those with appropriate authority.

As part of the Modern Workplace rollout, CodeBlue deployed a comprehensive security stack that went beyond Microsoft's baseline protections. This included conditional access, multi-factor authentication (MFA), endpoint detection via SentinelOne, and advanced email security through Perception Point. The solution was designed with a defence-in-depth approach that essentially replaced outdated antivirus software with AI-driven, behaviour-based protection.

This wasn't about tools, but posture. CodeBlue helped standardise the Institute's operating

Not just a project, but an evolution

This migration wasn't just about technology—it was about enabling MRI to pursue its mission without barriers.

We wouldn't have withstood the level of audit scrutiny we're now facing without this transformation, it's been a full evolution of how we operate.

With Microsoft Modern Workplace, the organisation has transformed a potential liability into a competitive advantage, laying the groundwork for a secure, scalable and research-ready future. And in doing so, it has set a benchmark for what secure, modern and mission-aligned IT should look like in the health research sector.

environment, reduce shadow IT risk, and enforce guardrails that protect users and data alike.

"For us, it's not about ticking boxes—it's about real-world assurance," Alex explains. "It's about being able to show participants and partners that we're doing everything possible to protect their information."

Reassurance at the top

In smaller organisations, the people responsible for IT aren't always deeply technical, Alex explains, which can cause lots of stress when things go wrong.

He says partnering with CodeBlue "takes the weight off".

With breach protocols in place and regular security and regulatory reports, Alex says senior leaders now feel more confident in their ability to respond to emerging risks. For an organisation juggling high-stakes research with limited internal IT capacity, that peace of mind is priceless.



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