

Borough Construction renovates its IT infrastructure with Fujitsu Services and IBM

Overview

■ The Challenge

Borough Construction, working for the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, needed to provide real-time reporting on project status to its clients. Its existing IT infrastructure was aging, and could not provide the required functionality.

■ The Solution

Worked with IBM Premier Business Partner Fujitsu Services (www.fujitsu.com) to migrate systems to ConSol-ePlus, a Windows-based service management solution which uses IBM Informix Dynamic Server 10 as its underlying database server. A mobile working module helps operatives keep headquarters updated on progress at remote sites.

■ The Benefits

Informix Dynamic Server provides a reliable, high-performance transaction processing platform, supporting remote working; ConSol-ePlus cuts manual processing workload, helps meet regulatory and reporting requirements, and improves scheduling by 10 per cent, saving an estimated £30,000 per year.

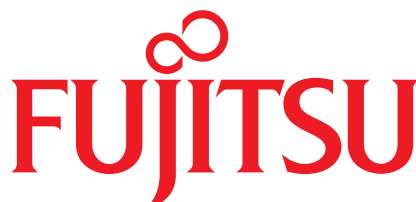


The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is home to over 170,000 people, for whom the borough council provides education, environmental and social services and housing – including 18,000 council-owned properties.

In line with the government's 'Decent Homes Standard' initiative, the council created an arms'-length management organisations, Hammersmith and Fulham Housing Management Services (HFHMS), tasked with improving the standard of council homes by 2010. This organisation is supported by the council's in-house service team, Borough Construction, which undertakes all the repairs and safety services for tenanted and leasehold properties.

"The overriding aim of Borough Construction is to deliver best value services to Housing Management Services," says Bill Fairhall, Head of Services, Borough Construction. "To that end, we depend heavily on our IT systems to manage how our services are controlled and delivered. Nowadays, clients want to know exactly what's happening on their jobs, so we need to answer their queries as and when they are raised. There are also a growing number of regulations and best value indicators that we must comply with, so every job needs to have an auditable trail covering its entire history. This is no small task when you're handling over 65,000 small value jobs a year.

"While our main support application, ConSol, worked very well and was extremely reliable, it was 14 years old. It would have been difficult to integrate it with any new applications. What we needed was a modern system that



offered the same functionality, but which was also flexible, easy to operate, future proofed and fully supported.”

Performance, reliability and availability

Borough Construction considered a number of solutions before choosing to migrate to ConSol-ePlus from Fujitsu Services, an IBM Premier Business Partner. The new solution runs under Microsoft Windows and uses IBM Informix Dynamic Server 10 (IDS) as its database server.

“Informix has been at the heart of the Fujitsu ConSol family since the early nineties, and has been one of the reasons behind the solution’s consistent success,” explains Simon Shelton-Palmer, Software Delivery Manager at Fujitsu Services. “The new version we are using for ConSol-ePlus has been extensively developed by IBM, and provides the performance, reliability and availability a modern business needs to support data and transaction processing workload.”

Fujitsu ConSol-ePlus helps Direct Service Organisations like Borough Construction control job receipt, progression and costing, sub-contractor control and payment, stock control and purchase order management. Borough Construction also implemented additional modules for appointment scheduling and mobile working, helping operatives manage time more effectively and provide real-time status updates via hand-held devices on a radio data network.

“ConSol-ePlus has empowered our managers with more accurate and up-to-date information, so that they can closely monitor performance and address any issues rapidly,” explains Chris Nolan, Projects & Quality Manager, Borough Construction. “Its open architecture also gives us a platform from which to start exploiting

new, best-of-breed applications, build closer links with our clients and sub-contractors, and even communicate directly with end customers using the web.”

Boosting productivity, restricting costs

The solution from Fujitsu Services will help Borough Construction meet regulatory requirements and provide the real-time reporting that its customers demand, while also significantly reducing costs in manual data-entry and administration. Appointment-keeping and job completion times are also expected to improve by 10 per cent, saving £30,000 a year.

“By next year, we aim to be in a position where our field staff will receive a complete eight-hour work schedule every day before they leave home,” explains Bill Fairhall. “They will be able to update this using hand-held devices, so they’ll only need to come back to the depot to restock and be debriefed. We expect that this will lead to real productivity benefits of at least one hour a day per person, and also ensure that our customers get a demonstrably first class service.”

The advanced functionalities of the ConSol-ePlus solution, combined with the reliability and performance of the IBM Informix Dynamic Server database which sits beneath it, are not the only key factors in the project’s success. Borough Construction is also keen to stress the benefits of working with IBM Business Partners like Fujitsu Services, as Bill Fairhall explains:

“Having Fujitsu as a partner allows us to concentrate on running our business, while they take care of the technology. Fujitsu has such great knowledge and experience of the public sector and other industries, and knows our requirements so well, that it can tailor our IT systems almost without needing to ask.”

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