

CASE STUDY

NORTHERN IRELAND CAUSEWAY PROGRAMME

» CAUSEWAY IS NOW FUNDAMENTAL TO THE CONTINUING MODERNISATION AND REFORM OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN NORTHERN IRELAND «

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CHALLENGE

Today's criminal justice systems rely on complex interactions between multiple organisations and the efficient transfer of information amongst different agencies.

In Northern Ireland, it was recognised that delays were inherent in the paper-based systems used to move data to the different stakeholders involved. There was also an opportunity to reduce costs by setting up an electronic information-sharing system.

To address these issues, the Causeway Programme was created. It is a joint initiative of the six criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland: Public Prosecution Service, Forensic Science Northern Ireland, Police Service, Courts and Tribunals Service, Probation Board and Prison Service.

SOLUTION

Fujitsu was selected as the IT partner to deliver the programme over ten years and is responsible for designing, implementing and operating the IT services that enable Causeway to provide a shared service to enable information sharing.

In the first stage of the project (DSM0), the Police, Public Prosecution and Forensic Science Northern Ireland were able to share information electronically. This was later extended in a second phase (DSM1) to include the Court Service and Prison Service.

Safeguards ensure that information is only made available to authorised people, and Fujitsu provides a secure, encrypted link from its data centres to each of the organisation's primary data centres. This guarantees that sensitive information is only accessible to the teams that have a right to see it.

Fujitsu worked closely with staff in each of the six organisations to deliver the solution in a complex multi-agency environment, and to help each of the Causeway partners to specify their requirements and how the main system should integrate with their existing IT applications.

AUTOMATIC DATA TRANSFER

The system means that changes in information can be automatically shared across all relevant bodies in the criminal justice system. This ensures that data is consistent at all times.

For example, when the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) enter a person's details to their line of business system for the purposes of prosecution this data is electronically shared with Causeway for onward transmission to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). Any updates are then communicated automatically back to the police, and with the courts service to arrange a court date.

THE CUSTOMER

- Causeway is a joint undertaking by six organisations that make up the majority of Northern Ireland's criminal justice system

THE CHALLENGE

- Northern Ireland's criminal justice system depended on the manual sharing of information, which contributed to delays, information gaps and duplication of effort
- Existing paper-based systems were unnecessarily costly and manpower-intensive

THE SOLUTION

- Fujitsu worked in a complex multi-agency environment to deliver a Shared Service solution that dramatically improves the provision of public services
- The solution enables the secure, rapid transfer of case data and sharing of common information
- Fujitsu is delivering a fully-integrated managed application service for electronic data transfer between the six organisations

THE BENEFITS

- **BENEFITS** – cumulative benefit of £68m and Return on Investment of 77%, releasing resources and investment
- **FASTER SENTENCING** – witnesses, victims and defendants can complete the trial process more quickly
- **MORE ACCURATE RECORDS** – records can be kept up-to-date, improving their relevance
- **TIMELY INFORMATION** – having a wider overall picture of work and costs enables NIW to drive efficiencies and improve services
- **ONE AND DONE** – data is exchanged electronically without the need for the data to be re-keyed multiple times increasing productivity as staff are freed up from data entry and manual information sharing
- **END TO END** – Providing the foundation to quickly deliver future developments in the Criminal Justice System

The Causeway application also ensures that numerous documents used to initiate case proceedings, such as summonses and charge sheets are exchanged electronically without the need for the data to be keyed multiple times. As the outcomes from trials are completed in the Court Service the results are automatically shared with the other criminal justice organisations.

“Before we had Causeway, each organisation had their own line of business system and information was communicated manually between them,” says Gary Archibald, Causeway Business Manager at the Department of Justice. *“The new system helps save costs, avoids delays in the manual transfer of documentation, and has also helped build stronger links between organisations. It’s really like a large conduit that communicates information between all the systems.”*

Similarly, if an individual changes address, this would previously have required the separate updating of multiple records across different organisations – a time-consuming process. Now, the Causeway system means that when an alteration is made it is immediately shared with all other stakeholders.

PARTNERSHIP

“The working relationship has been very good with everyone Fujitsu has put forward – we basically work out of the same offices, and that has helped a lot,” comments Archibald. *“There’s good communication between us all. Important issues are raised quickly, and that’s a key factor to achieve success in this type of complicated project.”*

Risk management has been another area that has been carefully considered, as Archibald comments: *“There are clearly defined processes to manage risks and mitigate against them – Fujitsu has entered into these procedures fully, and there has been excellent team-work between us to achieve this.”*

Any issues have been handled responsively and rapidly, as Archibald comments: *“If a challenge arises, Fujitsu use all their endeavours to work with us, they escalate difficulties within the Fujitsu infrastructure, and they do it quickly as they understand the importance of this system for the Northern Ireland criminal justice system.”*

SPEEDED-UP JUSTICE

By accelerating the criminal justice processes, the Causeway system should ensure that victims of crime have their cases dealt with more quickly, and that witnesses are able to testify while their recollections of incidents are fresher in their minds. Defendants also spend less time on bail or remand, and prisoners on sentence have their pre-trial reports completed more quickly.

There is also an improvement in the completeness of information presented in courts. This means that lawyers should see fewer cases adjourned due to incomplete reports, and judges and magistrates should less often be asked to agree to adjournments due to problems with information.

Criminal records are also more accessible, as when a judge delivers a sentence, the defendant’s record can be automatically updated. *“In the past, people would have to have written to the police to get this information and it would have taken at least two weeks to get a reply, but now it’s instantaneous,”* says Archibald. *“This is just one example of how processes have become faster.”*

“Before, if problems occurred in the criminal justice system, they could be overlooked – now instead of having individual elements, we have a joined up system, and issues are much more visible and can be dealt with very quickly,” says Archibald.

TECHNOLOGY CO-ORDINATION

Fujitsu provides services including a 24x7 help desk, service management, application design, development and support, ongoing application management, infrastructure provision and hosting.

As prime contractor, Fujitsu is also responsible for co-ordinating other suppliers, including HP and Microsoft. Applications that run on the infrastructure include Causeway’s core applications, SQL Server, Microsoft BizTalk, and Autonomy Meridio document and content management. The system is based around Microsoft .NET components, and is provided from Fujitsu’s two Belfast data centres – a live system and a disaster recovery site.

LEADING-EDGE PROJECT

With the first two phases now complete, the Causeway organisations are considering how Causeway can be fully exploited. They will also look at extending sharing information to other relevant government departments.

“Fujitsu has met all the requirements of the project, and has been fully committed to its success,” says Archibald.

As well as the cost benefits of information-sharing, this kind of multi-agency project also delivers savings due to economies of scale, and because duplication is avoided with IT systems and solutions shared across several organisations.

Over the lifetime of the programme, it will give a ROI of around 77%,” Organisations have reinvested the resources they’ve saved due to the Causeway system.

“Causeway is ground-breaking and is delivering joined-up criminal justice in Northern Ireland,” says Archibald.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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