

Case Study Forestry Commission

“Working closely together with Fujitsu as one unified team allowed us to co-ordinate the programme very efficiently and reach sites across the country within a strict timeframe. It was this collaborative approach that ensured success and made the process relatively painless.”

Clare Atkins, Head of Business Solutions, Forestry Commission



The customer

Country: United Kingdom
Industry: Public Sector
Founded: 1919
Employees: 3,000+
Website: www.forestry.gov.uk



The challenge

The Forestry Commission was using Windows XP on thousands of devices, however this OS was reaching end of life and would no longer be supported. It needed to upgrade all of these machines to Windows 7.

The solution

The organisation turned to its existing business partner, Fujitsu, to develop a precise deployment programme for over 2,200 machines in 54 locations.

The customer

Established in 1919, the Forestry Commission plants many millions of trees and harvests almost four million tonnes of wood every year from public forests – equivalent to more than a third of total domestic production. This reduces the UK's dependency on imported wood and provides low-carbon materials for manufacturing, fuel and energy. As Britain's largest land manager, the organisation is also custodian of 900,000 hectares of land including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where millions of visitors contribute almost £2 billion annually to the economy.

The challenge

Since the early 2000s, the Forestry Commission had relied on an extensive fleet of laptops and PCs running Windows XP. However, this operating system (OS) was nearing end of life meaning that a comprehensive refresh programme was called for. While the organisation had originally undertaken this type of project in-house, the client estate had grown so significantly that it did not have the internal resources to cope.

“We have almost 2,500 devices dispersed across a huge geographic area which is substantially more than when we handled the Windows XP roll out,” explains Clare Atkins, Head of Business Solutions, Forestry Commission. “That meant we needed a partner with the reach to upgrade or replace these machines.

“As the long established support partner to the Forestry Commission, Fujitsu already had a deep understanding of the technical challenges and the physical estate. They were therefore able to develop and implement a plan quickly and efficiently that leveraged maximum benefit to both sides from the existing relationship. Fujitsu could also demonstrate impressive experience of similarly sized projects,” adds Clare. “We knew Fujitsu had the scope to reach even the most remote sites and a wide variety of users from scientists to forest rangers to office staff.”

The benefit

- Fujitsu worked overnight to upgrade up to 100 computers per week without disrupting the business
- The presence of the Fujitsu floor walker on-site the following day enabled users to have any questions answered
- The team used Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager to streamline deployment and automate the build process for the most seamless migration
- The new OS gives a consistent, standardised user experience for better productivity
- Improved reliability has led to reduced support costs

Products and services

- Fujitsu systems integration

The solution

Fujitsu began with a series of workshops to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the process. This enabled it to identify the logistical requirements for a number of different roll-out scenarios. With the plan agreed, Fujitsu and the Commission commenced a pilot at Silvan House, one of its main offices. "The pilot enabled us to refine the upgrade process and make sure that the main programme would cause minimal disruption to daily business," says Clare. "We could then begin to roll out across the country."

Fujitsu typically touched three locations per week, upgrading upwards of 30 computers every night. To simplify the process, it used Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) to streamline deployment and automate the build process when there was a server available. In smaller locations without this resource, it manually upgraded each device to Windows 7.

"The engineers had dual roles –one team managed the initial install overnight and on the following day, another team were customer facing," continues Clare. "This meant that users had a friendly face to help them adjust to the new OS and answer any questions. This helped make the migration seamless."

The benefit

In total, Fujitsu visited 54 unique locations and upgraded or refreshed, as appropriate, over 1,500 devices to Windows 7. By automating the process using SCCM, it ensured that the whole project could be completed on time and on budget. It also minimised disruption to users by working overnight and at weekends.

"Working closely together as one unified team allowed us to co-ordinate the programme very efficiently and reach sites across the country within a strict timeframe," comments Clare. "It was this collaborative approach that ensured success and made the process painless."

The Forestry Commission now has a high percentage of its fleet of client devices upgraded that provide a consistent, reliable platform for users. This, in turn, has reduced support costs as well as enabling the simple deployment of new applications and services.

"We have fewer incidents to resolve, which reduces the burden on our Service Delivery teams," remarks Clare. "At the same time, the user experience has improved, making them more productive."

Conclusion

The agreed scope of this project has been successfully completed but there remains a final phase targeting specialist staff with individual requirements. The Forestry Commission is considering whether to involve Fujitsu once more.

"We're looking at the final part of the migration and speaking to Fujitsu," concludes Clare. "That will enable us to ensure every user is finally upgraded to Windows 7."

"As the project evolved, our team became more collaborative and behaved as one unit. Fujitsu wanted to succeed as much as we did and that was reflected by Fujitsu staff's willingness to go the extra mile."

Clare Atkins, Head of Business Solutions, Forestry Commission

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