

Putting forward the case for effective IT management

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John Coyle – Director of ICT, Irish Courts Service



Challenge

The effective operation of the courts system is a critical element of the well being of any society. However, their effectiveness is not influenced solely by the manner in which cases are dealt with by judges, but also by the administrative and institutional framework that supports and facilitates the operation of the courts.

In Ireland this framework is provided by the Courts Service, which was established on 9 November 1999 following the enactment of the Courts Service Act of 1998. The Courts Service’s remit includes providing support services to the judges and information to the public, managing and maintaining court buildings, and providing facilities for users of the courts. There are approximately 1,100 court users and approximately 140 judges that use the Courts Service support systems.

In 2002 the Courts Service wanted to modernise its information and communications infrastructure and decided that it did not have the necessary skills and expertise available in-house to do this. So, it decided to outsource the support of its IT infrastructure.

Solution

Following a competitive procurement exercise the Courts Service awarded Fujitsu a four year contract to provide a complete managed service covering 1,250 desktops and 200 servers in over 70 offices throughout Ireland. Fujitsu also manages other service providers as part of the contract and supplies a range of call-out services as required.

In 2004 Fujitsu was subsequently chosen to design and deliver the world’s latest technology courtroom for the new Commercial Court in Dublin. Following a separate EU tender, in 2005 the Courts Service also awarded Fujitsu the contract to design, implement and support a high-end, fully integrated technology solution to aid the presentation of evidence in three of the courtrooms in the Cork Courthouse as part of a major a ? 26 million refurbishment.

Both projects were successfully delivered on time and to budget and included digital audio recording, video conferencing, and electronic evidence distribution catering for evidence from CD, DVD, VCR, visual presenter or an evidence PC/server or from counsel’s laptop.

John Coyle, Director of ICT, Irish Courts Service, continues, *“These new courtroom technologies implemented by Fujitsu are enabling us to provide an enhanced service to the judiciary, the legal profession and their commercial clients, and are delivering cost savings by speeding up the judicial process.”*

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation

Irish Courts Service

Services delivered

A fully managed IT infrastructure support service and the development and implementation of advanced court room technology to aid the presentation of evidence

Key metrics

- 1,250 desktops and 200 servers
- 1100 employees, 140 judges in over 70 locations throughout Ireland

Benefits

- **Value for money** – centralising services has cut costs and technology has replaced manual processes
- **Improved customer service** – now have rapid access to accurate information, speeding up the judicial process
- **Minimised business disruption** – system availability is enhanced with a reliable and secure IT infrastructure
- **Simplified management** – have a single point of contact for the management of all technical and support issues
- **Focus on core business** – allows the Courts Service to concentrate on its core, value-adding activities
- **Accurate budgeting** – costs are entirely visible and predictable over the contract
- **Access specialist resources** – can access a wide range of essential business and technical expertise

CASE STUDY IRISH COURTS SERVICE



The success of the first managed service contract prompted the Courts Service to extend the scope and duration of the replacement contract. Following a competitive procurement exercise Fujitsu was chosen to continue providing the managed IT infrastructure support services up until to 2013.

“Fujitsu met and in some cases exceeded all the requirements specified by the Courts Service,” says John Coyle. “For us, it was important to award the contract to a supplier that is proactive, innovative and flexible and has the enthusiasm for continuous service improvement and customer service. These characteristics were reflected in the bid from Fujitsu and from our experience of working with them over the past number of years, we are confident that they will deliver.”

Under the new contract, which is valued at over ?12 million, Fujitsu manages all aspects of IT infrastructure support within the Courts Service. Its extensive range of services includes desktop, network, database, system administration, hardware support and asset management services, as well as the provision of IT security, hosting, supplier management, service desk and service management. Additionally the Courts Service can request ad-hoc services from Fujitsu that are a logical extension of the contracted services.

As another step in its change modernisation programme, the Courts Service chose Fujitsu to deliver and manage a Digital Audio Recording (DAR) system in courtrooms nationwide. Under the contract, which is valued in excess of ?16 million and spans a period of 5-7 years, Fujitsu will provide a fully managed service including the provision of the core DAR system, a secure data storage environment and the production and delivery of court transcripts. Using state-of-the-art technology, proceedings in all courtrooms will be recorded to provide an accurate record of evidence in all cases for subsequent transcription or playback.

P J Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Courts Service, says, *“Digital Audio Recording will replace the existing stenography system which has been in place for many years. The courts are not immune to developments in technology generally and this new system, based as it is on digital technology, will provide Judges with increased levels of support within the courtroom and is a further step in our overall change modernisation programme.”*

Benefits

The new court room systems and managed service provided by Fujitsu are enabling the Courts Service to:

- **Value for money** – centralising services and removing duplicate effort and resources has cut costs, while increasing the overall level of support, and technology has been used to replace labour-intensive processes
- **Improve customer service** – all stakeholders now have rapid and consistent access to accurate information and evidence within the courtroom, speeding up key elements of the judicial process
- **Minimise business disruption** – system availability is enhanced with a reliable and secure IT infrastructure, proactive management and rapid problem resolution
- **Simplify management** – a single point of contact for the management of all technical and support issues, using standardised procedures/methodologies across all

suppliers, substantially reduces risk, management time and overhead costs

- **Focus on core business** – allows the Courts Service to concentrate on its core, value-adding activities, rather than the underlying support processes
- **Budget accurately** – costs are entirely visible and predictable over the contract
- **Access specialist resources** – can access a wide range of business and technical expertise essential for the maintenance and support of a modern IT infrastructure.

“The Courts Service is increasingly dependent on its technologies and applications for the effective discharge of its business operations,” says P J Fitzpatrick. “This has resulted in significant business benefit for the organisation and has transformed the organisation from a virtual ‘Greenfield site’ to a modern technological organisation using information technology to support the administration of the courts and the provision of ever increasing levels of customer service.”

John Coyle adds, *“The ready availability of Fujitsu’s extensive technical skills enables the Courts Service to react rapidly to changing business requirements and to provide better and more consistent service levels internally across the organisation and to our customers.”*

Approach

The Courts Service began with an almost clean slate in terms of existing IT infrastructure, a factor that John Coyle says worked to their advantage, *“We weren’t replacing any equipment or doing a huge amount of integration with existing systems, so we were able to get off the ground quickly.”*

However, central to Fujitsu’s ongoing service delivery is their continued focus on continuous service improvement, which ensures an innovative and dynamic service based on a deep understanding of the customer’s business.

Expertise

With over 30 years experience of supporting the needs of customers, Fujitsu has a proven track record in providing complex systems integration and management services that reduce costs, improve productivity and customer services and deliver a compelling return on investment.

In particular, Fujitsu has a great deal of experience in delivering working technology-enabled courtrooms in The Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the UK and Australia. It is also leading the Causeway project, which will enable all justice agencies in Northern Ireland to electronically share information easily and efficiently.

Explaining the importance of this John Coyle says, *“We wanted a single strategic partner to provide information technology support services, with proven capacity, capability and experience, who we could rely upon to manage the day-to-day running and support of our IT infrastructure, freeing us to focus on our core business of efficiently and effectively supporting the operation of the courts.”*

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