



Centrix Software Enables Cheshire East to Accurately Plan for Desktop Transformation

“Centrix WorkSpace *iQ* has enabled us to plan for a user-centric desktop transformation, as well as identifying costs savings along the way. The speed, accuracy and interpretation of our end-user estate data that Centrix Software WorkSpace *iQ* provides is unique in my experience.” Alan Myatt, ICT Program Manager, Cheshire East

Situation

Historically, Cheshire County Council was a traditional two-tier local authority covering the geography of Cheshire. Having been made into two unitary councils, covering East and West, both organizations operate on a shared IT-Services infrastructure. The strategic ICT function in Cheshire East is mirrored in Cheshire West, with the bulk of operations run as a shared service. With this newly formed structure of East and West, Mr Myatt was part of the project team to review the desktop estate with a view to implementing a desktop transformation.

Challenge

The desktop transformation project is wide ranging, “Our desktop estate is XP and so we need to migrate to a supported desktop operating system, but also as a new authority we recognized that we were going to be working very differently. Our current ‘one person, to one desk, to one machine’ isn’t sustainable and we need to understand not only what we have, but also what is being used, and how and by who.”

While Mr Myatt had a variety of asset tools at his disposal, they couldn’t tell him usage nor could they identify exactly how many users there were; without the usage data, a new desktop strategy could not be conceived.

Solution

Having been introduced to Centrix Software by an incumbent reseller partner, Mr Myatt engaged with the other key stakeholders from IT Shared Services and Cheshire West to scope out an action plan for desktop transformation utilizing WorkSpace *iQ*. With the empirical data that WorkSpace *iQ* provided, it was quickly recognized that not only did the authorities have significantly less users than they thought but also devices. “We thought we had a rather ageing predominantly thick-client estate with a few hundred applications but the biggest surprise to us was we actually didn’t know how many users or devices we truly had, both numbers came back considerably lower than expected,” says Mr Myatt. In fact, both counts were in the region of 15% less than anticipated.

“The realization that our users and devices were lower than expected was a real turning point for us. We had signed up to a Microsoft EA on a per device basis and it was coming up

to its anniversary and what started as a desktop transformation project veered to an opportunity to realize cost savings as we recognized we would be able to optimize certain parts our EA,” comments Mr Myatt. While the monitoring of the application estate provided no big surprises, it revealed the uncontrolled proliferation of some non-core business desktop applications, which was a big eye opener. A threshold was set for applications; if they were used for 15 minutes or less, it was likely they were being used for viewing rather than creating or editing purposes. Armed with this empirical data, IT Shared Services engaged with Cheshire East and Cheshire West to discuss the appropriate action to take. “In this respect WorkSpace *iQ* enables us to ensure our users have access to the appropriate applications based upon their actual usage pattern,” states Mr Myatt.

Mr Myatt continues, “Overall, it took less than 4 weeks for us to fully understand who was using what and how and to decide on a plan to execute. We were hugely impressed by the speed of identification and reporting. It was also a big benefit that WorkSpace *iQ* worked with some of the asset tools we had already invested in, such as Vector and Active Directory.”

Benefits

Phase 1 of the desktop transformation project was all about information and planning - to date Centrix WorkSpace *iQ* has provided:

- Fact-based data and input for the planning of desktop transformation
- Detailed user and usage based intelligence for future mode of application delivery
- Identification of cost savings
- Empirical data for an optimized Microsoft EA renewal

Next Steps

Using data and reports from WorkSpace *iQ*, Mr Myatt’s plans include user virtualization and desktop virtualization. WorkSpace *iQ* has identified which users and devices are likely candidates for desktop virtualization. But prior to embarking on a desktop virtualization proof of concept, Mr Myatt will be deploying user virtualization from one of the leading technology vendors in this area.