

agile and collaborative approach to upgrade maintains Agency accreditation

Atos delivers a speedy and successful upgrade for 3,500 users, reduces incidents, and retains critical access to secure network.

The Highways Agency is responsible for operating, maintaining, and improving Britain's motorways and major roads. Its people work all over the country, often on different shift patterns. When the Agency needed to upgrade its Windows XP platform to Windows 7, it faced a major challenge. As well as logistical issues, the estate required a complete refresh. Yet the change had to be completed quickly to ensure continued access to the Government's secure network - critical to the Agency's role.

Leveraging its knowledge of the Highways Agency's computer estate as long term outsource partner, Atos worked closely with the Agency to complete the upgrade in a compressed timescale of just eight months with minimal client disruption. As a result, the Highways Agency retained its Government accreditation, and employees continue to access secure shared networks.

Employees across the Agency now use a consistently stable, up-to-date Windows 7 platform. End users report less incidents than before the upgrade, and feedback suggests an improvement in user perceptions of ICT support. The Agency is saving money on applications licenses that are no longer needed, and maintains a streamlined software estate.



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Imperative change



The Highways Agency used Windows XP as its default platform for more than five years. When Microsoft announced the end of its support for Windows XP, the Agency had to quickly upgrade 3,500 end user devices to Windows 7 – because the Government requires that public sector organisations have software still supported by the vendor if they use secure official shared networks.

Speed was crucial if the Agency was to retain continuous Government accreditation and access to the information it needs to do its job. So it set a tough target of eight months for the upgrade programme – less than half the time typically required for a project of its size.

That was a significant challenge, given that the Agency's workforce is located all over the country, working long days with variable work patterns: 7am to 7pm core working day, seven days a week, with a third of the workforce covering 24 hours on shift patterns.

It was made even more challenging because the software estate was complicated, and the Agency required more than an upgrade. Over five years, the number of applications and other software tools had grown significantly as operational requirements changed. Some software was no longer in use, and some legacy versions of applications had interoperability issues, which affected collaboration and caused unnecessary license costs.

This unplanned growth meant the estate had become difficult and expensive to manage. There was an increase in user incidents reported, and it was taking longer and more resources to fix them.

The Windows 7 upgrade programme was designed to:

- ▶ **Migrate devices from Windows XP, Office 2003 to Windows 7, Office 2010**
- ▶ **Upgrade key applications such as Office and Adobe products**
- ▶ **In the longer term, the Agency would be able to:**
 - ▶ **Simplify, standardise and future proof its estate**
 - ▶ **Rationalise software based on usage patterns**
 - ▶ **Introduce new technologies to enhance system efficiency and user productivity.**

The upgrade programme had to be completed quickly if the Agency was to secure continued Government accreditation.

Close partner

As ICT partner since 2008, Atos was well prepared to take the lead role on delivering the urgent upgrade and comprehensive software refresh. The role included preventing interoperability issues, and managing software licenses. Atos has excellent knowledge of the Agency's software estate and end user device processes. It also has a good working relationship with the Agency's ICT team, and close collaboration was vital if the upgrade was to meet the tight timescale.

The Agency and Atos carefully planned two phases of activity designed to meet the deadline:

An initial upgrade of Office on the virtual desktop estate provided a third of workplace devices with an early view of the functionality associated with Office 2010

Consolidated upgrade and rationalisation on a site by site basis was supported by user laptop clinics and floorwalkers to aid with the transition from XP to W7.

Proven approaches

As well as its knowledge of the Highways Agency software estate, Atos also brought its experience of working with many other organisations, using proven deployment approaches to software upgrades and complex rationalisation projects. It applied its methodology rigorously to deliver the project:

Applications confirmation

- ▶ Applications accessed
 - An applications master list was created to control all applications accessed and the components and versions required to run them
- ▶ Compatibility
 - Checks were made on which versions were not compatible with Windows 7 and required an upgrade
 - The software compliance team confirmed where new licenses were required
- ▶ New, removed and changed applications were tracked
- ▶ Version control was used on the master list to track changes
- ▶ Applications usage was measured
 - Software metering was configured for selected applications
 - Results were provided to the Agency, allowing a judgement to be made about which applications could be retired, or quantity of software licenses amended.

Non desktop components

- ▶ Virtual Desktop estate was upgraded to include Office 2010, to provide quick deployment of upgraded software to a large section of the user community
- ▶ Standalone demonstration machines were provided to users to allow early use of Windows 7 and Office 2010
- ▶ Servers to be upgraded, decommissioned or retain unchanged were reviewed
- ▶ Built and deployed replacement branch cache servers ahead of deployment ensured smooth rollout Third party print services were migrated to new branch cache servers.

Security

- ▶ Close engagement with Highways Agency Security Manager provided early sight of Risk Management and Accreditation Documentation (RMAD)
- ▶ Early migration of the Security Manager provided confidence in the solution
- ▶ Multiple PEN tests were scheduled to cover different elements of the solution as they became available to ensure the timescales were met.

Testing

- ▶ Highways Agency and Atos joint testing allowed for phasing of the project, and for the desktop deployment to begin without waiting for all testing to be completed, through an agreed prioritisation of applications critical to Highways Agency users
- ▶ Technical testing
 - Component testing of infrastructure elements was completed
 - Applications were categorised for testing with input from support teams and Highways Agency project team
 - Atos application support team provided signoff for the test plans for applications they supported, and also took part in the testing of some applications
- ▶ User Acceptance Testing
 - Conducted in a test lab, allowing for close project support and quicker resolution of incidents as they were identified
 - Test platform was also provided through Citrix and was available throughout the life of the project for users, allowing them to test their in house applications
 - Internal project team pre tested to confirm readiness for UAT, before passing to the Highways project team who managed the selection and execution of the end user testing, with assistance from the Atos project team, to identify users and resolve issues raised to ensure final signoff of the applications was achieved.

Pre deployment

- ▶ Joint planning sessions with Atos and the Highways Agency project teams were held in order to put together a comprehensive plan that ensured that the Agency's requirements for deployments were met, based on known events
- ▶ Internal project team was extensively engaged in planning and execution
- ▶ Some devices did not support Windows 7 and these were identified and replaced
- ▶ Scope of user data migration during the upgrade was planned:
 - Baseline architecture with user home and profiles were replicated to the central store to facilitate a smoother rollout
- ▶ Site surveys were used to review the infrastructure and locations, and aid planning the deployment
 - Measures were used to increase the number of builds taking place at once in order to speed up the migration.

Deployment

- ▶ A deployment approach was created for each scenario, all of which included the use of floorwalkers to support users in the transition of XP to W7:
 - Desktops
 - Manual rebuilds were used
 - Laptops
 - Manual rebuilds were used as planned in scheduled clinics at user sites
 - Sites with no build server (e.g. small sites and home workers)
 - Buffer stock was used to facilitate pre built laptops and desktops to be swapped out
 - Regional Control Centres
 - Times were coordinated with traffic officers for upgrades to take place to ensure that 24/7 service was not affected
 - Specialist users (graphics, diversity, meeting rooms, senior management)
 - Project staff carried out the builds on a one to one basis to ensure specialist software was installed and functioned correctly
- ▶ Management of supplier
 - supported the supplier with project resource for deployment to allow for a smoother delivery.

Communications

- ▶ Managed by the Highways Agency, and regularly provided to users throughout the project, especially during rollout. In particular an FAQ document was produced for users to show the main differences between the two operating systems and was regularly updated based on the most common issues users had reported to floorwalkers during the migrations progressed.
- ▶ Regular face to face project communication within the team helped to facilitate the Agency and Atos working together as a single unit.

Using the Atos approach, and following the two phase plan, the project was completed on time, with no outstanding migration issues. The Highways Agency regards it as an outstanding success as users reap the benefits.

Highways Agency benefits

As a result of Atos delivery, the Agency has achieved its stated objectives and much more:

- ▶ Government accreditation retained
- ▶ Stable service
- ▶ Less incidents raised
- ▶ Less management of the estate required
- ▶ Estate rationalised, providing opportunities for license and maintenance cost savings
- ▶ Ensured software compliance
- ▶ Working and repeatable user communications approach, designed for future use
- ▶ Improved perception of ICT from user base.



About Atos

Atos SE (Societas Europaea) is a leader in digital services with 2014 pro forma annual revenue of circa €11 billion and 93,000 employees in 72 countries. Serving a global client base, the Group provides Consulting & Systems Integration services, Managed Services & BPO, Cloud operations, Big Data & Cyber-security solutions, as well as transactional services through Worldline, the European leader in the payments and transactional services industry. With its deep technology expertise and industry knowledge, the Group works with clients across different business sectors: Defense, Financial Services, Health, Manufacturing, Media, Utilities, Public sector, Retail, Telecommunications, and Transportation.

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