



Windows 7 Customer Solution Case Study

City of London enhances citizen service delivery with the help of Windows 7

Overview

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Government

Customer Profile

London is a city in Southwestern Ontario with a metropolitan area population of more than 350,000.

Business Situation

Facing mounting budgetary pressures, London was looking to update its desktop computing environment in order for city officials to be more responsive to the public.

Solution

London became one of the first Canadian municipalities to upgrade its desktop computing environment to the Windows® 7 operating system operating system.

Benefits

- Enhanced It data and network protection
- Cost-effective deployment
- Improved productivity and user

“The business proposition for deploying Windows 7 was around delivering more proactive automated desktop management model and an enhanced desktop computing experience for our staff.”

Barry Heathers, City of London

London is a city in Southwestern Ontario with a metropolitan area population of more than 350,000. The innovative municipality prides itself on the strategic use of technology and delivering a high level of core services to its citizens. Facing mounting budgetary pressures, London was looking to update its desktop computing environment in order for city officials to be more responsive to the public. Working with Microsoft® Gold Certified partner CMS Consulting Inc., London became one of the first Canadian municipalities to upgrade its desktop computing environment to the Windows® 7 operating system operating system. Employees at the city are now taking advantage of the software’s capabilities to access data more quickly, securely and productively – allowing staff to support more efficient and lower-cost municipal services.

Situation

Nestled in the heart of Southwestern Ontario, the City of London has enjoyed a long tradition of enterprise, innovation and creativity since it was founded as a village in 1826. Home to more than 350,000 residents, London was recently ranked as one of the best-managed cities in Ontario and included among the top 10 in Canada by Maclean's magazine for its ability to cost-effectively deliver services to its constituents. These services – including administration, licensing, inspections, sanitation, fire, police, water, land use planning, community services, and parks and recreation – are critical to the day-to-day lives of citizens. However, like many municipal governments, the City of London must deliver a high standard of service in the face of rising budgetary pressures and increasing demand for its IT services.

According to Barry Heathers, Manager, Data Centre and Hardware Services, as local governments seek to build deeper connections with their citizens and maximize operating budgets, harnessing innovation through technology is a strategic priority for the municipality. "A big reason why London consistently ranks so highly compared to other municipalities is our commitment to innovation, and one of the most effective ways to encourage innovation is by taking advantage of cutting-edge technology. Our 2,400 PCs were still running Microsoft Windows XP, and it was time to upgrade our technology," says Heathers.

Security is another priority at the City of London. In the face of new regulations, such as the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), which governs the transparency and security of personal information, and Procurement Card Industry (PCI) compliance that dictates how debit or credit card payments are made, the IT department also needed a more efficient

way to encrypt data – a process it had tried before using a third-party solution, with limited success.

Given that an estimated 400 employees work remotely, ensuring that data didn't get accidentally lost or stolen was another concern.

"The ability to offer quality services hinges on our ability to find information quickly and easily, and deliver it securely," says Heathers. "Technology plays a critical role as we build deeper connections with citizens, and we knew that migrating to the latest technology platform would help us gain improved levels of service and smarter information management."

Solution

After conducting a thorough evaluation of its IT infrastructure, the City of London worked with Microsoft Gold Certified partner CMS Consulting Inc. to standardize its IT staff PCs on the Windows 7 operating system and begin the broader deployment of Windows 7.

"The City of London knew what they wanted to achieve: a PC environment that helped staff find the information they need in a collaborative environment," says Alex Chan, CMS Consulting Inc. "We recommended Windows 7 because it meets the City's immediate security and performance needs and has the flexibility to help the City deliver top-quality services to citizens for years to come."

Windows 7 also helps the IT department streamline PC management. During deployment, the municipality took advantage of the enhanced User State Migration Tool, a command-line tool designed to migrate user profiles, files and system settings, to ensure that all information was transferred to the new system. As well, the Dynamic Driver Provisioning and the Deployment Image

Servicing and Management tool (DISM) helped the IT department leverage a single image for the entire organization. With it, staff can more easily create, change and manage desktop images across its 2,400 desktop PCs.

The IT team also used the Windows XP Mode of Windows 7 to help during the migration to Windows 7. This enabled staff to easily create a virtual Windows XP environment capable of running those few applications that required Windows XP, while work was underway to update these applications to run natively on Windows 7.

Benefits

In the face of tightening budgets, the performance and flexibility of Windows 7 has enabled the City of London to reduce the cost of supporting desktop PC users, and deliver services more securely and efficiently.

Just as important, the user experience has improved. Staff has summarized the Windows 7 experience in a single word – easy. “Our IT team receives fewer calls, which frees up their time to be proactive and focus on different areas of the organization. The less the support desk hears from our users, the more time we have to enhance our service portfolio,” adds Heathers.

Enhanced IT data and network protection

The City of London has realized several security and performance enhancements with the move to Windows 7. The Windows Firewall Client, improved in Windows 7, together with Microsoft AppLocker™ and Group Policy improvements, help provide a stronger level of PC security without incremental cost. With Microsoft AppLocker, the City of London IT staff can help prevent unauthorized software from running on PCs, which allows them to better manage

application installations and create a standardized PC environment.

“Earning and keeping the trust of citizens is paramount in everything we do. Ensuring that our desktops are as secure as possible helps us protect sensitive data, and allows us to build a connection with citizens that’s secure and reliable,” says Heathers.

In addition, with Microsoft BitLocker To Go™ helping to protect data on portable storage devices and the enhanced User Account Control also helping defend the cities’ computers, the City of London has greater assurance that its data is secure and that it is meeting compliance requirements.

“The City of London quickly embraced many of the new features in Windows 7, such as Microsoft BitLocker and BitLocker To Go for fixed and removable hard drive data encryption, and DirectAccess for more secure network connections,” says Chan. “With these additional security features, the City of London is able to protect data while allowing staff to work more productively.”

Cost-effective deployment

The hard link migration feature in the User State Migration Tool allows IT staff to confidently leave data on a computer while it is upgraded to Windows 7, and alleviates the need to back up data across the network, reducing the impact on bandwidth. The City estimates that it saved about 30 minutes per PC compared to its last operating system upgrade. As well, moving from Windows XP to Windows 7 did not require a hardware refresh, and has helped improve the performance of aging applications.

There are also plans to take advantage of the Windows 7 features that can help reduce power consumption - such as the improved idle processing, which reduces background activities and Adaptive Display Brightness,

which automatically reduces display brightness when a PC is idle - that will help reduce operational costs and over time shrink the city's carbon footprint.

"Innovation is the key to our success and we believe strongly in leveraging next-generation technology to foster it. But to do that, it has to work well out of the box. With Windows 7 we encountered no compatibility issues and we were quick to see performance benefits as well," says Heathers.

Improved productivity and user experience

Using Windows 7, employees are now able to access data faster than ever before- allowing them to get more done in less time. City staffers, for example, are now delivering a higher standard of service by taking advantage of new features in Windows 7, such as Federated Search, which enables users to seamlessly search their own desktop computers and the city's network resources. This also helps the City of London ensure compliance with MFIPPA and foster a greater level of openness and transparency.

In the future, the municipality also has plans to deploy the Windows Server® 2008 R2 operating system to take advantage of the DirectAccess feature in Windows 7, which will enable city staff to more easily access information and resources securely without having to use virtual private network technology.

"With greater visibility and easier access to our data, City of London staff can now spend less time trying to locate information and more time delivering strong service. When our frontline city staff can better use technology, they're able to do more work for our citizens," says Heathers

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Software & Services

■ Windows 7

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