



Microsoft Windows Server System Customer Solution Case Study

Responsive IT Helps United Kingdom Government Department Streamline Collaborative Working

Overview

Country or Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Government

Customer Profile

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is one of the largest United Kingdom Government departments.

Business Situation

MoD needed to improve efficiency and streamline its collaborative working processes.

Solution

MoD worked with Capgemini to develop and implement the Defence Electronic Commerce Service (DECS) shared working environment, based on Microsoft® SharePoint® Portal Server 2001 technology and the Defence Collaboration Programme (DCP) collaborative working environment.

Benefits

- Reduced IT infrastructure costs
- Lower travel costs from fewer meetings
- Increased versatility
- Faster, more visible communication
- File-sharing allows re-use of material
- More coherence in remote teamwork

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Duncan Aitchison, DCP Customer Requirements Manager, Ministry of Defence

One of the United Kingdom Government’s largest and most diverse departments, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is responsible for defending the United Kingdom and for promoting international peace and security. MoD develops most of its products and capabilities through Integrated Project Teams (IPTs), which can be spread over several locations. The department needed to improve efficiency and streamline its collaborative working processes. The MoD worked with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Capgemini to develop the Defence Electronic Commerce Service (DECS) shared working environment, based on Microsoft SharePoint® Portal Server 2001 technology. Now, new services based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003 are introducing more synergies and capabilities.

Situation

The United Kingdom Government wanted all its services to be available online by 2005. As this deadline draws near, the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence (MoD)—one of the Government's largest and most diverse departments, and the one responsible for the nation's security and international peacekeeping efforts—is looking to increase productivity and efficiency, especially in working with partners.

The MoD develops and maintains most of its products and capabilities through Integrated Project Teams (IPTs), which can be spread over several locations in the United Kingdom and overseas. Such diversity can make it difficult for the IPTs to work together efficiently. The MoD wanted to improve its collaborative working processes while integrating services to work more efficiently with its supplier community.

Industry is playing an increasingly strong role in delivering capability, and the MoD needed to improve its own productivity and efficiency in order to compete. It needed a solution to enable and support its work with trading partners, which include BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, and QinetiQ.

"We required a collaborative solution that would enable us to share information with our suppliers with the assurance that it was done within a secure environment. This would allow both MoD and our suppliers to take advantage of the many benefits to be realised from improved collaborative working processes," says Squadron Leader Duncan Aitchison, Defence Collaboration Programme (DCP) Customer Requirements Manager at the MoD. Priorities include the handling of information in support of decision-making, and information flows that support new business processes.

Solution

The MoD joined forces with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Capgemini to launch the Defence Electronic Commerce Service (DECS) platform in July 2000. DECS is a secure online trading platform for both government departments and trading partners that aims to drive down costs by improving efficiency and capabilities for all users. Key areas of focus include speeding up communications, improving decision-making capabilities, and more effective use of funds.

DECS provides several e-business services, including Purchase-to-Payment, Interim Purchasing, e-catalogues, and the Bulk Fuel Inventory Solution. In April 2002, the MoD asked Capgemini to use the platform to develop the DCP shared working environment. The MoD wanted a versatile menu of services that would allow users to switch easily between services and enable more efficient collaborative working. "The DECS Collaborative Programme provides a menu of e-business services that enables collaborative working to be optimised for each business relationship, maximising the benefits to all involved," says Squadron Leader Aitchison.

Capgemini worked with the MoD to develop a tailored set of requirements that met the department's collaborative working needs for information management. "This was a joint venture," says Cliff Evans, Capgemini's DCP Programme Director. "The MoD centrally funded the purchase of seats to register users." The seats were then allocated to several IPTs. The partners used workshops, which were run with potential user communities, to construct scenarios and use-cases to assess suitable products to provide the technology foundation for the information management service. Microsoft SharePoint® Portal Server 2001 closely matched the MoD's needs, and Capgemini's long-standing relationship with Microsoft helped to cement

the choice of SharePoint Portal Server 2001 for the core Information Manager service.

When the DCP contract came up for renewal in April 2004, Capgemini was already planning to migrate the service to Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003, part of the Microsoft Windows Server System™ integrated server software. Capgemini based its proposal on the MoD's need for a menu of services that would allow more versatile use of the platform. The MoD asked for added capabilities, particularly in the areas of workflow and records management.

Capgemini chose SharePoint Portal Server 2001 originally because it offered a range of key capabilities, including shared content, a common user interface, security, document version control, and fast access to content. Evans says that the project also benefited from the SharePoint Portal Server 2003 integration with other programs: "It integrates with our workflow engine and records management engine, giving us the capabilities that the MoD was looking for," he says. "Plus, we get the benefits of the upgraded functionality within SharePoint Portal Server 2003."

The new capabilities offered by SharePoint Portal Server 2003 support the MoD's need to collaborate with its partners by offering a menu of modules and services. Information Manager is the core service, but programme management, process management, and electronic records management are also important to the project. Key services include the sharing of documents and systems, as well as notification, discussion, and dialogue capabilities.

Security is naturally a top priority for the project. The MoD's security accreditor has to certify the service in order to control access, including access to highly classified, 'United Kingdom-Restricted' information. An

important security feature is therefore access control, where users are restricted only to the sites, folders, and directories that they have permission to use.

The capabilities of SharePoint Portal Server 2003 have helped to shape the DCP project, and its close fit with the MoD's own Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) programme has increased its versatility: "The DII project is also using SharePoint Portal Server 2003, so we've been able to align our platform with the MoD's own, and it all fits together very nicely," Squadron Leader Aitchison said.

The project initially runs for six years, and Capgemini has now completed the process of rolling out the new SharePoint Portal Server 2003 solution. "We have a joint management team with the MoD," says Evans. "They have an independent Collaborative Working Group that looks at general collaborative working requirements. We're using output from that to focus on future products, on applications and capabilities that we want to deliver to our customers."

Some of the department's projects need a collaborative solution that is currently unavailable, and the DCP project provides a short-term solution to this problem. "It has certainly given them some flexibility," adds Evans. "It also has the advantage of a common look and feel, so there's no need for retraining if you're jumping from one platform to the other."

Benefits

Collaborative working offers many benefits, including reduced IT infrastructure costs and faster, more visible communication. But benefits can be difficult to measure, as the success of a collaborative working environment depends on how willingly the collaborative working community adopts it.

Capgemini's Evans says that most of the IPTs using the system already recognise benefits from it. These include a reduced need for travel and meetings, with associated cost savings. File-sharing allows previously developed material to be re-used, and makes work-in-progress more visible. Less tangible benefits include a more coherent team identity and more focused team activity. The collaborative working environment also inspires greater levels of confidence between team members: "This has been evident with reductions in time and cost to programmes utilising CWE technology within both the Defence Procurement Executive, involved in producing new capability, and the Defence Logistics Organisation, supporting existing capability," Squadron Leader Aitchison says.

Capgemini and the MoD are working together to document quantifiable benefits as part of the project. Right now, the Capgemini/MoD team is working with IPTs to implement benefits realisation and tracking processes, to ensure the delivery of measurable business benefits.

Capgemini is looking to the MoD and its user community to point out future directions in terms of capability. Evans says that Capgemini tries to be as responsive as possible as the MoD's collaborative working needs evolve. "I think that capabilities like records management are going to become growth areas that will point the way forward," he says.

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 - Internet Information Services 5.0/6.0
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Technologies

- Active Directory
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Partners

- Capgemini

Third-Party Products

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- Meridio Records Management

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