

ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

IT Services Fit for a King

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technology Challenge

- Need to comply with government legislation and meet citizens' demands for high-quality services

Solution

- Brocade® SAN solutions, including the Brocade USD-X and the Brocade Edge M3000
- Brocade Professional Services

Benefits

- Greater storage capacity
- A more robust backup strategy
- Improved business continuity

The Royal Borough of Kingston serves some 150,000 residents with a broad range of services, including housing, education, council tax, social services, planning, and refuse collection. At the center of the Borough, Kingston town has expanded from its early beginnings as a Market Town with a Royal Charter, to become the seventh largest retail center in the UK.

Kingston has a reputation as a high-performing, low-spending council. External assessment has praised services in the Borough as "excellent" and Kingston is one of only three authorities to hold the highest rating of three stars for its delivery of education and social services. The council has ambitions to improve further the way it works and the quality of its services in all areas.

Information technology and especially applications such as e-mail, are fundamental to the day-to-day activity of the council's 1,600 personal computer users. Although a Storage Area Network (SAN), installed some years earlier, had improved access to information at the time, now storage capacity

was running out and the situation needed to be addressed urgently.

"We had 1 TB of disk space available with the SAN," says Bob Grover, Network and Server Manager for the Borough. "E-mail and other application data had swallowed all but 100 GB, and the limit of our capacity was in sight. It was critical that we took action to address the issue and ensure that the operation of the Borough was not constrained."

E-mail was originally viewed as the main culprit, eating into the available storage capacity. However, the storage pool was available to all applications, and so it wasn't just going to be e-mail that suffered from a shortage of space; other servers would be affected, too.

The capacity problem provided the impetus for reviewing the existing storage infrastructure, but the Borough also needed to take steps to ensure business continuity and rapid recovery of IT functionality in the case of a disaster. Estimates had put the recovery period at between six and eight weeks if the server room became flooded or

damaged by fire. "This was unacceptable," explains Robin Noble, ICT Manager for the Borough, working alongside Grover. "Without a responsive disaster recovery facility, the Borough would be unable to meet its commitments for compliance with government legislation and would struggle to ensure 'business as usual' if there was an incident."

PROVEN TRACK RECORD CLINCHES THE DEAL

The IT team met with more than a dozen potential suppliers to assess the different technologies and approaches that were available to address the capacity issue and need for a disaster recovery facility.

Three suppliers progressed to a proof-of-concept stage. Barry Sayers, SAN manager, was part of the team assessing the submissions. "It was a close decision," he admits. "However, Brocade's proposal offered two significant advantages: A new SAN that was 100 percent compatible with the existing solution and a proven ability to successfully deliver SAN solutions for the Borough."

RESPONSIVE DEPLOYMENT

The replacement SAN infrastructure is based on Xiotech Magnitude technology—just like the existing SAN. The new Magnitude 3D solution offered 100 percent guaranteed backward compatibility, making the transition to the new environment as simple as possible. To minimize the disruption to users, the deployment was scheduled to take place on weekends.

The new Magnitude 3D is equipped with 4 TB of usable data (6 TB raw) and two controllers for added resilience. The Brocade USD-X provides the SAN connectivity at the production site, and the Brocade Edge M3000 solution is used to extend the SAN to another Xiotech Magnitude with one controller at the disaster recovery site.

"Brocade Professional Services is managing the entire project for us, including provision of the co-location facilities at the secure data center. Their project plans have been comprehensive and we've received frequent updates from our project manager," says Grover. "The installation has gone very smoothly and we've been very happy with the responsiveness."

THE BENEFITS OF THE NEW SAN

"We know the project has been successful because our users have experienced minimal disruption," Grover says. "The true measure is that our infrastructure and management procedures are now more robust and supportive of the operational needs of the Borough."

"For example, we have always taken backups, of course, but the window was such that we confined ourselves to full backups only at the weekends, relying on incremental backups during the week. With the new solution in place, we can adopt a more imaginative backup strategy and even take backups at lunchtime, too.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Grover concludes that the Royal Borough of Kingston will certainly be continuing their relationship with Brocade: "We are extremely satisfied with the services we get and look forward to building our in-house skills as we work alongside Brocade Services consultants. In the short term, we'll be looking to their expertise to ensure that we are making the best use of our newly acquired solution."

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