



Copeland Borough Council Case Study

Councillors set free with Office 365

Overview

Copeland Borough Council is the governing council responsible for the western Cumbria borough of Copeland. As councillors' demanded greater flexibility in their choice of devices, it became clear that the Council's aging VPN infrastructure was holding it back. With the help of Phoenix Software, Copeland Borough Council was able to deploy Office 365 to meet the demands of its users, while also providing the foundation for significant innovations in the future.

The Challenge

As has become commonplace in organisations across the private and public sector, users increasingly want - and expect - to use the

very latest technologies at work. Whereas barely a decade ago users would have been content with the device they were given by IT - because that was the only device approved and configured to work on the network - today they want to use the same devices at work that they use at home, and they don't want to be limited to one device. They want the iPad experience, but they want IT to support and manage it.

For Copeland Borough Council, this was a demand he was facing every day, when the borough's 52 elected Councillors would ask for greater flexibility in the devices they could use so they could be more productive and work more easily from different locations. ➔



KEY POINTS

Challenge

Councillors requesting to use the very latest technologies at work while having the freedom to work remotely on whichever device they wanted. The Council also had to comply with strict data protection requirements, a shrinking IT budget and the technical limitations of its existing infrastructure.

Solution

Microsoft Office 365 with Microsoft Intune for Mobile Device Management

Benefits

Complete device freedom, the latest versions of Microsoft Office software, vast amounts of cloud storage, lower operational and capital expenditure, improved device and user management and a seamless migration.





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Copeland Borough Council

The Council wanted to provide its Councillors with the flexibility they wanted, but the Council's existing VPN-based IT infrastructure rendered such demands impossible to meet. Each of the Councillors were already provided with a laptop with a Juniper SSL-VPN client. While this enabled them to work remotely if they wished, they were limited to using the one device provided by IT, and any change or new device needed significant work from IT before it could be used. This was a far cry from the iPad style experience they craved.

At the same time, the Council's IT Team was facing pressures of his own, least of all a shrinking IT budget in the age of austerity. His small team also spent most of its time just managing the existing IT infrastructure. How could they find the time or the budget to provide the flexibility his users were demanding? They needed a solution that not only freed his users to use the devices they wanted to, but did so without increasing the burden of management on his team or costing an arm and a leg. And last but not least, the new solution had to be compliant with all of the regulations that UK Council's must abide by, such as IL2 classification for personal data protection and PSN classification.

The Solution

The Council looked into a number of potential solutions to solve the Council's challenges, including Google Apps and a Citrix/XenMobile virtual desktop (VDI) solution. While Google Apps was a relatively low cost option, it was quickly dismissed due to data security concerns, limited functionality, unfamiliarity to users and its lack of compliance with PSN. All of these factors meant it could never be used as a complete replacement to the existing solution. The Citrix/XenDesktop solution would meet the Council's requirements for greater flexibility and PSN compliance, but its management complexity and prohibitively high cost rendered it unsuitable. Ultimately none of the solutions that the Council had seen could solve all of the challenges it had.

Phoenix Software already supplied Copeland Borough Council with its Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for the bulk of its Microsoft software, including Windows and Office. Through this relationship it was able to gain a deep understanding of the challenges it was facing and to propose an alternative solution which could meet all of the Council's objectives without any significant changes to the software the Councillors were already using. Phoenix

Software proposed to deploy Office 365, Microsoft's cloud-based Office, email and storage solution. Office 365 would provide each Councillor with a cloud-based Exchange mailbox and calendar which could be accessed from any device, in addition to the latest versions of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Access, Publisher, Outlook, Skype for Business and InfoPath, as well as web applications of Word, Excel and PowerPoint. What's more, each user could install Office on up to five different devices, and with native Office apps for PC, Android, iPhone, iPad and even Mac, the Councillors could finally enjoy the device freedom they had craved.

Due to the immediate success and popularity of Office 365 among the 52 elected councillors, Copeland Borough Council quickly expanded its use of Office 365 to a further 325 users within the wider Council. This enabled the Council to retire two of its three onsite Exchange servers, leaving just one hybrid Exchange server. Phoenix Software managed the entire project on the Council's behalf in just 15 days. This included the migration of all user data and emails to the Office 365 cloud and the changes to the onsite server environment. ➔





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While Office 365 was able to meet the Council's initial requirements for greater device flexibility and reduced management overheads, it also provided numerous additional features which no other single solution could hope to match:

- **Included storage:** Each Office 365 user is provided with a huge 50GB mailbox in the cloud, in addition to 1TB of personal OneDrive storage as part of the Office 365 licence. With such a significant amount of space available, Phoenix was able to retire two of Copeland Borough Council's Microsoft Exchange Servers. The Council retained just one Exchange Server in order to provide a hybrid cloud/onsite mailbox for GSX data compliance purposes, which is a requirement of PSN whereby all personal data stored by the Council must remain on-premise.
- **Web-based management interface:** In contrast to the numerous different management tools that the Council's VPN infrastructure required, the IT Team is now able to administer the entire Office 365 suite through a single website. Phoenix also deployed Microsoft Intune, a web-based mobile device management,

mobile application management, and PC management platform for the management of the devices themselves.

- **SharePoint:** Microsoft's platform for shared content and numerous other intranet-style features is included within Office 365. As a result, Phoenix Software was able to migrate Copeland Borough Council's existing intranet off its physical servers and onto SharePoint, further reducing the Council's physical hardware overheads.
- **Skype for Business:** The professional version of Microsoft's popular communication platform enables users to share instant messages, voice and video calls to other users of the platform, whether they are inside the organisation or not.

The Benefits

The benefits to the Council as a whole, and the IT Team in particular, since switching to Office 365 were immediate and numerous:

- **Device flexibility:** Each member of the Council immediately benefitted from the flexibility to access their email, calendar and files from up to five different devices of their choice. This has enabled the Council to support a Bring Your Own Device policy, so each Councillor can use the devices they want and has enabled the Council to transition away from providing its staff with Blackberry devices.
- **Cost reductions:** The Council has been able to reduce costs in many areas

significantly, in both operational and capital expenses. Office 365 is not only significantly cheaper than the alternative Citrix VDI solution that was proposed, it has also yielded numerous operational cost savings such as having fewer Exchange Servers onsite to power, cool and maintain, a significant reduction in IT staff time required to manage the service and a lower phone bill due to many internal calls now being made through Skype for Business. On the capex side BYOD has enabled the Council to provide services to more devices without having to purchase the additional devices themselves while also being able to begin the retirement of its Blackberry fleet without necessarily having to replace them with new devices.

- **Ease of management:** With the entire Office 365 service for all users being managed through one web-based management console, including the deployment and retirement of users, erasing of lost devices and management of data, the Council has much more control over its services. Users can even reset their passwords themselves, a service that previously could only be administered by the IT team. In addition, because each device can be configured by the user themselves, IT is no longer required to deploy each service to the client on each of their five devices. Gone are the days of IT having to configure and deploy each and every device. It is estimated the time saved by the IT Team is in the region of at least 50% since deploying Office 365. ➔





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Copeland Borough Council

- **Device management:** Leveraging Microsoft Intune, Copeland Borough Council has even more visibility and control over the devices which the councillors use, irrespective of whether the Council deployed the devices themselves or not.
- **Collaboration:** With staff taking advantage of the ability to make free phone calls to each other via Skype for Business and to share information through SharePoint and Yammer, collaboration and overall productivity has jumped significantly. The Councillors in particular have embraced Skype to conduct meetings remotely, cutting down on wasted travel time.
- **Seamless integration:** With so many services provided through one vendor (Microsoft), the Council has been impressed with how well everything works together; Office, OneDrive, SharePoint, Skype for Business, Yammer, etc. all just work seamlessly together.
- **Fixed monthly cost:** Due to the subscription nature of Office 365 and its per-user pricing, it is very easy for Copeland Borough Council to budget for and to scale the service to the number of users. When new users are required, the Council simply buys more licences and no new physical hardware is required.

Due to the success of Office 365 the Council is already investigating additional Microsoft services and devices which could complement and improve its use of Office 365. This includes an ongoing trial of Microsoft Surface Pro tablets for a more seamless mobile experience, investigating enterprise voice services that integrate external voice calls (via SIP) with Skype for Business, and exploring the Microsoft Azure AD Premium cloud platform in order to securely deploy web-based apps directly to Council users.

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NEXT STEPS

For further information on the products and services available from Phoenix Software, contact a member of our team on:

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