Northumbrian Water Standardises I.T. Support

Company Name
Northumbrian Water

Industry
Utility

Business Benefits
- Consolidated reporting
- I.T. support across multipul sites
- Identification of training requirements
- Integration with Key Result Areas

"In HEAT we found a solution that allows us to master the basics and then move on to the exciting applications in simple and convenient steps."

Claire Burn, Northern Desktop &

Network Services Team Leader

BACKGROUND

Northumbrian Water was purchased by the French utility Lyonnaise des Eaux in 1996. Lyonnaise des Eaux subsequently merged with Suez, forming Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux. This company has subsequently been renamed as Suez. In April 2000, Northumbrian Water merged with Essex & Suffolk Water and formed one, enlarged, Northumbrian Water Limited, operating under one licence.

CONSOLIDATING I.T. SUPPORT

Due to the merger of Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water there were many areas of overlap particularly in the IT environment. Both companies had their own, very distinct help desks to support the IT infrastructure. As the companies became one, despite their disparate locations, the IS departments also unified and developed common ways of working and reporting.

In the North the IS department ran an old help desk package which was no longer supported and in the South the IS department was using HEAT. After evaluating all the solutions available Northumbrian Water decided to standardise on HEAT. "The business needed a solution that was quick to implement, flexible enough to cope with our post merger environment and had the capacity to expand as our needs become more sophisticated," commented Claire Burn, Northern Desktop and Network Services Team Leader. "As you can imagine, in the aftermath of a merger we needed to get the basics up and running before we tried anything too sophisticated. In HEAT we found a solution that allows us to master the basics and then move on to the exciting applications in simple and convenient steps."

For Northumbrian Water it was vital to have a help desk solution that removed any geographical barriers to providing support. They need a single database that can be accessed from different locations in the country and which holds all the system and client information. "Support was the first function to be merged because it was vital to keeping other departments up and running as they all migrated to a common computing platform," remarked Claire.

BUSINESS CONTINUATION

Old data was extracted from a Sybase database and imported to HEAT running on an Oracle platform. This allowed business critical

information generated before the merger to be retained.

Northumbrian Water record all calls made to the IS Support Centre and it is important for the department to be able to report on the type of requests made by the business, who makes the calls and which department they are in. The reports are used to establish if there is a particular problem in a particular area of the infrastructure, if a particular person has a training need or if a department is having problems with one of their mission critical applications.

The support provided by the IS Teams is also measured. The intention is to measure individuals on call resolution rates, the length of time it takes to resolve calls and the outstanding backlog of calls waiting to be resolved. These measurements will make up the teams Key Result Areas against which their performance is assessed. Reports generated from HEAT will play a critical role in job fulfilment as service standards, call logging standards, call resolution and customer service levels are set and measured.

HEAT records when calls are made to the IS Support Centre so call flow trends can be extrapolated and the team can plan their time effectively. "Using the information in HEAT, I can allocate members of the team to particular tasks during the quiet periods. It means they have a variety of work to do and they don't lose their motivation waiting for calls. Importantly for the bottom line, the company saves money by better utilising our internal resources to develop the network," said Claire Burn.

STREAMLINED DELIVERY

HEAT gives the IS department a holistic view of the IT infrastructure from a single point. Because all the information is in the same place the team is able to generate information to substantiate any claims or requests for extra equipment.

For end users, business processes have been streamlined. All requests for support or development are logged via a series of forms held within a Lotus Notes database. By prompting the user for information the IS department get a better understanding of the problem before they try to resolve it. "My team is able to resolve problems in less time because they know what they are getting themselves into before they arrive at someone's desk," commented Claire.

WEB ENABLEMENT

Northumbrian Water will be upgrading to HEAT 6 by the end of the year. "It's the web integration that is particularly appealing to myself and the team. They are always being caught in the corridor to fix a problem and they often have to wait until they get back to their desks to log the request. If they are being measured on the number of calls they resolve then it is vital that we capture all of them and iHEAT looks ideal," said Claire.

In addition to logging all calls made to IS, HEAT 6 will enable the business to see the status of their calls and what actions have been taken. Claire is expecting this to reduce the number of calls to the IS Support Centre and therefore give her team more time resolve problems. "We get a number of calls from people chasing the resolution of their requests and by giving them access to their own records we can aim to turn this around and let the users obtain updates as and when they require them" said Claire. "By logging all calls that come through and placing an agreed priority on them, which we can monitor, we use HEAT as a strategic tool to prioritise the urgency of calls."