

## Appendix C

### National Local Authorities

#### Trial for complete OSS

**Birmingham City Council commenced a year long evaluation in November 2005. An independent auditor will assess an impartial evaluation at the end of the year long trial in November 2006**

#### **Details**

Birmingham City Council will be migrating 1,500 clients in its library service to open source software including the GNU/Linux operating system, and such application software as the OpenOffice office suite and the Firefox browser, although details are yet to be worked out. The PCs involved will include public-access terminals and office desktops in libraries around the city, as well as the library service's server-side infrastructure.

Unlike another well-known open source project under the auspices of the Academy - Bristol City Council's migration of 5,000 desktops to StarOffice running on Windows - the Birmingham project will be open source through and through. "This is really the rubber hitting the road," said Mark Taylor of the Open Source Consortium, an advocacy group that has an advisory role with several of the Academy's projects. "Birmingham has the biggest metropolitan council in the UK and in Europe, and it is rolling out a complete production business system."

The council is currently putting together a usability study and will begin rolling out the systems later this year. **The year long trial will be followed by a commissioned an independent auditor to assess an impartial evaluation, taking into account productivity and initial and ongoing costs such as training and hiring IT staff,** the Council said.

While a number of local authorities are already using open source - usually on the server side - the benefits have not been made clear enough, according to Taylor. "One of the major deliverables of this is having an unbiased study saying, 'Here's what we've done and here are the good and bad aspects of it,' " he said. "A lot of councils are using it internally, but there are just no objective case studies on production systems in the UK."

#### Switch to Star Office

##### **Bristol City Council - commenced May 2005**

Bristol, unlike ourselves, used more than one office suite which caused compatibility problems with the sharing of their documents both internally and externally. Bristol only use 2 business systems that require Microsoft Office for integration. Bristol have commissioned the providers of these system and Sun, the supplier of StarOffice, to work on developing the integration. This is on-going and so far a number of bugs are present which must be resolved before Bristol can remove the need to retain Microsoft Office.

Bristol are now two thirds the way through their migration of more than 5,000 users from a mixture of office software products to StarOffice 7.

#### **Details**

As part of a Best Value Review, Bristol City Council conducted a survey of staff about what standards they should incorporate. The top issue the respondents asked the council to fix was the mixed environment of Lotus 1-2-3, WordPerfect, and Microsoft Office. Users complained of spending too much time on converting documents, even for internal sharing, and without a corporate licensing agreement there were many versions of each product in use. Many of

these tools did not support the newer features of Microsoft Office, which made collaborating with partners more difficult.

The savings offer the hard-pressed local authority the best part of £2m. The merger of Avon and Bristol counties into the super-authority of Bristol in 1996 created a headache for IT managers, with different groups of staff using a variety of office software. "We had to spend money on changing our IT office environment," said Gavin Beckett, Bristol's information and communications technology strategy team leader.

After the merger of Avon and Bristol counties, the new body decided they'd rather not spend £2 million - 1% on their council tax - on upgrading to MS Office. Instead, they gave Sun's Star Office a whirl at the knock down price of £186,000, leaving them with enough change to fund training and support for their 5,500 staff.

### **Microsoft deal**

#### **Staffordshire County Council**

has become the latest council to sign an Enterprise Licensing Agreement with Microsoft marking the **100th deal** across local government, it was announced on 24 October 2005. The council's agreement covers 5,000 desktops for three years and includes all PCs except for the authority's education department. It is hoped the deal will result in savings of £1m during its lifecycle.

### **Microsoft after complete study**

#### **Newham Council**

The council compared the cost and business value of a Linux-based solution and a Microsoft®-based solution, utilizing Capgemini to complete a study on the alternatives and make recommendations on the best platform.

Newham Council, an innovative and leading-edge local authority in the United Kingdom, was faced with the need to lower cost and risk, while providing a financially predictable, stable, and innovative information and communications technology (ICT) platform to support its ambitious long-term transformation plans. A multi-disciplinary team under the lead of Capgemini was brought in to evaluate the best possible solution for the borough, comparing the costs, business benefits, and risk profiles of a Microsoft® solution (incorporating Microsoft Windows® XP and the Microsoft Office System on the desktop, with Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003) with equivalent Open Source solutions. The analysis showed that by standardizing on a Microsoft solution, the borough could lower ICT operating costs, derive additional significant business benefit, and secure the desired predictability and stability. Specific benefits of an all-Microsoft solution included the potential for a 13.5 per cent reduction in ICT support and operation costs and double the productivity benefits of an Open Source solution.

### **Switch back from Linux and Star Office to Microsoft**

#### **Central Scotland Police**

The force has a reputation for success in crime reduction and efficient administration. With many new policing challenges lying ahead, the force reviewed its IT infrastructure, which currently uses Linux and StarOffice. After the review, Central Scotland Police signed a Microsoft® Enterprise Agreement to migrate to an integrated software solution of Microsoft Windows® XP, Microsoft Office and Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003. The Central Scotland Police estimates that migrating to Microsoft technology could save it up to 30 percent on IT maintenance costs and 25 percent of IT staff's time. By using Microsoft Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003, the force will avoid spending £100,000 (U.S. \$191,000) on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) compliance. The solution will also support the police modernization

agenda, help introduce more flexible working arrangements for frontline officers, and enable the force to better engage with its criminal justice partners.

### **Microsoft after SOCITM study**

#### **South Gloucestershire unitary council**

completed a £1m installation of Microsoft software in 2005 at two new data centres.

Paul Appleton, head of IT at the unitary council, said he had considered using open source software and had discussed the plans with his opposite number at Bristol Council, the authority that [famously ditched Microsoft](#) and went open source in 2004.

He even commissioned the Society of IT Management to study his options. He chose Microsoft, he said, because it meant less aggro in the long run.

"We have about 60 permanent staff in IT so we don't really have the capacity to do a great deal of development inhouse," Appleton said. He also said Microsoft software would better "future proof" his systems.

But he could not explain the decision in any more detail. The society report might be released for the benefit of his peers in the public sector if his "public relations" manager allows it.

He appeared to squirm when pressed for figures to support his decision. Fortunately, Microsoft UK director of platform strategy Nicholas McGrath was able to butt in with some well-polished one-liners straight from the public relations handbook: "Cost savings...integration...ease of use...support".

Appleton later said maintenance, upgrade, and licensing costs for the old and new systems were about the same.

However, there were 10 per cent fewer calls to the help desk, more of which are being resolved immediately.

"But the long-term benefits are still to come because we've got a long learning curve still to go through," he said. "Our engineers have got experience in Novell. Their retraining is not yet complete."

## **Replies from our neighbouring Local Authorities**

### **Ribble Valley Borough Council**

We currently use Linux on our Internet and Intranet servers, as that was the preferred operating system for our CMS systems from Jadu. If we had the time I would like to investigate the idea of open source desktop use, but feel at the moment we have too many Microsoft based departmental software systems around the authority for it to work. However, I am assuming that our iWorld system being browser based would run on Linux equipped pc's

Hope this helps

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### **Barrow Borough Council**

Here in Barrow we have not actually carried out any evaluation of this type so I have no results I can share with you.

We do however run some open source software in connection with a partnership venture in Cumbria. The Connected Cumbria Information Hub uses software called Excelsior, and is built around LGOL-Net, both of which are open source and freely available. If you want any further info on these I will arrange it.

Regards  
Mick

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S F McKinnell  
IT Manager  
Barrow BC

### **Wyre Borough Council**

Sorry for not replying earlier. We haven't done a formal feasibility study on the use of Open Source, but here are some thoughts on moving to Linux (which you probably already know):-

Cost of migration and retraining of IT staff.

Cost of replacing existing Software Applications with alternatives, if the original has not been ported to Linux by its manufacturer. Associated costs of user training.

Lack of support for modern hardware.

Interoperability issues (Servers and desktops).

Efficient network administration difficult due to reduced features available in Linux (e.g. no equivalent to Microsoft Active Directory).

Security concerns.

Cost of Linux support.

Newham Borough Council did a major pilot test of open source software and decided to stay with Microsoft. Moving from Windows NT4 to Windows 2003 and Office emerged as being cheaper than switching.

I hope this is of some help. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need anything further.

Regards

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Also awaiting replies from :-

South Lakeland  
Craven  
Burnley