WORLDWIDE MOBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Computacenter helps the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to transform their workplace and infrastructure on a global scale

OBJECTIVE
The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was tasked with creating a more efficient and effective organisation, by improving its processes, structures and systems in order to provide a world-class diplomatic service for years to come.

This resulted in a £120m Tech Overhaul project to revolutionise the FCO’s IT workplace and infrastructure, with focus on improving speed, stability and reliability, and offering users greater flexibility, mobility and collaboration. The FCO therefore needed an IT Services partner who could deliver the planned programmes of transformation.

SOLUTION
Computacenter were chosen as that partner, based on years of sterling past service and reliability, and experience of handling similar transformations.

The programme was organised into several projects, including a new, flexible world-wide WiFi network, a global network upgrade to improve the speed, stability and reliability of connectivity for FCO users, and an upgrade to the FCO’s UK headquarters for video conferencing and managed print.

Alongside this, workplace devices were transformed to deliver greater mobility and all users were moved to Office 365 as part of a wider strategy to utilise cloud-based services. Computacenter created Windows 10 builds and upgraded the existing infrastructure to integrate with Windows 10, while they also built the hybrid infrastructure platform to move the FCO to Office 365.

OUTCOME
Computacenter delivered the new workplace devices with minimal impact on the users’ day job and have received great user feedback. The wider infrastructure project has had a substantial positive impact on the work of the FCO and has fully met the strategic objective to improve mobility, flexibility and collaboration, as well as saving costs.
OBJECTIVE
Creating a more efficient and effective organisation through a major technology overhaul

The FCO’s IT communications infrastructure is mission-critical. Quite simply, if a user doesn’t have access to their own IT environment, they can’t carry out the important work they do.

In 2015, Sir Simon McDonald, Permanent Undersecretary to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), commissioned the Future FCO Review, to create a more efficient and effective organisation. The FCO consulted with staff and other stakeholders on how it could improve its processes, structures and systems in order to provide a world-class diplomatic service for years to come.

The consultation resulted in Diplomacy 20:20, an implementation programme which included a £120 million Tech Overhaul project funded by the Cabinet Office to revolutionise the FCO’s IT infrastructure. The four main objectives were:

• To give users greater speed, stability and reliability.
• To offer users flexibility and mobility.
• To enable collaboration across all teams and with the wider UK government agencies.
• To improve knowledge and information excellence.

The programme was designed around people and was focussed on breaking down silos to give a consistently effective user experience across the organisation, thus enabling better collaboration and information sharing.

As Simon MacDonald himself explains: “In the internet age, how can the FCO/Diplomatic Service best do the job our government and fellow Brits want, understanding, influencing and representing the UK overseas?”

SOLUTION
Transforming the FCO’s IT environment to enable mobility, flexibility and collaboration in the worldwide organisation

The FCO chose Computacenter as their partner to help to deliver this global transformation of workplace and infrastructure. Their decision was based on sterling past service. For example, Computacenter has managed the FCO’s desktop infrastructure as a contractual managed service since April 2014, managing their LAN, PCs, printers and servers, with support delivered by around 180 Computacenter employees.

This relationship, and Computacenter’s previous experience of similar transformation projects, stood the company in good stead to be the FCO’s preferred delivery partner. Computacenter’s proposed solution also allowed the FCO to adopt best practice and move to an industry standard, future-proofing the infrastructure, making any ongoing development easier to implement, and moving them to the Government’s “Official” Security Classification.
The programme was organised into several projects in order to meet the stated objectives. This included implementing:

• A Wi-Fi network across FCO locations worldwide, to make it easier to work flexibly and to stay connected.
• A global network upgrade to improve the speed, stability and reliability of connectivity for FCO users.
• An upgrade to the video conferencing facilities at the FCO’s UK headquarters, an improved room booking service, and a managed print service.

From a device perspective, the programme moved FCO users to smartphones and has upgraded their laptops and desktops to Windows 10. This allows users to work at multiple locations and is further supported by a new “device for life” policy – where the device is assigned to the user, who keeps it even if they change role or location.

Finally, the FCO has moved people from a traditional on-premise Exchange messaging platform to Microsoft Office 365 as part of a wider strategy to utilise cloud-based services where appropriate.

To deliver this transformation, Computacenter worked with the FCO and other contractors within the Tech Overhaul programme, with Computacenter delivering the following specific services:

• Created the Windows 10 build on devices in the UK and gave technical support to overseas builds.
• Upgraded the existing fragmented infrastructure to be able to integrate with Windows 10.
• Built the hybrid infrastructure platform to move the FCO to Office 365.
• Planned and installed the managed print solution.
• Built the Mobile Device Management solution to enable the move to smartphones.

The solution was designed and built to balance security with flexibility. Security is critical for such an organisation and the data it uses, but the desire was for a much more open and collaborative user experience. In order to ensure the relevant security standards were met, the programme team worked both with Computacenter’s own Security Practice and with the FCO’s IT Security Advisors to meet government guidelines and undertake rigorous security compliance testing.

To ensure that the FCO’s strategy was delivered, Computacenter produced the End State Architecture (the defined target infrastructure) for the programme and ran the Technical Design Authority to approve all major architectural decisions and high-level designs. Then Computacenter was able to prove the new solution, with early adopter deployments showing how the Windows 10 solution would work in their legacy environment. This gave users confidence in the solution, as well as demonstrating that the programme was progressing on schedule.

One of the main tools where the FCO has been notoriously weak is IT. Our Tech Overhaul project aims to change that quickly.

Simon MacDonald, Permanent Undersecretary Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Feels like I’ve joined the 21st century.

FCO Employee, Australia Office
OUTCOME

Succeeding in meeting the strategic objective to improve mobility, flexibility and collaboration, as well as saving costs

Delivering a global migration requires a great deal of planning and consultation with the users. Computacenter used their experience of delivering previous projects and, considering the constraints and unique requirements, delivered the new devices with minimal impact on the users’ day job and received great user feedback.

The programme has had a substantial impact on the work of the FCO, meeting the strategic objective to improve mobility, flexibility and collaboration, as well as saving costs.

Specific benefits are as follows:

• Users are not restricted to a specific desk or location unless their role requires it; they now have the flexibility to work wherever they choose and using devices they can take from post to post and role to role. In most cases this improves the individual’s work and home balance as well as making more efficient use of their working time.

• The organisation is protected from damaging down-time in the event of an office becoming unavailable at short notice – often a time when their services would be most critically needed.

• Decreased physical office infrastructure costs, with an 8/10 policy implemented in the UK (where 8 desks are provided for every 10 employees).

• Significantly faster and more reliable systems, improving efficiency and reducing user frustration.

• Reduced costs and improved data security from the use of OneNote in meetings and the new Managed Print service, which has decreased physical printing.

• Much improved collaboration and data security, with sharing through the cloud rather than local file servers.

• Decreases in hardware and storage expenditure and maintenance costs.

The devices are revolutionary, particularly when you need to be out of the office a lot.

FCO Employee, Vienna Office

ABOUT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is a department of the UK government formed in 1968. It has a worldwide network of embassies and consulates, employing over 14,000 people in nearly 270 diplomatic offices. It works with international organisations to promote UK interests and global security, including the EU, NATO, the United Nations, the UN Security Council and the Commonwealth.

MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about our enterprise services and read more customer case studies, please visit www.computacenter.com