



Bytes provide Somerset County Council with their unique Device-as-a-Service, supporting sustainability goals

Company profile

Industry: Public Sector



Overview

Somerset County Council is responsible for delivering services to more than half a million people. As part of its 'Improving Lives' strategy, the council sought to maximise the use of digital, data and technology to drive efficiency, to deliver on its strategic objectives and to deliver improved integrated services.

Challenge

In 2017, it initiated a 'Technology and People' programme to enable a more productive workforce and chose to utilise Bytes DaaS offering. Through the pandemic lockdowns, it became one of the first councils to benefit from Bytes' implementation of Microsoft's Windows Autopilot for pre-provisioned deployment services, streamlining the distribution, provision and management of devices for remote workers.

The stated goal was to improve the use of technology to enable an integrated and collaborative workplace, to develop skills, and improve the lives of the people of Somerset. The council needed to upgrade its IT estate, including user devices. But how could a council do this without contributing to the, already massive, amount of E-Waste produced by the public services? The problem lies in the complete removal of a physical IT estate. How could Somerset modernise whilst still maintaining its sustainability goals?

For Somerset, the answer came in the form of Device as a Service (DaaS). In fact, sustainability is at the core of the DaaS procurement process. It contributes to the reduction of emissions by firstly creating a flexible modern workplace in which all staff members have free access to the same information. It then greatly reduces emissions by giving councils the opportunity to recycle, upcycle and gift their legacy hardware to help fight digital poverty in their local communities.



We refurbished many of the laptops and returned them to the council who gave them to local charities, schools, adult social care projects and care leavers. As well as helping these deserving causes and reducing landfill, each laptop we refurbished saved another 3902 kilogrammes of carbon.

Richard Read | Head of Public Sector at Bytes

Solution

First, Bytes needed to assess the diverse needs of the council staff. Richard Read, Head of Public Sector at Bytes explains that “helping customers get exactly the right IT for their needs is central to our work. So, when Somerset County Council asked us to replace their employees’ laptops, making sure staff were matched with exactly the right IT was a key part of the job. We had to really get under the skin of what the different jobs involved, finding out for instance, that fieldworkers needed mobile equipment; social care workers had to have devices with pens that children could use to draw on and office staff required a complete replacement of all their desk-based machines with modern flexible devices.” Richard Read continues, “Having established which employees needed which machines, we then evaluated different devices for each type of work and piloted them with tech champions across the council”.

In order to truly tailor the hardware to staff members’ needs, Bytes then coordinated the physical delivery of the Microsoft Autopilot configured devices. Read states that Bytes “used Microsoft’s Windows Autopilot to set up individual employee profiles on each of the 1880 computers, tagged and registered each one, and delivered them to the council’s people, across the region. By sending the devices directly to the staff, rather than via the council, we saved 310800 tons of carbon.” This method of pre-configuration and delivery directly cuts the council’s carbon footprint whilst conveyancing staff and allowing them to work in a flexible, smarter way.

Read goes on to explain the reduction of the carbon footprint was furthered as “we refurbished many of the laptops and returned them to the council who gave them to local charities, schools, adult social care projects and care leavers. As well as helping these deserving causes and reducing landfill, each laptop we refurbished saved another 3902 kilogrammes of carbon”. As part of the upcycling and recycling, Somerset County Council “handed over 16 ex-SCC laptops for YMCA staff to use to support young people in their homes and communities who are living in our Pathways to Independence (P2I) Service.” By the end of the project Bytes estimates that it will have repurposed 4000 laptops and recycled 1,500 with none going to landfill. This not only dramatically reduces E-Waste but provides the myriad of benefits in reducing digital poverty previously detailed.

Evaluation and Plans for the Future:

The results speak for themselves:

- **2000+** devices were delivered direct from the supplier to the end-users.
- Over **50,000** miles of travelling were saved.
- There was an average **reduction of 41% in CO₂** produced during the device’s lifespan, when compared to the equivalent Lenovo devices
- There was an average **reduction of 53% in energy consumption**, when compared to the equivalent Lenovo devices
- Carbon emissions on these **resources were reduced by 40%**, saving an estimated 1,000,000kg of CO₂ over the life of the devices.

Somerset Council “has brought in Microsoft support to coach its technology champions, as well as accessing learning guides and Microsoft Learn topics to drive onwards adoption and optimisation.” This support means staff members can all be brought up to speed in their own time and ensure their specific needs are being met.

This not only improves services and reduces emissions through flexible working but equips staff with the knowledge to leverage these solutions and improve the system that Bytes implements. At Somerset Council “staff are learning new skills. They are learning how to automate software testing, for example, so we [the council] can immediately test all our key applications. They are getting a better skillset and a much better working life. They have the time to do it now.” This support means systems can be made even more efficient. Staff have time to improve services, cutting costs and reducing the carbon footprint. It is this hands-on approach that makes Bytes’ DaaS offering so all-encompassing. By equipping staff with the tools to not only use the solutions but build upon them, Bytes directly instils the modern workplace into councils and local authorities.

¹ CTG Circular. “CTG Circular.” CTG Circular, <https://ctgcircular.com/page/ecologische-impact>. Accessed 13 September 2022.

² CTG Circular. “CTG Circular.” CTG Circular, <https://ctgcircular.com/page/ecologische-impact>.

³ Breeze, Julie. “Council’s ex-laptops helping young people.” OurSomerset.wordpress.com, <https://oursomerset.wordpress.com/2022/05/12/councils-ex-laptops-helping-young-people/>. Accessed 23 August 2022.

⁴ Microsoft. “How to maximise the value of existing Microsoft investments: one council’s journey.”

⁵ Microsoft. “How to maximise the value of existing Microsoft investments: one council’s journey.”

References:

Breeze, Julie. “Council’s ex-laptops helping young people.” OurSomerset.wordpress.com, <https://oursomerset.wordpress.com/2022/05/12/councils-ex-laptops-helping-young-people/>. Accessed 23 August 2022.

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Microsoft. “How to maximise the value of existing Microsoft investments: one council’s journey.” Microsoft, <https://customers.microsoft.com/en-us/story/1450467492035818426-somerset>. Accessed 23 August 2022.