

University of the West of England

Background

The University of the West of England (UWE), based in Bristol, has a population of 30,000 students, 1,500 academic staff and 1,500 support staff in 9 Faculties spread over 4 campuses and 5,000 network devices. It is supported by centralised IT services with 90 staff.

Due to the increasing cost of desktop support and the proliferation of its server infrastructure, IT Services moved away from the traditional academic/administrative model of computing to adopt a very aggressive commercial IT model through centralisation of both IT provision and budgetary control. This enabled IT Services to focus on delivering corporate services whilst enabling Faculty support staff to focus on specialist, Faculty specific IT delivery.

In 1999, IT Services had two support systems in place, a help desk system for fault calls and an in-house developed database for recording work requests. The help desk system provided no direct access to the necessary service management information regarding the nature, progress and overall impact of help desk calls on the service.

Morale of help desk staff was very low and the lack of a formal, integrated change management system made workload planning extremely difficult, with paperwork being passed between teams to allocate and schedule work. This situation and the processes used within IT Services meant that the service to staff and students was variable.

The project

A formal review of the help desk system was carried out. The desired outcome was to provide both an integrated service desk and change management solution, and also a true service management overview along with other capabilities that would fulfil future services requirements. The IT Services procurement criteria focused on 11 key functional areas:-

- Call Escalations
- Knowledge Management
- Reporting and Analysis
- Alternative Customer Communication
- Automated SLA Monitoring
- Inventory Management
- Purchasing
- Automated Procedures
- Compatibility with UWE Infrastructure
- Systems Management Tool Set Integration
- Change Control

Approach

The RMS implementation was performed under tight timescales due to the necessity of replacing the existing end of life system.

IT Services worked with the RMS consultancy team to not only configure and implement the help desk replacement solution (RMS Service Desk) but also to replace its works request system with RMS Change Management in under a month.

Tight timescales meant that staff could only be provided with minimal training on the functions necessary to carry out their role prior to the system going live.

“RMS worked closely with us throughout the implementation process, advising UWE on the best way to migrate to the RMS Service Desk and on modelling our support processes in RMS Change Management, resulting in a highly successful implementation.”

Andrew Pearce, Technical Services Manager

Training on additional features of the solution was provided once the installation had been operational for a few months.

Next steps

Since installing the system, IT Services has worked with RMS to extend use of the system in areas to include implementation of a self-service knowledge base for students; automated call logging using the RMS Enterprise Management Solution and the introduction of RMS Contract Management.

RMS systems are being successfully deployed into other departments such as Accommodation, Estates, Finance, Library and Telecoms.

The aim is to establish a full model of the IT Service lifecycle from design and development through to implementation and support, enabling the service impact and ultimate cost of any in-house software development or service operated to be assessed.

Why RMS?

RMS was not only considered cost effective, offering a commercially attractive site licence allowing deployment of unlimited user licences in support of the overall aims of the university, but also delivered the most comprehensive solution. It provided the appropriate scalable solution that was capable of meeting immediate, short term and future requirements.

UWE particularly liked the non-proprietary database which underpins the solution allowing them to perform their own bespoke in-depth reporting analysis using Microsoft Office and standard commercially available report writing software. The Change Management Module was highly beneficial in achieving compliance and providing a comprehensive ITIL process,

“We wanted a solution that would not only meet our immediate Service desk and Change Management requirements, but would also grow and evolve to meet our longer term Service Management objectives. Whilst confidence in the technology was important the key factor that made it a success was the close working relationship established with RMS.”

Andrew Pearce, Technical Services Manager

Successes

Within two months of the system going live meaningful information was available to provide a basis for service improvement decisions.

2nd & 3rd line support staff began to work closely with Service Desk staff to resolve problems at the point of contact. This changed the perception of IT Services from reactive to proactive, improving the morale of Service Desk staff.

The introduction of a formal change management solution led to a major service improvement.

The RMS Change Management allowed monitoring planned work and review of the change management processes employed.

IT Services streamlined processes to deliver an efficient, cost effective service that could deliver a consistent, high quality service to its customers.