



LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

CASE STUDY

Encouraging Potential: Inspiring Change Meet “Epic”



About Epic

Epic CIC is an employee-led mutual formed from the Youth Services at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and “spun-out” in January 2014.

Epic has a turnover of around £5 million and employs 182 whole time equivalent staff. It provides a comprehensive range of youth support services to children and young people. Epic’s mission is to inspire young people to achieve their potential and to make a positive difference to the communities in which it works.

Epic used RBKC for its IT services. However, these costs were increasing. In 2012, the cost was £285,000 and by 2014, it had risen to £400,000. This cost included desktop support, asset registration, strategic development and training and development.

Epic needed to create its own infrastructure. It wanted a solution that was cost effective, cutting-edge and would allow its services to continue to run smoothly.

Four principles guided the appraisal of potential solutions: cloud, collaboration, innovation and mobility. These relate to the strategic and business aims of Epic:

- ▶ Improve what we do to be smarter and better
- ▶ Develop a culture of enterprise and innovation
- ▶ Win business to achieve our mission and vision
- ▶ Explore opportunities to diversify
- ▶ Create a business model that is sustainable and fit for purpose.



Identifying the Solution

Working with an assigned IT strategist from RBKC, Epic identified various options. The following benefits made Google the best fit:

- ▶ Reduction and stabilisation of IT costs
- ▶ Reliable and 'always on' IT service
- ▶ Mobile and flexible working
- ▶ Internet based environment: seamless access to social media and all emerging internet capabilities vital for the growth of Epic
- ▶ No PC management costs or upgrades required
- ▶ Additional free IT capabilities; video conferencing, translation, voice recognition
- ▶ Increased Partner collaboration
- ▶ More young person friendly service
- ▶ Cutting edge technology, hardware and software
- ▶ Improved environmental impact with lower energy consumption
- ▶ Future-proofing through being cloud based

Having decided to adopt Google, Epic identified Ancoris as its Google Partner to implement and support the change programme.

Epic used its annual recharge costs, which were over £300,000 in 2013, as the baseline to commission its new IT service. The cost to move to Google was approximately £100,000. This included the costs to purchase new equipment and install IT infrastructure across twelve sites. The on-going annual costs are approximately £75,000 for 2015, which Epic aims to reduce in the future.



Implementing the Change

Moving away from the borough presented a huge challenge for Epic. It had to take control of its entire operations, including HR, finance, and IT. Through RBKC, Epic was using a managed Microsoft IT system and needed something to move to. This process took place during 2011-2014 and was complex, requiring careful project planning. It included the migration of substantial amounts of data, such as MS Outlook data files (.pst files) to Gmail and over 250,000 other files to Google Drive. Ancoris provided initial training to staff, which was supplemented by ongoing training through its online Cloud Skills Academy.

Epic was well supported by the RBKC IT department during the migration process. However, some hurdles had to be overcome. These included:

- ▶ Ensuring that Google met the council's minimum standards regarding Data Protection
- ▶ Ensuring the smooth transfer of council data and permissions of folders and files
- ▶ Buy-in from council's senior decision makers and IT department
- ▶ Setting up a new infrastructure including new hardware, network (Wi-Fi), telephony and cloud printing at all twelve sites
- ▶ Staff training and development
- ▶ Identifying funds for new hardware and infrastructure
- ▶ RBKC commissioning procedures

In addition, a small percentage of staff had their doubts about transitioning to a new system. As the benefits of the new system have become apparent, these doubts have diminished.

The Benefits

Google for Work was chosen as the core infrastructure for Epic. It is a reliable, "always on", IT service that supports mobile and flexible working, at a low and predictable cost. Other features such as videoconferencing, Hangouts and Google Forms can be exploited at no extra cost and it seamlessly integrates with social media vital to future service development.

Staff regularly work from home, saving as much as 90 minutes commuting time by accessing the system remotely. Business processes have become more efficient and improved services and delivery are transforming Epic. Google Apps has also enabled staff to work in a much more collaborative manner: over 900 documents are shared with multiple people, fostering a culture of enterprise.

Another key benefit of Google for Work and Chrome is the security it provides. All the data is held on Google Drive and not on the devices. Further, if a device is lost or stolen, Chrome Device Management provides the option to wipe the hardware remotely.

Productivity has increased as staff can use Chromebooks or smartphones when they are working on site, catching up with paperwork during sessions, or taking notes and capturing registration data during breaks or while the young people are busy with an activity.

With new technology have come some significant cost savings. Epic saved £67,000 on IT costs in the first year, and £140,000 a year later. This results from lower costs in desktop support, maintenance and repairs (the greatest saving by far), asset management, strategic development and reduced training costs.

Epic is clear that the Chrome environment has been instrumental in enabling it to become more mobile, more collaborative and more enterprising. Epic believes that whatever the future holds, it now has an IT infrastructure that will support it every step of the way.



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