



Discovery Case Study

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
*CENTENNIAL DISCOVERY IMPROVES IT
PRODUCTIVITY AND ASSET VISIBILITY
AT ISLINGTON*

- **Business Driver:**
Software Auditing to deliver
FAST compliancy
- **Industry Sector:**
Public Sector, Local Government
- **Network type:**
Decentralised, 4000 seats,
200 sites
- **Why Centennial Discovery:**
Increased control of IT assets,
Delivers comprehensive information
- **Business benefits:**
Aided speed of FAST accreditation,
Improved support desk productivity,
Improved asset visibility, reduces
unnecessary spending on IT assets

With the rapid increase of mobile workers and the need to actively manage its software license and support desk costs, the London Borough of Islington chose Centennial Discovery to help reduce unnecessary spending and to improve IT services.

Overview

With over 175,000 people living and working there, Islington is one of London's smallest yet most densely populated boroughs. The 60-strong IT support team, TSG, led by John Lowin, Head of TSG, looks after the needs of over 4,000 computer users spread across more than 200 individual sites in the borough.

The Need

There were several key requirements that led to Islington's decision to purchase Centennial Discovery. Not least among these was the fact that, with so many sites, the council's network is extremely complex and serves both office and home-based staff.

With more software being used than ever before by the council, Ken Middleton, TSG Business Manager, wanted to ensure the authority was "fully compliant with licensing but not overspending on software. We looked into FAST accreditation and were convinced almost immediately that compliance would bring a host of benefits".

Marie McNaney, Software License Manager, explained that auditing issues were becoming more challenging with the rise of home working: "We began a Hot Desking initiative in 2003 to reduce the number of desks and actively encourage mobile working. The project has been very successful and TSG has succeeded in cutting the number of desks by 50% and are now looking to apply this across the borough through the SMART working project. This has benefits in terms of space saving, but it does present a real challenge when it comes to keeping tabs on assets and computer usage."

Another driver is the move to a 'traded environment', where the IT Support Unit will become a separate cost center in its own right, providing chargeable services to its council colleagues.

It became clear to Ken Middleton that the pull towards an automated asset management solution was not only becoming irresistible, but also critical if they were to become a traded environment.



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Being Selective

To ensure they made the right decision, Islington undertook very careful and detailed research, and advises others to be equally selective: "We were able to narrow the field to two vendors quite quickly, and before making a purchase we were extremely painstaking in our due diligence process," said Ken Middleton.

"All the roads kept leading back to Centennial Discovery, but we needed to be 100% sure that it was the right solution for us. We sought specialist advice from consultants, such as The Lapworth Consultancy, as well as talking to other users in the public sector and reviewed the Centennial software for about a month before making a final commitment," he continued.

Centennial Discovery enables automatic IT audits to be conducted, according to the parameters set by Islington. It will report back on device identification, location and configuration and for PCs it will include a full list of all software programs installed on the hard drive.

Once deployed, any changes on the network are reported back to the Control Centre and highlighted to help administrators pinpoint changes and maintain full visibility of their IT assets.

Roll Out

Working closely with The Lapworth Consultancy, Islington found that installation was a trouble-free experience. Support

engineers at Islington have found Centennial Discovery extremely user friendly and they are enthusiastic about the amount of information they can now access at the push of a button.

As with their research, Islington has taken a measured pace in the deployment phase: "We learnt early on that using the software was a step by step process and it was best to extend use of the software steadily; from a single PC to a team and thence to a department," said McNaney.

Early Wins

The move to Centennial Discovery has allowed Islington to link information on PCs and other assets directly to its help desk solution. "This has been one of the biggest improvements we've experienced so far," said Ken Middleton. "Because we no longer need to visit a computer in order to know what specification it is and what software is installed on it, we're now able to resolve 80% of fault calls remotely. This has made a huge difference to the productivity of the support team and has generated a very healthy return on investment for Islington". TSG has also found that there is already a changed perception of IT support. Not only have users noticed the marked improvement in problem resolution, they are now aware that there is visibility of their hardware and software usage and this is having a beneficial impact.

As with many organizations seeking to control IT budgets more effectively, there is a drive to centralize procurement of software

and hardware at Islington. Centennial will enable the council to reduce the number of software and hardware purchases made outside of the official procurement channels, pinpointing additions to the network that were not sanctioned centrally. Where 'rogue' purchases are detected, the team are able to pinpoint the buyer quickly and encourage them to follow procedures in future.

"Prevention is better than cure and if we can prevent users 'meddling' with their system configuration or indulging in dubious software practices, so much the better," explains McNaney.

Summary

Now steadily approaching FAST accreditation, the London Borough of Islington is already seeing the benefits of Centennial Discovery. As it moves to a traded environment, the software will play a key role in enabling the Unit to establish a fair charging and clear reporting process for its user base.

Ken Middleton believes that Islington's choice to use Centennial Discovery has already been proven right: "We approached the project with optimism and it's been justified. Without doubt and reservation we are extremely pleased with our choice of Centennial Discovery," he said. "With Centennial Discovery, we feel equipped to face the future, whatever new complexities and challenges come our way!"