

INFO330 – Windows 7 Upgrade Project

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ABSTRACT

This poster presents a summary of a 3rd year Information Systems internship that was completed in the Project Management Office (PMO) at the University of Canterbury. The PMO is undertaking an upgrade from Windows XP to Windows 7 and the internship project involved the creation of a communications plan to ensure that all staff are kept informed of what is taking place with the project and the writing of a report to summarise the benefits of moving to a managed software environment. The poster also summarises the key learning and experience for the student involved.

Keywords

Operating Systems, Upgrade, Communications Plan

Windows 7 Upgrade Project

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Project Background

The University of Canterbury was using Windows XP with an unmanaged software environment for staff.

As Windows XP will not be supported after April 2014, computers will need to migrate to a later version of Windows.

Computers will be moved to a Windows 7 Standard Operating Environment. A part of the upgrade will mean users move to standard user accounts and a managed software environment.

The new managed environment will enable users to be able to get the software they need in a controlled fashion, while ensuring that software updates are applied uniformly across the campus.

Communications Plan

My communications plan outlines how the team can best and most effectively communicate with key staff and those affected by the upgrade. The plan ensures that people have access to the information they need and receive it in the best way, while making sure that they do not get bogged down with information they do not need which turns them off.

This is important as staff in the Colleges will not always be at their desks during working hours and may not view a computer as a particularly important aspect of their work lives. Key staff and College level technicians need to be consulted fully and engaged in the decision making process.

My plan includes key messages to promote in order to get the best message across, and includes a list of risks and counter measures to avoid these. This will aid the team in ensuring that communications are a help, not a hindrance to the team and that the project will be completed on time with a satisfied user base.

The Project

The project is being run by the Project Management Office (PMO), a part of Learning Resources. The PMO manages many large projects around UC, including the SMS (Student Management System) Replacement Project.

The project commenced in November 2011, and has finished the University Services Units and student workrooms.

The project is now about to enter the Colleges of the University. This presents challenges to the project as the computers are not administered by ICTS. Colleges control the budget themselves and department level technicians (such as those in Business & Law and Engineering) are usually the first port of call.

Going forward, the project will need a consistent communications strategy in order to ensure college staff & key contacts know what is happening & required for the upgrade.

Software Benefits

Report

There are many benefits from moving to a managed software asset environment from an unmanaged one.

There are cost savings from having bulk and volume licenses on a per user basis rather than having everyone use an individual license. There are security savings from having centralised updates and removing administrative access from people. There are time and resource savings from having IT not have to support a multitude of software.

Before I joined the project, there had not really been an effort to calculate the comprehensive benefits of software asset management, so it was good to be able to add this tool of real value to the team.

Learning & Experience

It was good to be able to get real life experience of working in a proper organisational environment. Up until now all my learning had been on a largely individual, theoretical basis.

My internship helped to highlight the benefits and necessity of project management methodologies in large projects and organisations. While I did not get to experience the use of the Kanban methodology myself, in my last week when it was implemented the benefit and time savings were immediately obvious.

The experience has given me the tools and skills that I will need going into a career with a formal organisation. Even simple things like proper office etiquette are things that I have been able to learn while being in a supportive, educational environment.

The biggest thing that I have learned is the experience of work being largely open ended, in contrast with University level work and assignments which are often very close ended with a definite result. I have learned how to go about work and using the feedback of others to shape it, which is something very new to me.



1. THE PROJECT

The University of Canterbury was using Windows XP with an unmanaged software environment for staff. As Windows XP will not be supported after April 2014, computers will need to migrate to a later version of Windows. Computers will be moved to a Windows 7 Standard Operating Environment. A part of the upgrade will mean users move to standard user accounts and a managed software environment. The new managed environment will enable users to be able to get the software they need in a controlled fashion, while ensuring that software updates are applied uniformly across the campus.

The communications plan that was created outlines how the team can best and most effectively communicate with key staff and those affected by the upgrade. The plan ensures that people have access to the information they need and receive it in the best way, while making sure that they do not get bogged down with information they do not need which turns them off.

The software benefits report outlined the many benefits from moving to a managed software asset environment from an unmanaged one. These include cost savings from having bulk and volume licenses on a per user basis rather than having everyone use an individual license. There are also a number of security and time saving benefits that result.

2. STUDENT LEARNING

The key outcomes of the internship were:

- Gaining experience of working in a proper organisational environment.
- Highlighting the benefits and necessity of project management methodologies in large projects and organisations.
- Gaining tools and skills needed for going into a career with a formal organisation.
- Gaining experience of work that was largely open ended, in contrast with University level work and assignments which are often very close ended with a definite result.
- Learning how to go about work and using the feedback of others to shape it.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The internship was a valuable experience and enabled the student to develop existing skills and learn new skills, in particular relating to project management in formally structured organisations.

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