

## **Case Study**

# **Department for Education and Skills (DfES)**

## Embrionic Case Study for Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

### Department Profile

The work of the Department for Education and Skills is of central importance to the Government's agenda. The Department leads on a set of challenges that are crucial both to the economic prosperity for the UK, and to building a fair, equal and inclusive society.

The Department's aim is to help build a competitive economy and inclusive society by:

- Creating opportunities for everyone to develop their learning
- Releasing potential in people to make the most of themselves
- Achieving excellence in standards of education and levels of skills

Its objectives are to:

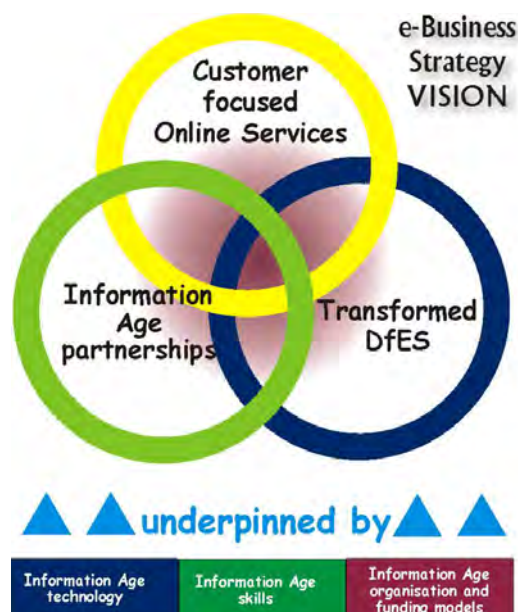
- Give children an excellent start in education so that they have a better foundation for future learning
- Enable all young people to develop and equip themselves with the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed for work and life
- Encourage and enable adults to learn, improve their skills and enrich their lives

Of particular importance to the Department is developing a deeper understanding its customers and working more effectively with its partners. Many of the DfES policies and programmes support the targets of other Government Departments and it is these partnerships that enable the Department to tackle issues of wider concern in the community.

Delivering against the Department's e-Business Strategy is key to realising these goals and to building partnerships that enable collaborative, real time sharing of knowledge, best practice and ideas, both inter- and intra-department.

### DfES e-Business Strategy

Supporting the Government's goal of making all information and services capable of delivery online by 2005, the Department is using technology to transform service delivery to customers, internal processes and the way it works with its partners.



The strategy recognises most services are delivered through a wide range of independently managed partners who make their own decisions about priorities and how best to deliver their services electronically, and factors in the strategies of executive non-departmental public bodies [NDPBs], OFSTED, Local Authorities and Schools.

The strategy is steeped in the key assumption that future users of government services will be more demanding and will not accept disjointed services from the Government. The second key assumption is that for improvements to be sustainable the organisation itself must be transformed and not just its current set of offerings.

Therefore, the central goals of the Department's e-Business Strategy are:

- To make real progress in making use of delivering information and services online, and to make that information relevant to a range of customer communities in ways that makes the information easy to use and find
- To ensure the Department utilises up-to-date technology solutions to communicate more effectively with the public and help transform policymaking

To this end a wide reaching programme of infrastructure refresh commenced in 2002 with the programmes objectives being to:

- Drive cost and scale efficiencies through the implementation of common standards and a consolidated architecture
- Deliver a platform that will enable the Department to adopt new ways of working e.g. flexible/mobile working, higher levels of collaboration within the Department and with its partners
- Comply with prescribed central government ICT standards

The Department's IS Work Programme (ISWP) is driven by the business and priorities of the Department and underpins the implementation of the Department's IS and IT strategies which in turn link to wider strategies such as the e-Business strategy. The ISWP is a rolling programme of work that is reviewed and refreshed annually. Each year, the programme looks to build on previous successes and it includes the modernisation of most core ICT services and systems. The task of defining and managing the ISWP sits with Huw Evans, DfES Programme Manager. Huw's goals include improving the way the Department works by delivering ICT projects that offer clear business benefits in an efficient and controlled manner; and delivering projects to the highest possible technical excellence on time and to budget. Work streams within the programme include the:

- Design and implementation of a dual data centre to deliver the resilience, cost and manageability benefits associated with a consolidated server infrastructure
- Implementation of an IP WAN across the Department to drive down costs and underpin future cost-saving and efficiency solutions such as voice over IP
- Delivery of an employee portal supporting direct DfES staff and affiliated partners such as OFSTED and NDPBs, bringing closer collaboration across these diverse groups
- Development of an electronic document and records management system to better manage the Departmental memory and to help the Department meet the requirements of the Freedom of Information act
- Development of a "Services Zone" to streamline in house service delivery and to deliver more in house corporate services electronically direct to Departmental staff

- Deployment of Microsoft Exchange 2003 with Outlook clients as the framework for joined-up and remote working across the Department and its partners.

In addition to the overall programme management role, Huw also owns the delivery of the Exchange 2003 work stream and it is in this capacity that he works with his key Microsoft Exchange Partner Embrionic.

Of Embrionic's involvement in the project, Huw Evans says:

**“Embrionic were originally brought into the project to bridge the knowledge gap between two major infrastructure projects – Exchange Upgrade and Dual Data Centre. Their depth of technical and project know how have been instrumental in bringing the level of success to the project we have enjoyed to date.”**

Embrionic's role in the Exchange project incorporated steering the delivery of the technical architecture together with overall responsibility for the management of the technical work stream to include:

- Design and implementation of the architecture and migration strategy
- Develop skills transfer programme, prescriptive build and test process, and guides
- Assistance with documentation of the project lifecycle and integration of that into other work stream activity i.e. Active Directory, Server, Desktop, Dual Data Centre
- Liaison and management of work stream partners – Dell and Microsoft.
- Participation in, and contribution to, the Project Board

**“Embrionic's knowledge of not only Exchange but high level of understanding of all the technical streams has added substantial value to the project, they are clearly very confident with both technology and pragmatic project process and present an extremely professional face of IT to our customers and DfES Management.”**

Huw Evans, DfES Programme Manager

#### **About Embrionic:**

Embrionic is a well established and successful IT consultancy. A team of skilled and enthusiastic specialists, they have a distinctive approach to the way they work, producing durable business solutions.

The tag line "Energising IT for Business" demonstrate the company's passion and dynamism when assisting our clients in planning, designing, developing and deploying creative IT solutions coupled with the desire to ensure strong long term client relationships.

Their experience of many large-scale projects means Embrionic possesses a broad knowledge base of what the real world of integrating multiple Microsoft products at scale is, and is therefore ideally positioned to take that pain away from their customers. Their pragmatic approach to project management means the Embrionic Consultants integrate rapidly and seamlessly into customer teams and can be relied on to execute to time and budget.

Additionally, the company's project model delivers the right know how at the right time, with skills transfer and clean handover a priority in enabling Embrionic to continue to work its growing list of satisfied customers.

**The Future:**

The delivery of this integrated platform means DfES has in place the foundation that meets the goals of a transformed department, and is best placed to accelerate and support innovation in the future.

Projects linked to, and planning to maximise the value of this platform include:

- An Electronic Document and Records Management System
- The integration of CRM into the Department's processes
- The development of applications based on Exchange 2003 for example extending the reach and richness of the Learning Academy Suite.
- Extending remote working capability to enable new ways of flexible working across the department and its partners.

Based on the success of this initial engagement, DfES and Embrionic are continuing to work together to explore where the combined skills and know how will continue to add unique value.

**Technical Solution:****Solution Description**

Key points for the migration of Exchange Server 2003 included:

- Collapsing five Exchange sites to a single Administrative Group/Routing Group
- Consolidation of twelve servers to just two clusters (using the leapfrog method)
- 8000 mailboxes migrated
- In excess of 11,000 public folders
- Forty-five mail dependent applications – including two key Department wide applications, Correspondence Handling System and Services Zone
- Introduction of Data Replication

**Software**

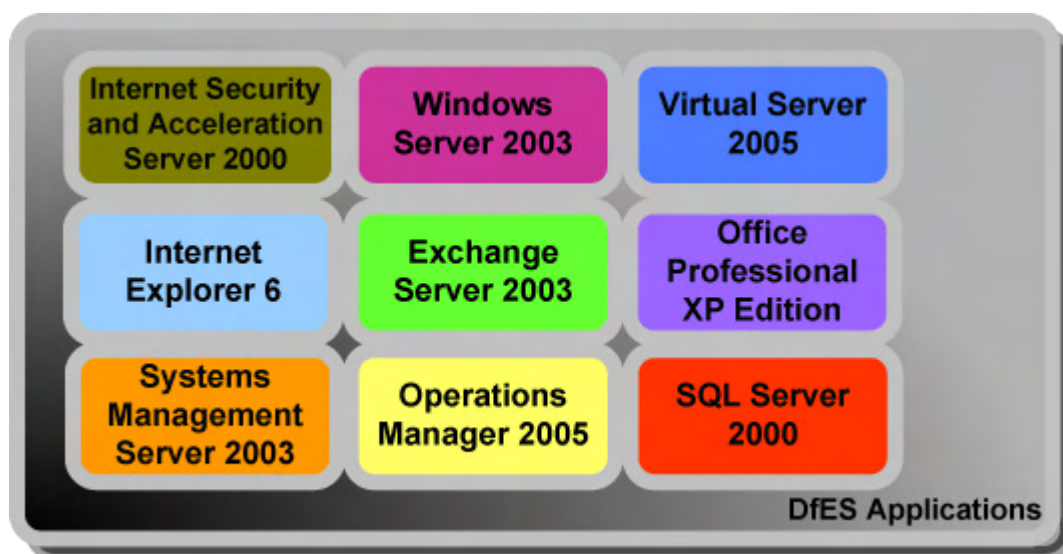
Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Enterprise Edition

Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 Enterprise Edition

Microsoft Outlook 2002

Microsoft Operations Manager 2005

NSI Software Double-Take



department for  
**education and skills**

