Rushcliffe Council cuts PC energy costs by 65% with PowerMAN

The Challenge

Rushcliffe Borough Council in South Nottinghamshire is facing unprecedented cuts of £2.8m (25%) of its budget over the next four years. Budget cuts mean the authority is working hard to cut costs, increase income, improve efficiency and radically redesign services. One area the council has focused on is improving energy efficiency. The IT team was keen to help.

Paul Chapman, Rushcliffe's ICT Support Manager explains:

"The Council's carbon management plan sets out the need to reduce Rushcliffe's carbon waste by 15% by 2015 and then by another 15% by 2020."

So with tough targets in place, the IT team investigated the energy costs associated with computers. Paul Chapman said:

"We looked how we could reduce the energy used by PCs. We looked at many options and selected PowerMAN."

PowerMAN Solution

Data Synergy's PowerMAN is a flexible energy management software package that allows the IT Team to identify and reduce energy use with an easy to navigate dashboard. As part of the package, Paul and his colleague Mike Daft received comprehensive product training from the manufacturer.

Implementation

The first task was to establish how efficient the existing operating practices were. The software was put into monitoring mode and quickly recording data from around 250 PCs.

"Historically, we didn't know if staff were turning off their computers when they weren't in use without physically checking each desktop. This wasn't practical on a regular basis. PowerMAN allows us to automate this process."

Using the reporting features of PowerMAN, the team carried out an initial baseline measurement to work out the amount of wasted PC hours. During the first four weeks of monitoring, the software found almost 23,000 hours where PCs were turned on, but were not being used. This was about half of all workstation hours and amounted about five hours per workstation per day. Two thirds of this was due to users leaving unused workstations logged on, whilst the rest was due to workstations that were not logged on.

The team used this information to work out a power management policy.

The team's approach was to start gently, but then become more rigid to allow users to grow used to the technology and minimise any productivity issues. The team worked with users to identify some computers that were required 24/7 and then made all other workstations shutdown at 6:30pm if no user was logged on. The team followed this up by making workstations 'sleep' after an hour of inactivity. Paul explains:

"We have been rolling out PowerMAN gradually every week. We keep staff informed through our staff magazine. Most staff have not even noticed, because installing the software has been easy and not at all intrusive."

Results: 65% saving

The project has been very successful and enabled the team to reduce inactive workstation hours by 65%. The team estimate this saving to be worth around £4,500 per annum. The software allows Paul and his team to quickly run reports to evaluate the efficiency of any area or specific workstation. This allows the team to keep a watchful eye on on-going performance. Paul's colleague Mike comments:

"The reports allowed me to find computers that were being left logged on for prolonged periods."

The project is on-going and the team plan to further fine tune the power management policies in the future. Mike explains,

"With PowerMAN there is a lot of room for adjustment and further control."

One of the additional benefits of the project that both Paul and Mike identified was security. Paul explains,

"When people aren't at their PC, it now locks automatically and turns the screen off, making it virtually impossible for anyone else to get access"

Conclusion

PowerMAN has helped Rushcliffe to get a grip on its computer energy usage, meaning the Council can monitor it, reduce it and continue to look for more improvements.

Rushcliffe Borough Council is on track to meet its carbon reduction targets, helped by the improved energy use provided by PowerMAN. Less waste, less cost and better for the planet.

"Overall the use and after sales care of PowerMAN has been a huge success. It has given control back to us and means we can now fully monitor our usage helping us dramatically reduce our PC energy wastage and costs."

Background Information

Rushcliffe Borough Council covers the area south of the river Trent between Nottingham, Newark and Loughborough. The main population centre is located in West Bridgford where 36,000 of the councils 100,000 plus population live. The council offices are located in the heart of West Bridgford immediately next to the Nottingham Forest football ground and the Trent Bridge cricket ground. The council has approximately 350 staff workstations.

Press Contacts

Nicky Mee (Communications Manager) Tel: 0115 914 8555
nmee@rushcliffe.gov.uk

30 September 2011

About Data Synergy

Data Synergy is a British company based in Sheffield. We have over 10 years' experience developing and supporting software solutions for enterprise PC deployment and management. We do not resell other vendors' products and do all our development, sales and support from our UK base.

Our products have evolved through listening to customer ideas and applying our unrivalled knowledge of PC internals. If you have a suggestion for a new product or feature we would love to talk to you.

Data Synergy UK Ltd
Cooper Buildings
Sheffield Technology Parks
Arundel Street
Sheffield
S1 2NS

Website: www.datasynergy.co.uk
Email: sales@datasynergy.co.uk
Telephone: 08456 435 035

Registered in England and Wales
Company Number 06682095
VAT Registration GB 939 7559 56