



Overview

Country: UK

Industry: Public Sector

Customer Profile

The Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK) has a population of only 150,000. It is rated 'excellent' by the Audit Commission. Some 70 per cent of its residents regularly access the Internet.

Business Situation

RBK wanted an e-ticketing solution to help community groups sell tickets for events on the council Web site and encourage more people to access the site for other local authority services.

Solution

CIBER UK recommended using Microsoft® Commerce Server 2002. Built on the Microsoft .NET Framework, Commerce Server extends the uses of any Web site, making it easy for users to buy services.

Benefits

- E-ticketing for community groups
- More residents visit council Web site
- Easy to change using the Microsoft .NET Framework
- Helps meet e-government targets
- Promotes other transactional services

Council Offers Free E-Ticketing Solution to Every Local Authority to Help Meet E-Government Targets

“This is a major benefit for community groups in Kingston, because if they sold tickets through a commercial third party, they would have to pay a significantly higher transaction fee.”

Robin Noble, IT Manager, Royal Borough of Kingston

The Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK), a suburban borough in south west London, provides local authority services to 150,000 people. RBK obtained funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to lead on development of an e-ticketing solution for both council services and community groups as part of the e-Pay National Project. CIBER UK, a Microsoft® Gold Partner, implemented 'My Kingston,' with Microsoft Commerce Server 2002 using the Microsoft .NET Framework. Community groups in Kingston can register as promoters to sell tickets, or register participants for their events, on 'My Kingston,' and benefit from the full value of their tickets. RBK is experiencing more hits on its Web site, with residents becoming more aware of the transactional services available to them online from the council. The e-ticketing solution will be made available free to every local authority in the U.K. saving them from spending any money on development costs.



“Instead of developing [the solution] themselves all [Local Authorities] need to do is buy the licence and then integrate the solution with their back-office systems. Then there is an opportunity for bespoke development and rebranding of the solution by each local authority.”

Robin Noble, IT Manager, Royal Borough of Kingston

Situation

The Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK) is the smallest of the 33 London boroughs, excluding the City of London, and has a population of only 150,000. The council, which provides a full range of local authority services, is rated 'excellent' by the latest Audit Commission Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA). Many of Kingston residents commute to central London for employment and are heavy consumers of digital services, with some 70 per cent regularly accessing the Internet.

RBK has developed a national reputation for innovative use of information technology (IT) and prides itself on working in partnership with the private sector, voluntary organisations, and community groups, as well as making the most of in-house skills. RBK is making substantial progress in responding to the government's public access and e-services agenda: this was a key contributor to the council moving up to 'excellent' status during its most recent CPA review.

In early 2004, RBK was working on adding more transactional services to its Web site, including the option for citizens to pay bills online, such as council tax, charges for meals-on-wheels, and other services. RBK approached the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to seek funding to lead nationwide on development of an e-ticketing solution with a number of key deliverables:

- Online system for community groups to promote events and sell tickets.
- Systems for council staff to sell tickets in its joint services centres, libraries, and tourism information centres.
- Reporting for reconciliation, audit, and management information.

The ODPM funding was conditional on RBK making the solution freely available to all other U.K. local authorities through its e-Pay

National Project, with very little further development needed. The e-Pay National Project provides local authorities with tools and guidance for implementing electronic payments. Noble says: "After proof of concept and testing, the plan is for the ODPM to showcase it nationally, and advertise the solution through various public sector channels."

Solution

RBK invited CIBER UK, a Microsoft® Gold Partner for commerce and collaboration, to implement the solution, which is called 'My Kingston.' CIBER UK was already working on developing the RBK Web site and had been awarded that contract, because of their status as a Microsoft Gold Partner and their reputation in delivering successful local government projects. CIBER UK recommended using Microsoft Commerce Server 2002 because the product is ideally suited to meeting the demands of the local e-government agenda.

Built on the Microsoft .NET Framework, Commerce Server 2002 extends the uses of any Web site, drives revenue, and makes it easy for users to buy services. Commerce Server provides powerful features for user profiles, personalisation, catalogue management, order processing, globalisation, and advanced online business analysis and reporting.

Charles James, Business Manager, CIBER UK, says: "Commerce Server has only been implemented a few times in local government and this shows great use of the product, which some local authorities have previously found hard to grasp."

CIBER UK has produced a generic fast-track starter kit for roll out of similar solutions for councils of all sizes across the country, including schemas, page templates, and integration tools.

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Charles James, Business Manager, CIBER UK

From the end of November the solution itself will be offered for free download on the government e-Pay Web site: www.e-payments.org.uk and the Local Authority Open Application Sharing Portal: <http://oas.newham.gov.uk/default.aspx>

James predicts that the solution will prove an instant success with other councils, because it is flexible and cost effective. “You do not need to have Microsoft technology in the back office databases to use this solution,” he says. “Through the ODPM, other local authorities will enjoy a £3,000 (U.S.\$5,430) discounted licence fee for Commerce Server, which would have cost them £20,000 (U.S.\$36,200) from resellers.”

Benefits

Cost Effective Online Ticketing for Community Groups

Community groups selling tickets through ‘My Kingston’ get the full value of the ticket with the customer paying a 10 per cent administration charge to the council.

Noble says: “This is a major benefit for community groups in Kingston, because if they sold tickets through a commercial third party, such as Ticketmaster, they would have to pay a significantly higher transaction fee on every ticket, making it completely uneconomic to use. Community groups, once they are registered with us as promoters, can put up their own content. They can even register people for their events where there is no charge so as to create mailing lists.”

More Citizens Access Council Services

RBK is already benefiting because of the increased traffic on its Web site. Some citizens, nevertheless, are still unaware of which council services are available electronically, despite the high use of the Internet. Around 80 per cent of residents are online either at home or work.

Noble says: “Supporting community groups is a priority for us, but ‘My Kingston’ also introduces more people to the council’s online transactional services. Between £80,000-£100,000 (U.S.\$144,800-U.S.\$181,000) a month is coming into the council online and even at this very early stage we have already sold over 100 tickets for community events.”

Low Total Cost of Ownership for Local Authorities

RBK considered other solutions for e-ticketing before agreeing with CIBER UK’s recommendation that the council use Commerce Server. Noble says: “It is the only one that is flexible, low cost, and easy to work with. There is no need to rely on third-party software. Because it is all written using the .NET Framework, ‘My Kingston’ is easy to change, with very little training needed.”

Through the ODPM and the new Microsoft local government Web sites, all U.K. local authorities will be able to download the e-ticketing solution software at no cost. Noble believes this represents amazing value for money for other local authorities because of the low total cost of ownership (TCO). He says: “Instead of developing it themselves all they need to do is buy the licence and then integrate the solution with their back-office systems. Then there is an opportunity for bespoke development and rebranding of the solution by each local authority.”

Local authorities can also use CIBER UK’s generic fast-track starter kit which includes schemas, page templates, and integration tools.

Helps Meet E-Government Targets

Local authorities are under increasing pressure to meet the ODPM’s public access and e-government services targets by the end of 2005. Every local authority, including those whose systems are not based on Microsoft

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products or services, call the Microsoft UK Contact Centre on 08706 010100. To access information via the World Wide Web, go to:

www.microsoft.com/uk/

For more information about CIBER UK products and services, call 01865 315200 or visit the Web site at:

www.ciber-uk.com

For more information about Royal Borough of Kingston, visit the Web site at:

www.kingston.gov.uk

For more information about the ODPM e-ticketing solution, visit the Web site at:

www.e-payments.org.uk

technology, can use Microsoft Commerce Server for e-ticketing.

Noble says: "Commerce Server is helping us to meet our e-government targets. 'My Kingston' demonstrates that the council is fulfilling the ODPM and delivering on our commitment to community leadership."

Microsoft Windows Server System

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<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsserversystem>

Software and Services

■ Products

- Microsoft Commerce Server 2002

■ Technologies

- Microsoft .NET Framework

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