



THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

A Transformational Way of Policing Public Sector IT

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Thames Valley Police is the largest non-metropolitan police force in England and Wales, serving a population of more than two million, as well as six million visitors who come to Thames Valley each year. In 2011, its IT operations were merged with those of Hampshire Constabulary.

CHALLENGE

To comply with government guidelines, the joint services had to migrate their current operating system to a later version of Windows. As part of the migration, they needed an accurate discovery of the IT estate across both forces to identify and remove legacy applications that would not be included in the new OS image..

SNOW'S CONTRIBUTION

Snow platform has helped the joint IT operations of two major police services to recalibrate their software licensing & procurement processes.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Better software availability for police force
- Software budget planning based on usage trends
- Optimization of the software estate through rationalization and standardization
- Reduced cost of asset procurement and set up

SAM HERO

Lee Brown, SAM consultant for the combined Thames Valley and Hampshire police forces, "Using Snow we can make better decisions and determine what is the best delivery method (such as the cloud or a virtual platform) based on usage."

TWO POLICE FORCES, DECADES OF IT

The need to reduce costs for the two constabularies of Thames Valley and Hampshire led to the formation of a Joint Operations Unit which saw the two forces' IT departments merging in 2011. Combined, the estate has 12,000 desktops run on up to 1700 servers, managed in-house by a partner. The IT team operates from Kidlington, the Thames Valley headquarters, and from Southampton.

To comply with the government's Public Network Sector guidelines, finalized in 2015, the combined force had to migrate to a newer version of Windows – a transformational challenge for an IT team that had never seriously inventoried its estate. "To migrate to a new operating system, it is first of all necessary to know what you are migrating," says Lee Brown, who led the project. The IT operations team wanted insight so that they could remove legacy applications, and not waste unnecessary resource on the project. The SAM function in place had been manual – a process that proved both inaccurate and over-detailed.

"Before we implemented Snow we couldn't see the wood for the trees," Brown admits. "We used spreadsheets to update licenses and SCCM to collect discovery data which was very administrative-heavy. Now, using the combination of Snow Inventory and Software Recognition Service, with the output of cleansed and normalized information we can have a proper understanding of what IT assets we have across the two forces' networks – mapping licenses to the installed software and importantly we can now detect usage for all products."

FROM INSIGHT TO STRATEGY

Snow was selected as the best solution to get the forces' sprawling IT estates into shape for the operating system migration. As Brown puts it: "We needed Snow to understand what was out there." This process of discovery led inevitably to a series of commercial decisions and strategies regarding software licensing. Brown was keen to gain control and remove any blind spots from the network, he says: "If we're migrating 8,000 licenses currently on one operating system, do we need all those licenses again as part of the new migration? Snow helped with some of the strategic decisions, enabling us to rationalize our software estate, before we commit to doing the upgrade".

THE BIGGEST WIN? STANDARDIZED DESKTOPS

To Brown, the most tangible and professionally satisfying result of the Snow deployment was the creation of standardized desktops for each user or user type. He sees the benefit in lower cost of asset procurement and set up as well as reduced support costs. "The migration project was successfully achieved using data from Snow and the business," Brown says. Policing is a complex, multi-faceted activity and key departments such as security, service management, offender management, accounts, not to mention IT and the SAM team, would need the flexibility



"Snow License Manager is good because of its simplicity, providing a good overview quickly."

Erwin Sparreboom, Head of IT Strategy, Sourcing & Vendor Management, SBM Offshore

to add software packages to the standardized UI. The Windows upgrade path was the perfect opportunity to introduce these standardized yet nimble UIs across the two police forces.

COMPLIANT? WE'RE THE POLICE ...

It goes without saying that more than any other business, the police needs to have its house in order when it comes to software licenses compliance. The key vendors of the Thames Valley and Hampshire forces are the usual suspects: Microsoft, Oracle and IBM – as well as some police-specific vendors. However, compliance, license optimisation and even saving money were not what drove the implementation of Snow – or at least not yet. "It's the opposite," says Brown. "At this stage, we're actually looking to invest in IT rather than reduce cost and the actionable intelligence that Snow provides informs our purchasing decisions."

CLOUD AND MOBILE – THE NEXT BIG CHALLENGES

What are the next areas of focus and investment for the SAM team? "Cloud is our biggest challenge," says Brown, "because it will fundamentally change how we deploy and manage software. As part of our IT strategy, we are looking to migrate more and more services to the cloud, such as AWS, Microsoft or Google Docs. We see these sorts of services benefiting our officers more, by giving them the ability to work from multiple devices, and enabling them to be more mobile."

Containerisation is another matter. The SAM team is currently investigating different options for police officers to access work applications on their phones whether it's an officer's personal device or a corporately provisioned one. This is where Snow Device Manager could play a crucial role in securing "the walled garden" approach called for in the PSN guidelines, and obviously crucial for a police force.

WORDS OF WISDOM

"Software Asset Manager is a roadmap rather than an instant fix. A strategic long-term fit rather than a quick fix to immediate issues," Brown sums up. "We regard Snow as a long-term partner in our on-going transformational process but even a solution as great as Snow is only as good as the people who use it and the training they get," Lee Brown concludes, echoing his belief in the values of public service.