



Absolute® Software helps London Borough of Camden cement its reputation for protecting public sector computers

Challenges

- Spotlight on public sector organisations to ensure that information is secured and protected from unauthorised access and usage
- Delivering efficiencies by improving the utilisation of existing assets rather than buying more of them
- Providing IT managers with fast and streamlined mass deployment over large and complex estates

Solution

- Computrace® One™ by Absolute® Software

Results

- Automated and reliable installation of Computrace over a large estate
- Immediately identified that 30% of mobile assets were underused enabling the Council to recycle assets
- Delivered real time map of where assets were located
- New capability added to wipe data from stolen systems anywhere in the world

Challenge

The London Borough of Camden serves around 230,000 people living in an area covering inner London, north of the West End and the City of London. The Council is one of a handful of local authorities across the UK to have achieved four-star status – central government’s highest award for excellent levels of service to the community.

The same ethos that helped win the four-star performance award extends to the way the authority controls and manages computers and data security. Mindful of how some public sector organisations have been criticised for the failure to track computers, especially mobile devices, Camden has implemented a very high level of security for its laptops. This is based on industry-standard recommendations for mobile device security: password protection, hard disk encryption and data protection, and computer tracking. With most of these in place, Camden needed to find an effective solution for computer tracking, and it did not need to look far for the answer.

Solution

BIOS-embedded into laptops from most major PC manufacturers is support for Computrace® by from Absolute® Software; an IT asset management, data protection and theft recovery solution.

According to Ian Lawrence, Technical Services Manager at the London Borough of Camden, “Computrace was the only solution that met our standard for achieving the final part of our mobile security strategy. We needed a persistent technology where there was no possibility of the client being tampered with. Now with Computrace, even if someone steals a laptop and makes an attempt to remove the agent, the technology simply rebuilds itself. It is the solidity and the extra security hardening that Computrace offers that made it a big plus for us.”

“Computrace is a significant benefit to Camden because of the peace of mind it gives us, but perhaps the critical point is public perception. If one of our laptops is lost or stolen, we can say it was password protected, it was encrypted and - because of Computrace - we can remove the data, and even have the means to recover it. Being able to demonstrate you have in place the level of protection that Computrace offers, is key for a public sector organisation like the London Borough of Camden.”

Ian Lawrence
Technical Services Manager
London Borough of Camden

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One of the challenges Camden faced was not having an accurate record of the number of laptops in the organisation. Previously, purchasing had been done by separate departments, but following a strategy to consolidate administration functions, operations like IT have been centralised. Lawrence is just completing an audit of laptops and he estimates the Borough has around 2000, some as old as five years.

So far, Camden has activated Computrace on 1300 of its laptops. These are used by Borough staff for a variety of functions from senior managers working at home and while travelling, to social service officers and town planners using laptops out in the community to share and gather information. Computrace tracking information has shown that the Borough's laptops are being used not just in and around London, but as far as Belgium, South Africa, the US and even Korea.

Camden uses Computrace for a variety of functions. These include remote data delete, which is the ability to wipe the hard disk of a laptop that has been lost or stolen - as soon as the laptop connects to the internet - and theft recovery where a stolen laptop can be tracked and then recovered. Another function is geofencing where geographical boundaries are set for laptops - like those designated as presentation kit in a specific building or room - so that there is an automatic alert if the device goes outside the boundary.

Other automated alerts indicate when free space on a laptop hard disk drops below 10 percent so that the user can be contacted to bring in the laptop for assessment and maintenance. In addition, Computrace is used to complement Camden's existing asset management system by providing real-time information on asset location and utilisation.

As soon as Computrace was deployed, a feature Camden found very impressive was the speed of roll out. With the Computrace agent already embedded in the laptop BIOS, software activation is managed remotely via the Absolute Customer Centre portal and happens automatically when a laptop connects to the internet.

Lawrence says, "When it comes to things like software deployment, there's an 80/20 rule - 80 is pretty quick, but the 20 can take forever. However, with Computrace we were seeing up to 300 Computrace activations coming in every week and in eight weeks we had gone from nothing to 900 laptops with Computrace on them."

Results

"Computrace is a significant benefit to Camden because of the peace of mind it gives us, but perhaps the critical point is public perception," says Lawrence. "If one of our laptops is lost or stolen, we can say it was password protected, it was encrypted and - because of Computrace - we can remove the data, and even have the means to recover it. Being able to demonstrate you have in place the level of protection that Computrace offers, is key for a public sector organisation like the London Borough of Camden."

One of other significant benefits of using Computrace has been to give a much more accurate picture of how laptops are used enabling the Borough to drive greater value out of its computer resources. Over a seven-day period, Computrace showed that around 35 percent of the Borough's laptops were not being used very effectively. Lawrence can now pinpoint the laptops that are not being used, find out why and, if appropriate, give them to someone who needs a laptop. This has significantly increased the productivity the Borough can get out of its laptop hardware and avoids the need to buy new equipment, when existing equipment is underused.

“Computrace has given us a much better real-time insight into how staff use our laptops. Across the Borough we’ve got pools of laptops and we found that, perhaps an older laptop wouldn’t get used so much, wouldn’t be updated and would end up hidden at the back of a cupboard. Also, staff who have a desktop at work might take a pool laptop to work from home, and because there were no means of tracking it, it could stay there and only get used occasionally,” says Lawrence.

Using Computrace, Camden can now implement a policy that if a laptop does not connect to the internet for 90 days, it sends an automatic alert and Lawrence can then use the Absolute Customer Centre to investigate why it has not called in and where the laptop is located.

Computrace is also being linked into the leaver process, so that when an employee leaves the Borough there is an alert associated with a laptop they might be using and Lawrence’s team can ensure it is returned.

Some of the other aspects of the Absolute solution that have impressed Camden are the online portal and the software as a service (SaaS) feature. Via the portal, Lawrence can see laptop activity in real-time and access a wide range of reports quickly. Computrace SaaS meant that Camden did not have to buy another server to host the solution. Not only does this reduce costs, it also removes the administration complexity often needed in public sector purchasing. “It’s a whole project justification and procurement process I don’t need to worry about,” says Lawrence.

Camden is also looking at using another feature of Computrace to help improve management of its laptops. This is the ability to send messages or alerts to individuals or groups of laptops such as asking users to bring in a laptop for maintenance or sending out a general security message.

About Absolute Computrace

Absolute Computrace by Absolute Software allows organizations to centrally track and secure their IT assets within a single cloud-based console –the Absolute Customer Center. They can easily identify computers and ultra-portable devices that have gone missing, enforce software policies, and maintain a fleet of optimally running devices. Most importantly, they can remotely invoke preemptive or reactive security measures to safeguard each device and the data it contains.

About Absolute Software

Absolute Software is the global leader in firmware-embedded persistent endpoint security and management solutions.

We provide organisations with comprehensive visibility and control over all of their endpoints – regardless of user or location. Our customers are able to optimise productivity, reduce operating costs, prove compliance, and remotely secure all of their devices and the corporate data they contain.



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