

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Saves Time, Money—and the Environment

Scalable WinINSTALL improves desktop management tasks



Steeped in rich history and tradition, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has welcomed kings and queens, writers and revolutionaries, politicians and painters, thinkers and thespians. It is located west of the City of Westminster, in the heart of modern London. Major museums, elegant residences, universities, embassies, and the famous Harrods department store are just part of the fabric that makes up the Borough.

It is the most densely populated local authority in the United Kingdom. Providing efficient services has always been a key priority for the Borough's Council, which has embraced advances in information technology through the years. Technology continues to improve efficiency, access to information, and the level of customer service and convenience for citizens.

Managing PCs and servers keeps IT staff busy

Within an Information Systems Division of 80, the Support Team's 17 staff manage approximately 4,000 personal computers (PCs) and 230 servers for the Borough's 3,500 employees. They are responsible for procuring, installing, and maintaining all of the IT equipment. Deploying new operating systems, updating multiple applications and patches, and managing hardware and software inventory are challenges they face, so they use Scalable WinINSTALL® for desktop management. WinINSTALL is a PC lifecycle management solution that allows IT administrators to define process workflows that dynamically manage PCs.

Lack of automation meant countless wasted hours

Prior to using WinINSTALL, the staff had no desktop automation tools. They used automated unattended installation procedures to install Windows and other software, but this could only be done by manually disconnecting and relocating PCs to the IT workshop.

QUICK VIEW

Problem

With no efficient means of software deployment, IT staff physically brought PCs to the IT workshop for installation, while support staff resolved problems by phone—or with in-person visits to the PC—which was costly and time-consuming. The Borough needed a solution to improve efficiency and make desktop management tasks more cost-effective.

Solution

- Remote control
- Automated software and patch deployment
- Inventory and asset management
- Creation of MSI packages

Results

- Increased employee productivity by eliminating the need to move PCs or dispatch a technician to a PC
- Remote management reduces man hours—the cost of one person's salary
- Inventory tracking alerted high energy use; now reducing consumption

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– Barry Goodall, Support Unit Manager
The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

unlike the full-blown servers that are required at each remote site with other products on the market.

“After looking at all of the products available, we felt that WinINSTALL just knocked the socks off the rest, and I’m sure it would probably be the same today,” explained Goodall. “Frankly, we just haven’t had a reason to go back and look at those other products again. WinINSTALL was good value for the money then, and it still is.”

WinINSTALL quickly proves its worth

The Borough carried out an informal return on investment analysis after about a year. “The quickest ROI was the software distribution. As we packaged more and more software, its deployment features became more valuable to us,” added Goodall.

“Within two months, we calculated that the time saved on remote visits was worth one extra staff person,” Goodall stated. “At this point, we no longer need to look at ROI—we already know we couldn’t do without WinINSTALL.”

Putting WinINSTALL through its paces

“Everyone on our staff loves WinINSTALL,” said Goodall. “In fact, we have grown up with this product.” The Help Desk staff uses it behind the scenes for upgrading or repairing packages. All software is packaged before they will accept it—preferably by the supplier, but if necessary, using WinINSTALL. “It has been an excellent tool for the creation of software packages through the use of its snapshot technology,” added Goodall.

WinINSTALL allows the IT staff to permit users to install selected packages, even without administration rights. They also deploy packages automatically over the network. Compulsory packages, such as patches, are quickly deployed to all PCs.

WinINSTALL’s integrated functionality works well for Goodall and his staff. “One big advantage is the coupling of the inventory and scheduler features of the product,” said Goodall. “We can do a query search, and quickly find all of the PCs using a particular version of an application, and schedule the deployment of the new version to all of those.” They can target deployments to specific PCs, such as those running Windows XP SP2 or a particular application. “We can have these deployments happen immediately, or schedule them to occur at a later date and time.”

Inventory Management helps track, energy consumption for a ‘greener,’ thriftier Borough

The IT staff uses software asset management for licensing and compliance checks. “The accuracy and detail of the data with the online inventory feature is awe-inspiring, if you’ve never seen anything like it before,” Goodall noted.

One of the surprises that Goodall uncovered was how much energy was being wasted when PCs ran overnight. “I knew some machines were left on, but I wanted to quantify the numbers,” said Goodall. Using WinINSTALL, they ran an inventory check at 1 a.m., reviewed the data in the morning, and discovered that nearly 700 PCs had been left on.

“We matched PCs with their users, and emailed reminders to people about shutting down their PCs when go home,” he said. Almost immediately, the Borough was able to cut the number of PCs left on by a third, and over time, the environmental impact has also been significant. “We are reducing CO2 emissions by about 30 tons per year now,” said Goodall. Additionally, the Borough has calculated the financial savings to be about £3,000 GBP (\$6,000 USD) per year.

WinINSTALL: Now a tradition at the Royal Borough

Goodall summarized the topmost reasons they continue to rely on WinINSTALL, including the accuracy and detail of the information; the ability to create MSI packages, permitting users to install packages without an administrator; and the swift deployment of patches over the network. “Perhaps the most compelling is its simplicity,” said Goodall. “WinINSTALL is a really powerful tool for us. Truly, this is a great, absolutely superb product,” he added.



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