

**Feedback of Shared Services new systems was consistently poor for user-friendliness. To resolve these issues Oracle proposed a front page portal was created and context sensitive guidance introduced for users**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for Welfare, Work and Pension Policy and is a key player in tackling child poverty. It is the biggest public service delivery department in the UK, employing approximately 110,000 people who collectively serve over 20 million customers.

DWP delivers its customer services through a series of business units including:

- Pensions Disability and Carers Service
- Jobcentre Plus

### The Project - Background

Shared Services was launched in 2005, using Oracle ERP supporting DWP's HR, Payroll, Procurement, Finance and Accounting services. Feedback, through surveys from users was consistently poor in the user-friendliness of the system. To resolve these issues and following consultation with Oracle, it was agreed that a front end Portal page should be created and context sensitive UPK guidance introduced for users.

To help DWP users navigate the RM system, the Portal was designed to provide the following:

- Links to most commonly used Employee Self Service (ESS) and Management Self Service (MSS) processes
- Links to Intranet / Internet
- Real time news
- Direct access to personal work items



Technical



Content  
Development



Training

Although UPK and the Portal were seen as one solution across DWP, the Portal would be, in effect, a front end web page and would have no dependency on UPK - or vice versa. They were, and are, two separate entities. Notwithstanding, the DWP Senior Management decision was that the RM portal and UPK would be implemented together, rather than one without the other.

Larmer Brown was introduced to DWP's UPK Portal Project Team by Oracle, as their Preferred UPK Services Partner, to assist in the progression of the project.

### UPK RM Pilot - Setup and Challenges

During development and delivery of the project, a number of challenges were encountered that DWP and Larmer Brown managed together.

New test PCs and servers were being installed but could not be purveyed within the required time frame. Larmer Brown provided a suite of networked laptops, including a UPK Library Server and an environment for the application, as an interim measure so that the content development program would not be delayed.

To progress the development of UPK, Larmer Brown created and presented a UPK development program, including the creation of a Content Scope Report with priorities, Development Standards, Development Methodology with Tracking and Project Reporting, and a schedule for regular Project Review Reports and Meetings.

As the UPK recording process developed, it was identified that UPK did not recognise certain areas of the DWP Oracle solution, which directly impacted the ability to deliver context sensitive guidance. UPK uses context IDs to link content developed to the live system. The context IDs link UPK to eBusiness and activate the help buttons.

The context IDs were automatically produced for Procurement, Finance and Accounting. However, it transpired that this functionality had been taken away from HR and Payroll. Larmer Brown was able to identify a process of allocating IDs to these modules and capturing them within UPK. This work around was considered so successful that IDs were manually recorded and are now maintained by DWP personnel.

During early January 2009 Larmer Brown handed over the Project and awaited feedback as to the success or failure of the UPK Pilot.

### The Next Stage - Multiple Projects

During May 2009 Theresa Stevenson joined the DWP Team as UPK Project Manager. Theresa's background included testing on the RM Project, with 15 years in DWP and project management skills.



Aware that the UPK Pilot had been successful, Theresa developed a Strategy to implement UPK across the various DWP Service Lines, staffed by internal customer facing personnel with in-depth knowledge of the systems and processes.

Theresa's objective was to empower the Service Line Teams to develop UPK content for their own areas and then maintain it as the system and

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processes changed to meet the needs of the business. Theresa arranged:

- 4-day UPK Training Courses attended by a combination of personnel from various teams, which not only taught UPK but also provided a valuable networking opportunity.
- Review and customisation of the UPK Standards and Development Methodology utilised during the Pilot, to meet the needs of content being developed by various service lines.
- Re-introduction of Larmer Brown's UPK Developers into DWP with technical, mentoring and support responsibilities.
- Installation, configuration and testing of UPK on DWP servers, involving several infrastructure, environment and application partners.

The UPK development work progressed through Summer 2009, with Theresa co-ordinating the works across the multiple Service Lines based at different DWP locations.



The Portal, incorporating UPK, was scheduled to Go Live in August 2009. However, as with most projects of this nature, unanticipated issues were experienced. These issues were unrelated to UPK but nevertheless impacted the Go Live date.

- The decision was made to implement an Oracle Single Sign On (OSSO) as pre-requisite of the Portal / UPK. Major incidents related to OSSO network demands occurred and although unrelated to UPK the project Go Live was delayed.
- Numerous bugs found in the Oracle Portal were identified and resolved which further impacted Go Live date - eventhough they had no connection to UPK did not reflect positively on UPK.

The combined Portal and UPK Project finally went live in December 2009.

### Lessons Learned

- Don't rush - avoid the tendency to get 'stuck in'. Research the product by speaking to suppliers with UPK implementation experience, and their clients, in an effort to understand the potential and the pitfalls.
- Attend Events - such as UPK Seminars and Webinar Sessions. For example, the half day training course initially given did not provide the Developers with the skills or confidence to develop UPK content.
- Consolidation of training in the workplace. No matter how good the training course, nothing can compensate for real-life experience in terms of saving time and, perhaps more importantly, making strategic decisions on the hoof.
- Market the solution before and after Go Live.
- Know your internal security limitations and have contingencies in place. For example, the UPK Pilot developed topics for training purposes for the Department for Education and Cabinet Office. Due to securities DWP had to

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explore ways of passing UPK content to other Government Departments.

- Daily contact to keep control, monitor deliverables and deal with issues as they arise. This experience highlighted the necessity to keep issue logs and plan SME and developer time, etc.
- Train Developers, support them continually and create a virtual developer community.

### Next Steps

- Ongoing upgrades - including migration of existing content.
- Accessibility - having such a high profile it is crucial that central government departments comply with legislation and indeed set an example in terms of interpretation and compliance. Accessibility is the term used by many organisations to describe how all facilities within the said organisation need to be accessible to employees with disabilities.

In relation to UPK, which provides on-line learning and documentation, this means access to the content via various tools designed for users with disabilities, i.e. voice activation or screen readers.

- Government initiative implementing the Oracle system and therefore UPK / Portal to other Government Departments identifying a standard offer. At present UPK and Portal has DWP branding, links to DWP intranet - policies / procedures, DWP real time news, etc.
- Managing UPK uptake. The DfE and CoF UPK training was successful and very positive feedback was received. These teams are desperate to get on with UPK development but the above challenges need to be addressed first.

### About Larmer Brown

Larmer Brown's primary business objective is to help organisations with the implementation of learning initiatives through content development and end user training delivery programs.

We have been using User Productivity Kit Professional technology to provide business transformation, documentation and training services since 1994.

Larmer Brown is an Oracle Gold Partner. We are also a Reseller and Services Partner for both dominKnow Learning Systems and Engage Software.