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> " We were able to see the system and information in a new way and have realised £300k of savings "
>
> John Galsworthy, Head of Parking and Business, London Borough of Islington

Head of parking at Islington saves £300K by fixing its slow application

Challenge

Measure application performance to avoid productivity losses and support strategic planning.

Solution

Business Application Performance Monitor from Quadnet

Benefits

- 10% productivity gain resulting in £300,000
- Real-time alerting when end users experience problems
- Simplified infrastructure and unnecessary upgrades avoided
- Focused investment plans and improved capacity planning

London Borough of Islington

Islington is the smallest and most densely populated borough in the United Kingdom and is a gateway to the busy areas of the City and West End. With so many people living and travelling through such a small area every day, there is a major challenge with keeping traffic flowing.

Keeping budgets under control

Like all local government organisations, the London Borough of Islington is charged with maintaining frontline services while saving money. To optimise costs, Islington Parking Services' 160 staff are located at five offices. These include a call centre and back office processing centre in Ashton, and a document scanning facility in Worthing.

John Galsworthy, Head of Parking and Business, was acutely aware that any slowness of applications across sites could have a major impact on productivity. So, when Quadnet suggested putting in place its Business Application Performance Monitor solution, John was all in favour.

"We're processing over a million transactions a year," he says. "If applications are slow they can reduce productivity significantly."

Maintaining staff productivity

Islington's solution monitors and measures if the parking services applications are running slowly and how many staff are affected. It then identifies fixes for the underlying infrastructure components supporting the application.

Through visual and intuitive real-time dashboards, IT staff are alerted if there are any problems in performance. As a result, they can pro actively take action "The monitoring solution picks up performance degradations and build patterns," says John. "So, we have a opportunity to rectify problems before they start to impact users."

Holding suppliers to account

Business Application Performance Monitor has been running at Islington for over two years. John has already seen significant benefits, one of which is keeping suppliers on their toes.

A good example was when staff were complaining that systems were slow in the Ashton office, which is a vital link in the processing of transactions.

"Using the solution we could see that things were slow for users. It was quickly identified that the speed of one of the connections had suddenly halved," says John. "We immediately alerted our service provider who was able to fix the problem as we pinpointed the time."

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Productive meetings with colleagues

Business Application Performance Monitor has also helped highlight the interdependencies between applications. For example, Islington's parking services applications are linked to its finance systems. If these are running slowly it can have a significant impact on parking services' ability to accept payments, not only reducing productivity, but also degrading the service provided to citizens.

"We are more productive in meetings because we can use concrete information rather than gut feel when discussing problems," says John. "We can also highlight issues to our colleagues in other departments from a position of strength."

Acting in real time

In a similar way, the solution helps Islington understand the factors that have an impact on application performance. "The key is being able to see changes in performance as they happen," says John. "That enables us to link the changes to events. For example, if the system slows down at a particular time of day we can look for the causes. Perhaps a mail server is updating or there is additional network traffic for some reason. We can also see if specific activities, such as anti-virus or network upgrades, have a detrimental effect. As a result, we can make sure we schedule activities to cause minimum disruption."

Investing more wisely

At the same time, the solution is helping John with capital investment. "With a complete picture of how our applications are behaving, we can prioritise our investments much better," explains John. "Previously, when there were problems, we didn't know exactly what was causing them. Now we know exactly what we have to do, which saves the costs of upgrading items unnecessarily.

Plus, we can use the data we have to justify investments more strongly."

Increasing value

"You don't realise how valuable Business Application Performance Monitor is until you start using it," adds John.

"If our applications aren't operating at peak performance then productivity suffers and a backlog of work builds up. That leads to a rise in complaints, which increases our workload even more. At the same time, revenue is delayed, which has an impact on our budgets.

"Slow systems also result in more calls to the help desk. Plus, without the visibility to see where the problems are, IT staff spend longer than they need to searching for a solution.

"I estimate that Business Application Performance Monitor has increased productivity by 10%. For us that means savings of £300,000."

Three year application performance trend
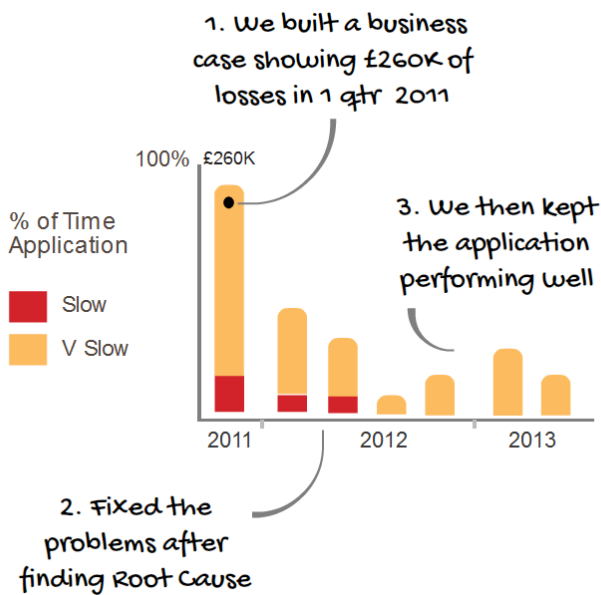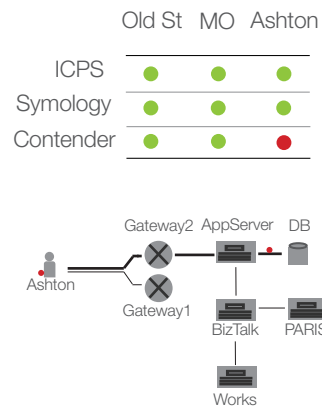

Real Time Dashboards

Figure 2 Real time dashboards with service maps lets you get to the root cause fast

Contact us to see how we can help you:

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