case study

A Journey through a SharePoint implementation with The Irish Deaf Society - Part 2, the Requirements Process

The Irish Deaf Society's SharePoint Project is underway. In the second part in this series of articles we talk to *John Sherwin*, Irish Deaf Society CEO, and *Gavin Tinnelly*, supportIT Cloud Services engineer, about how they built the requirements for the project.

John (IDS), can you describe in your words the high level requirements of the SharePoint instance?

The Irish Deaf Society (IDS) provides several advocacy services to the deaf community including personal advocacy and public policy development and co-ordination. The IDS Further Education and Training Department (FET) provides courses to deaf adults and also Irish Sign Language lasses to the hearing community.

These services are complex and the teams that deliver them manage sensitive personal data and confidential materials. The majority of our work is office-based and, with a large team, the management of our daily and weekly work requires software tools in order to manage our time and communications effectively. In addition, we generate large amounts of files that need to be stored in a reliable environment that is backed up and accessible at all times.

John (IDS), how did you approach the proof of concept?

Our stakeholders, in terms of the SharePoint project, were staff at all levels and the board of management. Like many other office environments, we were already using Microsoft products. In the main, these were the standard Office Suite of desktop products including Outlook (inc Calendar) and usual applications, Word, Excel and Powerpoint.

At a very basic level, our normal business does not demand any other more specialised software at the moment. Having identified a need for task management we had already started to use Microsoft Teams (and Planner to a lesser extent). In addition,

we were already using Office 365 to manage our email users and groups. At the time we had a physical server but most staff were storing quite a lot of files including day to day work on their work stations. Microsoft solutions addressed our problems in a very clear way, and built on the experience staff already had and the solutions they were comfortable with.

Gavin (supportIT), how did you approach the requirements from a supportIT point of view

With SharePoint projects there is often an education piece at the

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start of the requirements session about how SharePoint works, it is important that this is understood by key stakeholders before we embark on a project. However, when we met with John and his team they were already had a strong idea about how SharePoint could work for them. They were familiar with the product and other applications in the Microsoft suite so from that point of view moving everything into SharePoint for the team to share and collaborate wasn't a big discussion. Licensing also wasn't an issue because not-for-profit orgasniations can avail of free SharePoint licensing.

We did however discuss folder and file structure in great detail because this informs the design of the site. We looked at what files and folders from their existing server set-up they should bring over to SharePoint and what permissions were required for the new site. We also agreed timelines for the project; a SharePoint project typically takes 4 to 6 weeks from initial discussion to go-live date so we wanted to make sure the project deliverables met with Irish Deaf's expectations. And we agreed roles and responsibilities in terms of project sign-off, design, implementation, training and ongoing support.

From that meeting we created a file and folder structure document for sign-off by John and his team so we could begin work on the SharePoint instance.

Next Step in the IDS SharePoint journey...

The final article in this series will focus on the SharePoint build and implementation as well as staff training and support.

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