

Case Study

Mobile device management in the Finnish Parliament

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Customer: The Parliament of Finland

Industry: Government

Challenge: Find an intelligent and efficient way of managing and configuring mobile devices, while improving the level of IT security and Help Desk response time

Solution: Nokia Eseries mobile devices, Fromdistance mobile device management (MDM) suite, Sofor/BLC Wireless hosting services

Benefits: One management solution for mobile devices, efficiency gains in Help Desk and communication, increased level of security

The Eduskunta is the Parliament of Finland. Under the Constitution of Finland, the 200-member unicameral Parliament exercises supreme decision-making authority in Finland. It passes legislation, decides on state budget, approves international treaties and supervises the activities of the Government. The Representatives are elected directly on the basis of proportional representation. In addition to national decision-making, the Finnish Parliament participates actively in formulating the Finnish opinion in EU affairs and changes in European legislation.

The Challenge

The Finnish Parliament has been looking for a more intelligent way to support and manage its numerous mobile devices. Every time settings had to be changed, or new software had to be installed, it was carried out across more than 400 devices, one device at a time. Needless to say, the procedure took up a lot of valuable time and resources.

Luckily progress was made by the spring of 2008. A general agreement with the state's joint purchase company paved the way for a more specified contract with Sofor, a software house producing IT solutions. Sofor, together with its subcontractor BLC Wireless, provided the eventual management service for the Finnish Parliament.

Engineer Jari Kleemola from the IT Office of the Finnish Parliament commented: "A pilot project was launched near the end of 2008 with about 30 mobile devices. Our main concern was to make sure that things would continue to go smoothly after the changeover. We didn't experience any problems, and the device management service was initiated with 500 new mobile devices in April 2009,"

With some of the mobile devices already in use, the changeover had to be carried out manually. An older service blocked the use of SMS during the setup procedure. However, this was only a minor setback in a large-scale operation. According to Kleemola, a new set of mobile devices will be introduced to the management service in autumn 2009.

The Solution

The Finnish Parliament holds a wide range of Nokia Eseries mobile devices, mainly Nokia E90 communicators, Nokia E51 and Nokia E71 business phones. Their centralised administration is based on the Fromdistance MDM suite that allows the managing of applications, collecting of detailed inventory and usage-statistic information, and offers end-user support for multiple platforms. BLC Wireless provided the hosting service necessary.

The solution is already in place as a hosted service with an average training of one day for the Finnish Parliament's IT Office staff. Before implementation a specification project was carried out to collect all the necessary information and settings. The installation of the MDM client on the mobile devices was performed via SMS or from a memory card.

fromdistance

The culmination of all of these elements has given the Representatives secure and up-to-date mobile devices. The setting configuration and use of security codes has distinctly raised the level of protection and IT security. The creation of device and user profiles helps in solving unexpected problems by re-installing the desired settings. The solution also supports Nokia Mail for Exchange software and the Finnish Parliament's new email system.

"The main benefit of this system includes the ability to make remote installations and setups. With 500 – 1,000 mobile devices around, it's simply impossible to carry out such an endeavour manually. Or at least it's very time consuming. Prior to the management service we only performed top priority updates for the mobile devices. Now we have the power to make all the updates we want to."

Jari Kleemola, Engineer, the IT Office of the Finnish Parliament

The Benefits

Combined with BLC Wireless hosting, the Fromdistance MDM suite provides an all-inclusive device management solution that can be modified to suit the customer's specific needs. Help Desk can operate conveniently from a single point of remote administration, taking care of necessary configurations, various security measures and software installations and updates.

If an individual device needs replacement or maintenance, a new one can be easily set up to meet the identical specifications. The security features make it possible to lock a lost mobile device. This can be done while deleting all the saved data so an unauthorised person cannot make use of it.

The end users enjoy a greater level of satisfaction when installation and support services, such as data backup, can be carried out without their direct involvement.

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From the perspective of the data administration, the technology behind the device management service offers a wide range of possibilities while making significant gains in efficiency.

Jari Kleemola summarised it as follows: *"It's difficult to estimate the true value of the investment because the device management allows us to do things that we weren't able to do in the first place. So far we've noticed that the system helps us to do more with the same resources."*

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