

East Ayrshire Council
connect2 + events
December 2009

case study of connect2 + events

In our case study with East Ayrshire Council, we speak to Graham Stewart, IT Business Manager, about using connect2 and the events module to manage their Council wide services.

The study looks at how East Ayrshire has implemented connect2 to replace manual bookings for 15 service areas, and how this execution continues to grow across the Council.

background

"The vast majority of our bookings were recorded in manual systems, with some Council services using spreadsheets and other desktop facilities. Our staff were finding it completely unmanageable, especially in service areas where spreadsheets managed the bookings of Council meeting rooms; resulting in literally hundreds of spreadsheets.

Information was difficult to share across geographic areas as well as within work groups and clearly there was no way the Council could meet its objectives of delivering services to its customers via online self service channels.

The combination of the above, among many other factors, lead us to connect2."

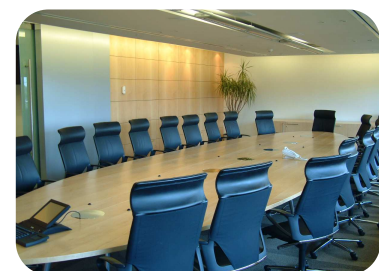
becoming a partner

At the time of evaluating suppliers, it was my view that there wasn't a single supplier delivering an integrated system that met the Council's needs. As a current lorensbergs customer, we took the decision to adopt a 'partnership' approach to develop a system that not only met our needs but could be used across the Local Authority customer base.

The early initial discussions involved IT Services and Library Services but we promptly carried out an audit of potential Council services that would benefit from such a system. The initial pilot phases involved Registration Services and Local Office Services.

implementation

In the areas of e-government and transforming services, our aim was to introduce online bookings for many of our primary services. This would include self service access over the Internet as well as providing Council staff with the means to deal with booking requests over the phone or face to face.



ebooking

at its best

In order to evaluate the process using real life scenarios we implemented connect2 on a phased basis. We began with online booking pilots for our registration offices (deaths, births and marriages) as well as meeting room bookings within our Dalmellington Area Centre (a co-location facility housing staff from the Council, Health Service, Police and other local organisations).



This stage enabled us to ensure that the software conformed to our business processes and issues of security. It also allowed us to address user access before the project was rolled out further.



The pilot stage began in the summer of 2005 and we used the feedback gained to introduce further stages which included bookings for recreation & leisure facilities as well as for other targeted services as seen in the list below.

During the first stage we also used the system to create efficiencies in the area of Community Planning. This was not in the original pilot specification and has therefore added an additional benefit to the project. Further to this, another area that arose during the pilot stage was our outdoor activities services which, amongst other things, organise groups to visit historical buildings and the County Park.

Due to the success of the system, we are now using connect2 to meet a range of business needs:

Dalmellington Area Centre:	Room booking and other Council facilities (via extranet)
Registrars:	Registration of births, marriages and deaths Booking of marriage suite and conference facilities
Headquarters:	Room booking; Council Cabinet meetings
Games Halls:	Booking of sports facilities
Imprint:	Events organised by Libraries
IT Resources:	IT equipment (projectors, laptops etc)
Leisure Activities:	Events organised by Leisure Development
Stewarton Area Centre:	Room booking
North West Area Centre:	Room bookings
C.H.I.P:	Community Health Incentive Programme
Dean Castle:	Events within Dean Castle Country Park
PPP Schools:	Sports facilities out with school hours
Social Work:	Room bookings

Football pitch bookings, training courses and contact desk management are currently undergoing user acceptance testing.

the benefits

- Each Service has implemented its own set of rules as well as access permissions e.g. some have full online self- service functionality, others 'read only' and others restricted to Service Department staff only. This has enabled each department to run as it wishes and to maximum efficiency.
- The online booking and automation of processes has resulted in a reduction in administration, specifically for meeting rooms and other resources.
- We are now able to provide a self service functionality to those customers who wish to interact in this way.
- Members of the public can make bookings online 24/7. This offers us a much reduced cost per transaction.
- connect2 centralises all information, facilitating easy access to information which can be shared across staff, locations or services; all of which lead to increased accuracy and efficiency.

For example, Council staff use connect2 to make bookings for registration appointments. The same system is also available to our citizens to allow them the flexibility of booking appointments online via our website.

- Staff are able to deal with requests or enquiries on behalf of customers at the first point of contact. This could include amending, deleting or making a booking. This offers a fantastic experience for our customers including reduced waiting/call times.
- Sensitive/personal information can only be viewed by authorised users.
- Staff are able to access Intranet facilities to view or update bookings while Community Partners can access the system via our Extranet. Again, being a centralised system means that everyone sees the same information.

"Council staff and Community Partners' reports of connect2 are highly positive".

a favourite feature

Having purchased a connect2 Enterprise licence, our Administrator can create new 'instances' across the Council. This enables us to implement connect2 into any of our departments at any time with little or no support from lorensbergs.

This offers us the ability to define rules for user access as well as bookings rules, which can vary from one 'instance' to another.

the future

Due to the phased approach to implementation and development, we have a very close working and business relationship with lorensbergs. We continually discuss our ideas and feedback, (which is always welcomed by lorensbergs), as our ongoing development of our connect2 solution facilitates the replacement of many existing manual systems used in the management of resources.

Our future developments together include advanced events management, integration to our payments engine for a seamless payment process, and integration with our CRM system to process authenticated e-bookings. We are also in the process of integrating connect2 with the Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG), LDAP and our 'Find my nearest' and WebGIS facilities.

In addition, we are also involved in development discussions including SMS integration, Leisure Management functionality e.g. casual bookings and payments, automated till processing and receipting and MS Outlook integration.

in summary

In summary, the Council's aim is to provide our customers and citizens with access channels that suit their needs, and to this end our Customer First policy includes transacting over the internet, face to face via our network of local offices, by telephone direct to Service Departments or via our Distributed Contact Centre system which networks voice calls across our local offices.

connect2 has been the key driver in enabling us to do the above, and we are well on our way to achieving these goals across the Council.

"I would highly recommend connect2 and Lorensbergs as a company, and am proud to act as a reference site for anyone considering the implementation of a bookings system."

With thanks to Graham Stewart, IT Business Manager, East Ayrshire Council



For more information on how connect2 could work for your organisation, give us a call on 01992 415500 or email enquiries@lorensbergs.com