



Case Study

Intel® Xeon® processor technology, Intel® Core™2 Duo processor technology



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Langford Levers Technology To Manage Growth

BC’s fastest growing city builds in efficiencies with Intel

Before incorporation in 1992, IT Manager Mike Palmer says the City of Langford was a “have not” municipality with high taxes and few services. A pro-business mayor and council, turned the city from “have not” to one of BC’s fastest growing communities.

Langford standardized on HP for its servers and workstations, which are at the heart of its network. Palmer relies on Intel® Xeon® processor technology for performance and dependability.

“Our servers have been bulletproof,” Palmer says. “We’ve embraced technology from the start. By investing in automation and technology, we increase efficiency and keep costs down. We’re a lean operation so when you look at our growth, and I’d say that’s a testament to what we’ve implemented. We’re able to stay small and agile.”

When the city adopted a unified communication platform, Palmer needed additional servers to handle the system requirements. “Because of the hard drive separation requirements of the software, we chose to virtualize instead of buying three more servers which saved us money,” Palmer said, noting they have also used virtualization for testing a new financial services package. It allowed them to test both the client and server environments before rolling the software out to staff.

Paperless Saves Floor Space & Time

A desire for efficiency prompted Langford to initiate the scanning and electronic indexing of all planning and development applications. The move saved space while speeding access to information for staff that no longer needed to search through file cabinets.

“We were dealing with growing pains and a lot of documentation coming into the city. We had some very basic search programs and were moving paper files off site to save floor space,” says Palmer, adding the city quickly outgrew their first paperless system.

In 2004, Langford upgraded to Microsoft SharePoint* running on HP servers powered by Intel Xeon processor technology to securely manage the documents coming into the city and allow for fast retrieval of information by staff. At that time, the city was indexing 170,000 documents. Today, there are more than 600,000 documents indexed on Langford servers.

“We are trying to eliminate or limit paper processes,” says Palmer, noting the increasing staff numbers coupled with a need for fast delivery of large mapping files which are used daily, requires a fast network and a scalable infrastructure to handle the growth.

Collaboration Is Key

Langford has seen development applications to the city increase from several hundred to more than 2,000 per year. To manage the workload, the city staff more than doubled from 27 to 70 people.

With more people working on each application, Langford needed collaboration tools. With Microsoft SharePoint and Microsoft Office Communicator* software running on the city’s HP servers powered by Intel, staff have been able to share expertise, leverage social networking and build team sites to help manage projects across departments, and collaborate with other governments.

When a new application comes in a team site is developed for that application, allowing everyone on the project to see the stage of the project, including who is responsible for which aspects of the project and what stages have been completed. Pictures can also be uploaded to the file. With all information readily available, anyone can easily pick up the file and manage it through the next steps.

Palmer adds that using tablet PCs allow inspectors to use pen with handwriting recognition to jot notes into applications. With Intel processors inside, the tablets get between seven and 10 hours of battery life, allowing staff to work effectively from the field.

The city was able to leverage its collaboration technology when they partnered with the regional and provincial governments to build a highway interchange. Langford created a SharePoint site, allowing remote access to the site for consultants and other government officials working the project. "External users could subscribe to alerts to know when things changed or were updated," says Palmer, adding they were able to track budget in real time. "The site definitely sped up that project."

Communications Integrated

To further unify their systems, Langford started using Microsoft Communicator in 2006. With full integration into SharePoint and other Microsoft products, staff can know instantly if someone is working on a document, and contact them via email, VOIP or instant message to ask questions. The software also allows staff to phone in and have everything from voicemails to emails played for them.

To run effectively, the system needed reliable technology. Langford standardized on a Nortel* IP PBX system, supported by the software infrastructure running on one of the city's 13 HP servers with Intel Xeon processor technology.

"It is great because we can communicate with people instantly using IP telephony integrated with Office Communicator. If I see someone working on a document, I can hover over their name and just call them from SharePoint. People can easily see if we're on the phone using Presence and forward calls to voicemail. The efficiencies are tremendous."

Wireless Enhances Efficiency

Bylaw enforcement, building and fire inspectors need mobility to effectively manage their workloads. Langford outfitted them with Panasonic ToughBook* tablet PCs, with either Intel® Core™ 2 Duo or Intel® Atom™ technology, depending on specific user requirements.

With built-in 3G cellular modems, long battery life and splash-proof housing, the ruggedized tablets allow instant connectivity to the office. For example, when a Bylaw enforcement officer is outside the office and enters an infraction into the system, the manager of bylaw enforcement receives an instant alert on his PC. "He can keep tabs on what's going on in the department, even though might not be there," says Palmer, adding unified communication using Microsoft allows officers to be alerted to a urgent issues while on the road so they can address it from the field with complete access to the information they need to respond effectively.

Palmer adds that using tablet PCs allow inspectors to use pen with handwriting recognition to jot notes into applications. With Intel processors inside, the tablets get between seven and 10 hours of battery life, allowing staff to work effectively from the field.

Emergency Response Connected

When Langford fire trucks roll out on a call, they get information on board from an Accura PowerBrick*, a ruggedized PC powered by Intel Core 2 Duo technology. When the truck is in the station, it is connected through the city's WLAN to the fire dispatch management software. When a call comes in, the system instantly connects to the cellular wireless network to provide ongoing instant access to critical information such as call details, building schematics and details about potential hazards at a commercial site.

About City of Langford

The City of Langford was incorporated as a city in 1992, but has history dating to 1851, when Captain Edward Langford established one of the four Hudson's Bay Company farms in the Victoria area. The city of 28,000 people is located at the south end of Vancouver Island and was named one of BC's fastest growing communities, with a population increase of 19.2 per cent between 2001 and 2006.



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