

Crown Prosecution Service

Transforming justice and public safety through technology at the CPS

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) deals with over one million prosecution and pre-charge decision cases. Witnesses and victims are vital to successful prosecutions, therefore the CPS has an objective to improve services and promote confidence in the judicial system.

WHAT THE CPS NEEDED

The relationship began in 2001 when the CPS decided to improve its handling of cases by using reliance on the physical file. Historically, everything has been largely paper-based. This meant that to conduct a successful case, not only did you need the right people in the right place at the right time, but also all the paperwork and other evidential material. Missing information or a key witness not attending court could lead to unnecessary adjournments which introduced costly delays and undermined confidence in the justice system.

The scale of change required meant both that the CPS itself would need to change significantly and also that major steps were needed to improve information sharing between criminal justice agencies, mainly the police, CPS and courts. The CPS therefore required a partner able to support the technology and business aspects of this major transformation. The CPS selected CGI as its strategic technology partner and the COMPASS programme was born. COMPASS provides the necessary tools to allow CPS staff to spend more time on essential tasks and less time on routine administration.

The ability to focus on casework leads to more effective prosecutions, improved performance and more accurate management information – enabling better use of CPS resources, improved staff morale and ultimately improved public confidence in the CPS and the wider criminal justice system (CJS). On the surface it was an electronic case management system (CMS), but scratch below that and you see a genuine partnership between two organisations that are on a journey together. It is this partnership that led COMPASS to be described as a shining example of best practice IT in government.

CASE STUDY

PUBLIC SECTOR

“At the heart of this progress will be the CPS/CGI COMPASS contract delivering all of the CPS information requirements from charging to prosecuting, from case preparation to working from home. This, in anyone’s judgment, is a transformation of profound proportion and will go a long way to delivering the CJS that the public require.”

David Jones

Chief Information Officer,
CPS

THE CHALLENGE

As with most partners who are on a journey, the CPS landscape has changed along the way. Major legislative changes have come into force, particularly the 2004 extension of CPS responsibilities at the pre-charge phase. Then in 2008 a structural change formalised the regional Groups, allowing economies of scale to be made and more complex casework to be better resourced. The CPS has been a leading agent in the ongoing quest for joined-up justice within the wider CJS. Electronic information sharing between criminal justice agencies and with defense representatives lays the foundation for the shift away from paper and to digital prosecutions.

OUR ANSWER

The way our partnership works means the CPS is supported through the changes the organisation undergoes. We work closely with the CPS to make best use of its investments and to map out how the evolving business can harness technology. We bring ideas to the table, collectively explore their potential and select the best ones to take forward based on delivery of benefits.

In 2011 we introduced structured bundling technology on the case management platform. This allows the CPS to cope with the range of evidential materials gathered by the police and to provide electronic bundles in a consistent form that can be served securely on court and defense. In 2012, we have introduced highly usable, secure tablet devices that for the first time allow advocates to present in the courtroom environment directly from the prosecutor's electronic bundle.

COMPASS began with a focus on a new national electronic case management system and has become a journey of transformation supported by modern information and communications technology. We are helping the CPS to embrace mobility without compromising security, through use of handheld devices and encrypted laptops. We've been helping them to join up justice with police systems and provision of tools to support joint witness care. Working through technology alliances, we continue to maintain modern IT and telephony.

CASE STUDY PUBLIC SECTOR

“The history of computing is littered with examples of solutions looking for a problem. This requires business managers to be very focused on the business case and subsequent benefits realisation of any project, as, for example, has been successfully achieved by the Crown Prosecution Service's COMPASS case management programme.”

Ian Watmore, formerly
Government CIO, October 2005.

A SUCCESS STORY

There are many examples of how the COMPASS CMS has helped the CPS develop better working practices and assisted in dealing with particular cases where issues arise. For instance, access to CMS using either a secure terminal or a 3G laptop has allowed prosecutors to find the most up to date information while in court that had not yet found its way into the physical file. Prosecutors have reported cases where CMS has given them information such as outstanding warrants or cases underway in other places, which has been critical when opposing bail applications. This has ensured that potentially dangerous defendants or indeed those with a track record of absconding were not released on bail.

Together, we have met every milestone right on time. But we don't stop there, and every single year we strive to improve to deliver better service. But actually, the bigger success story has been the transformation we have enabled through our partnership – truly modernising criminal justice. Following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, the CPS and partner agencies have accelerated the adoption of technology in order to achieve the efficiency gains necessary to continue to deliver vital public services across criminal justice. The CJS as a whole has committed to digital working in 2012 and our cross-justice expertise is allowing us to support the high profile CJS efficiency programme in meeting the challenges of modernising justice.

WHY CGI?

We have a flexible, collaborative culture. Our innovative, practical solutions are tailored to client needs. We work closely with public sector agencies and are one of the leading IT and business services suppliers to the Government/public sector.

Please note: The project referenced in this case study was delivered by Logica, which CGI acquired in August 2012.

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About CGI

With over 69,000 professionals in 40 countries, CGI fosters local accountability for client success while bringing global delivery capabilities to clients' front doors. Founded in 1976, CGI applies a disciplined delivery approach that has achieved an industry-leading track record of on-time, on-budget projects. Our high-quality business consulting, systems integration and outsourcing services help clients leverage current investments while adopting new technology and business strategies that achieve top and bottom line results. As a demonstration of our commitment, our average client satisfaction score for the past 10 years has measured consistently higher than 9 out of 10.

CASE STUDY PUBLIC SECTOR

“In 2009 the CPS extended its contract with CGI not only because the deal was cost effective but because the trust and confidence in the partnership was deeply embedded in both Logica and the CPS. When the decision to extend was made this strong relationship was an equal partner with the traditional hard factors of performance, time and cost.”

“Together we went forward with a reasonable view of how a digital CPS may emerge but without a firm user requirement. That courage - on both sides - is now paying huge dividends and by April 2012 the Government fully anticipates declaring the criminal justice system as digital.”

David Jones, CIO, CPS