Conwy County Borough Council and NDL SX/DX

Automating Digital Transformation

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NDL

Conwy - Sir flaengar sy'n creu cyfleoedd

Conwy - a progressive County creating opportunity

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Why did we investigate RPA ?

- Departmental restructure –greater focus on digital transformation and process efficiency.
- Tools and skill analysis identified some key gaps.
- Missing ability to interface with many of our key departmental and corporate systems.
- APIs individually either not available or prohibitively costly.
- Decided to investigate RPA as a method of achieving :*'invest once and use many times'*

Other Drivers:

- Website accessibility - eliminate 3rd party portals where possible
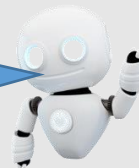- Data and document migrations from retiring to new systems
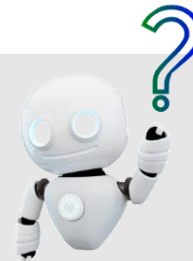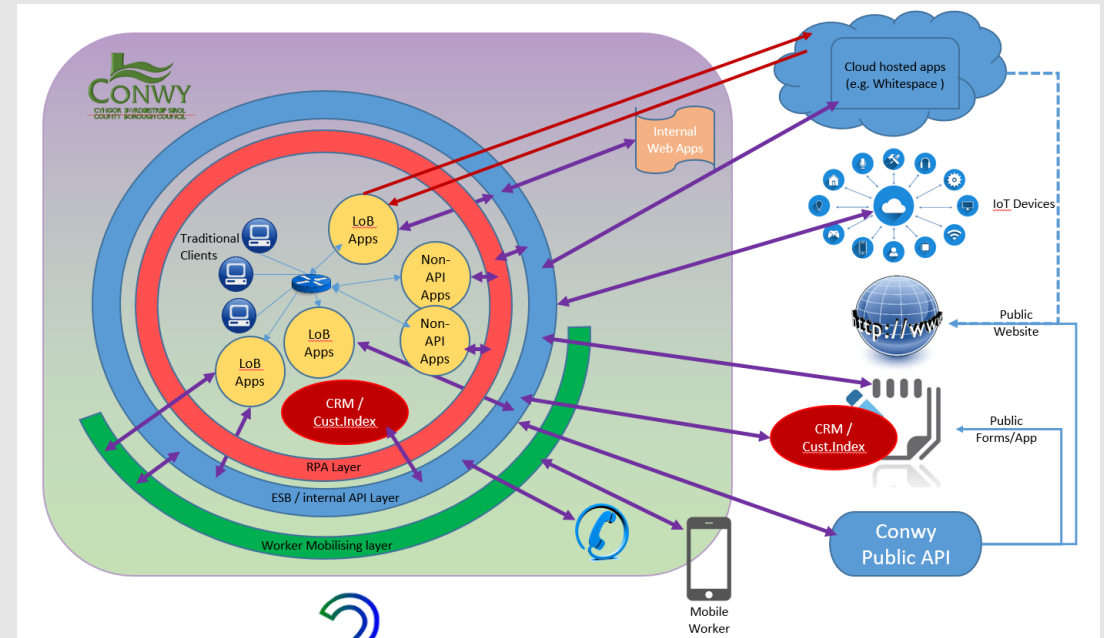
Why NDL?

- Engaged with vendors and/or RPA consultants including NDL
- Also looked at Open Source solutions
- Liked the Public Sector focus of the NDL solutions, and felt they really understood our 'business' more so than others.
- Presales engagement demonstrated willingness to 'do or die' and strong technical support skills. Gives confidence in the product and the team.
- Cost!
- Easy procurement route through G-cloud

We Like NDL :

- Nice people!
- Understand Local Gov
- Knowledgeable
- Strong support focus

Business Case presentation to SLT

We've made some promises to our leadership team which we have to deliver!

- NDL SX included as part of a 'package' proposal to give us the right toolkit to transform processes.
- Service priorities identified yrs 1-3
- Approved and backed by SLT

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Project 1 – Records transfer in Social Care

Records Transfer in Social Care

- Retiring 'PARIS' system holds many historical client records.
- Successor 'WCCIS' will not hold these documents.
- Using NDL SX/DX to automate export of documents from PARIS, Import into corporate EDM and provide link into WCCIS

Challenges:

- PARIS Client 'tires' in use – so added logout/login for each client caseload export.
- Takes longer for each process, but much improved reliability
- Documents from 130,000 clients (approx. 19.5million documents!) to migrate by March 2021.
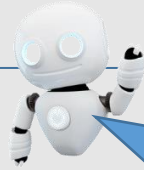
Saves a huge amount of manual work within Social Care Service, or maintaining 'lights on' on old system and all it's associated costs.

Benefits achieved to date:

I let social care staff focus on Social care, not data input – that's my job!

- eliminates inestimable staff costs to manually migrate records or ~£40k per annum to keep the legacy system alive for historic document access. Can't start the migration in anger until system switchover (end of this month!) – but test batches have worked with 0% failures (biggest batch was ~30,000 documents).

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Project 2 – Schools Admissions & Transfers

- Updated forms to capture incoming applications data more consistently.
- Incoming data held in SQL database
- NDL QX /SX monitors and updates Capita ONE Education Management system.
- Eliminates manual process for staff – typing admission details from emails into ONE

Challenges:
- ONE hosted by another authority – so no access to full client or web client
- 'Worst case scenario' :'fussy' client – delivered over citrix:
- But …… Can be done!!
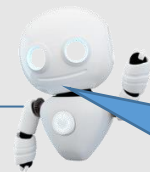
Saves about 6 weeks mind-numbing work per annum for education staff!

Benefits achieved to date:

- Schools admissions still in proving and user acceptance stage – expecting to process all this academic year's primary submissions once closing date is passed - from February 2021.

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Project approach and Lessons learned

- Understand the process!

  - Spend time with data input staff – sometimes they have shortcuts we can use too!

  - 5 Whys – question everything without fear or prejudice – you'll find stuff that is being done for no good reason!

- Understand and clean your incoming data if possible. consistency feeds success!

- Use your NDL support days – the strength of support here has been hugely beneficial – also acts as 'advanced training' ☺

- Allow NDL developer(s) time to focus – to get a robust, repeatable process running reliably on a tricky system takes time and a lot of testing.
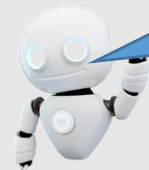
Robots learn from people – good habits and bad ones!

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What's Next?

Huge scope for improving back-end processes and we're a small team!

Prioritise based on cost/benefit and ensure we don't jeopardise those applications we have committed to in our business case.

Some upcoming examples:

- Social Care : Care workers mobile app will not interface with new WCCIS system initially – will be investigating if we can achieve this with NDL – potentially saving planned cost of hiring agency staff over 12 months to keep systems in sync.

- Corporate : interface with HR/Payroll system for Job applications. Native portal is a very poor user experience. If we can improve with our own forms and update backend system using NDL SX

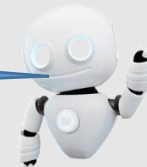- Finance processes have many copy/paste type system-system transfers.

This is just the beginning of the Robot Revolution in Conwy …. (mwahahahahah…)
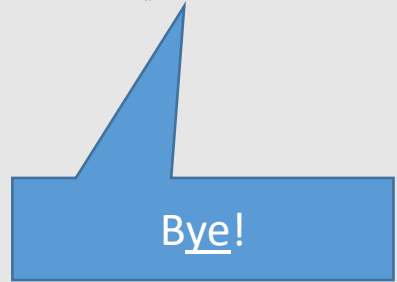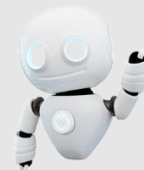
Coping with Covid

- We managed traditional training done 1 week before lockdown was announced!
- Subsequently support has been remote – but we don't feel this has diminished the experience.
- Has made it difficult to keep the skills spread within the team.
- So many other unexpected workloads as a result of Covid has meant we haven't been able to resource as heavily as planned.
- Working from home helps focus on tasks with reduced distractions/interruptions

PS. We don't get covid…

Thank you !

Bye!