

Personalisation and Service: Finally, how to get the vice out of (ICT) service

A long term aspiration, something that has been largely elusive up until now, is for staff and students to be able to personalise, in a limited way, the technology and related ICT services we offer. Many of the current services are characterised as ‘take it or leave it’, ‘do it here and now’ or ‘only use this technology but not that one’. This situation is very far removed from any characterisation of being personal or the kind of service we might want to deliver. To be fair, that may have been the only way a service could have been delivered. It is good to know that this is mostly no longer true and recent developments mean that we can deliver a uniform service but without dictating precisely how that happens.

After defining what is meant by personalisation, this paper describes work completed, and a plan of future actions at the University of Auckland Business School, that look to develop systems which, while able to be consumed most anywhere, are also configurable to meet some personal needs and wishes. Using virtualisation technology at a number of different levels we are able to construct services that we believe our users will value more than they do currently. One of these services is now known as bring your own computer or BYOC.

We were motivated to do this work for a number of reasons. Firstly, we might expect a higher level of consumption and satisfaction with what we offer if such flexibility were available. We would see users opting in rather than being unable to opt out. We should also be able to measure this improvement if it happens.

This paper suggest that freeing up the means of access to a service and measuring the change in consumption may be a better measure of a services worth than relying on satisfaction surveys. An example is provided to illustrate this. Secondly, staff morale and engagement in delivering such services could be expected to improve under such a scenario of positive engagement. Knowing you provided a measurably worthwhile service would be invaluable in maintaining the motivation to keep on developing these services. Does it take more effort, skill or determination to provide these services? The answer is no. This service strategy is actually the opposite; there are clear efficiency gains to be made in implementing the proposals in the paper.

The strategy we have employed makes use of several proprietary technologies in a coherent and logical way. The choice was for the most part straightforward as it simply made use of, or could exploit, what we already had experience of and access to.

However, several equivalent or competing technologies exist that can be tailored to the same end. The success of this programme of work is not tied to a particular supplier and can easily be adapted to local circumstances. It is the substance of the services provided which are the focus of this paper and not any particular means employed to deliver them. The paper will point out such equivalences where necessary but they will be clear to most readers without prompting.

The paper concludes with a view that some current fixed costs may be reduced or even eliminated over the medium to long term, depending upon how successful the programme eventually is. The cost of delivering a traditional service is mostly known and new services would generally be considered to add cost. The prospect of reducing some fixed costs should encourage our administrators interest in supporting this programme.

The full paper for this presentation can be found [here](#).

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