UK Government Digital Services
Case Study

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Digital Marketplace

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The Challenge

The G-Cloud framework allows anyone in the public sector to buy off the shelf cloud-based services on a pay as you go basis.

The framework covers infrastructure, platform, software and support services.

The original CloudStore, which gave access to the G-Cloud framework, needed to be updated to satisfy key requirements for a new Digital Marketplace, one which fully supported buyers, suppliers and administrators as well as reducing running costs.

Availability:
The platform was not robust enough to meet projected user volumes and an availability target of 99.9%

Capacity:
Due to high data volumes beyond initial predictions; capacity thresholds and design limitations would soon be reached

Replacement Reasons Included

Functionality:
Development effort to improve the platform with new features, services and frameworks was considered to be too difficult, risky and potentially more expensive

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Our Response

Following a comprehensive supplier evaluation, 6point6 was awarded the contract based on our clear understanding of the problem space, our experienced multi-disciplinary team and our understanding of the benefits and practicalities when adopting user-driven agile methods.

Understanding needs

We ran a short 'foundation' sprint to establish a shared understanding of the projects vision, goals and problem areas. This exercise also helped to establish working relationships and embed toolsets, standards and techniques

Multi-disciplinary team

We embedded a highly skilled and experienced team (across agile mentoring, architecture, development and operations) which rigorously applied service design thinking at all times

User Centric design approach

We built user research, evaluation and design into our weekly sprint heartbeat to ensure that customer needs' were always at the heart of everything we did, fully reflecting UK government Digital by Default service standards

Building quality in

We used continuous integration, automated testing, collective code ownership, pragmatic pair programming and automated regression and deployment techniques to reduce human error, increase repeatability and accelerate delivery

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What our customer said

"The new Digital Marketplace, which makes it clearer, simpler and faster for the whole of the public sector to buy digital products and services when it needs to, is a vast improvement for both supplier and customer"

Francis Maude
Minister for the Cabinet Office

6point6 helped to launch an enhanced procurement platform using agile delivery methods.

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The Outcome

Technologies / Methods in Use

RESTful web services, Groovy, PostgreSQL, Elasticsearch, Tomcat, Nginx, Continuous Delivery, Automated Acceptance Testing

Service Capabilities

Agile Product Design & Delivery Software Engineering Web Operations

Fast start - Alpha version delivered and publicly announced within 4 months of work starting

Early success - Beta version rapidly approved and released to nominated buyer departments

Rapid delivery - Successful deployment of a high quality, robust solution delivered using strong agile disciplines, techniques and practitioners

Client ownership - In-house web operations team became self-sufficient thanks to the seamless knowledge transfer provided

Customer delight - Increased customer acceptance and satisfaction levels achieved by holding regular user research sessions which resulted in greatly improved customer experiences (e.g. faster record search, ordered by relevance)

The final say - former Executive Director GDS Mike Bracken said: "We are developing a whole new of way of buying digital. Modern services need to be continually iterated and improved to meet users' needs. And we need a platform that allows us to flexibly commission what we need to deliver those services, drive down cost and drive up value. The Digital Marketplace demonstrates that we can build a service that meets these needs and allows government to work with a wide range of innovative suppliers of all sizes."
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-digital-marketplace-opens-for-business

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Thank you

For more information contact info@6point6.co.uk