

Numara Software brings an end to monkeying around with IT assets

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is a charity devoted to education and the conservation of animals and their habitats throughout the world. Its scientists, animal management teams and veterinarians throughout the laboratory, in the field and at the zoos contribute wide-ranging skills and experience to both practical conservation and to the scientific research that underpins this work.

The charity is made up of five operating divisions including the world famous London Zoo in Regent's Park, Whipsnade Wild Animal Park in Bedfordshire, the Institute of Zoology, ZSL Conservation Programmes around the globe and lastly Fellowship Services, handling memberships, donations and volunteer programmes.

The zoos are open 364 days a year, with only Christmas Day as a holiday. During that time, over 1.3 million people pass through the zoos' gates, keen to learn more about the 600 animal species that can be found within. The Regent's Park site also plays host to approximately 100 scientists, taking part in higher education and research programmes.

In his role as head of ICT, Nick Napier is responsible for the overall management of IT and communications across the five operating divisions. From the Regent's Park site, Napier's team of six IT staff support around 500 employees across two sites, the vast majority of which have daily contact with IT in some manner. Software applications include standard productivity and accountancy tools, but also cover a range of critical animal management solutions controlling diet, breeding and health programmes and of course the central ticketing infrastructure, crucial to generating ongoing revenue.

When he joined ZSL in August 2003, Napier found that there was little accurate record of what IT assets the charity owned or what processes were followed in order to resolve support issues.

"Having moved from a private sector organisation, I was used to following fairly regimented policies on how we tracked software, hardware and helpdesk activities," he explained. "When I joined ZSL however, there was nothing like this in place and I knew that my top priority needed to be choosing a reliable system that would give me a snapshot of what we had and how we supported it. I also knew that I had to bear in mind that charities work to strict budgets and that anything I bought must come in at a price point that reflected this."

Napier considered three options, but found that Numara Software's Track-It! Enterprise Edition met his requirements perfectly:

"Having used Numara Track-It! in a previous job, I was aware of its ease-of-use and competitive function-to-price ratio, but above all I knew that I would be able to get the fast, detailed situation analysis that we really needed."



Support has become far more efficient and effective; the IT department is proving itself as a business enabler rather than a cost centre.



"Before we implemented Numara Track-It!, my team had to generate work orders as simple tasks within Outlook. This was far from ideal as there was no way I could identify how the team was spending its time or whether there were any trends in support that we could draw on to create more efficient processes. In addition to this, ZSL was undergoing a major infrastructure upgrade, sending the number of helpdesk calls through the roof, but we didn't have the resources available and couldn't respond effectively ...in short, we could barely cope," he revealed.

Implementing Numara Track-It! was a straightforward "out of the box" process and Napier spent just one day setting up and configuring his database before the software was up and running. "Numara Track-It! is a very intuitive piece of kit and the team was quickly able to get to grips with the interface, logging new work orders and tracking fixes."

One of Napier's first undertakings for Numara Track-It! was to run a complete audit on ZSL's IT systems so that he could get a definitive picture of what was connected and where. At the Regent's Park site alone there are 25 separate buildings, linked by a fibre LAN, and each containing a mixture of PCs and Apple Macs. Napier explained the surprises they found following the audit: "Original records and a few rough estimates stated that we owned approximately 375 PCs and 30 Apple Macs.

However, following an audit with Numara Track-It! we found out that in reality we had unearthed 450 PCs and just 8 Apple Macs...a significant discrepancy and one that could have had serious impact on forecasting software and hardware costs and ultimately the overall IT budget."

Another key objective for Napier was to be able to create an accurate record of all work orders and track what had been fixed and what was still outstanding. The user community is made up of a diverse set of employees, from Keepers and Librarians to occasional students keen to make use of the organisation's research resources.

Added to this was the fact that they have a multitude of applications, operating systems and even a telecoms network to support. This combination meant that they receive on average anywhere between 4-600 support calls every month. Napier commented, "Without Numara Track-It! we stood no chance of answering everyone's queries. Now with the software in place our IT support has become far more efficient and effective – the IT department is proving itself as a business enabler rather than a cost centre."

ZSL also found that it could make excellent use of the ability to link the purchase ordering system with the helpdesk functionality of Numara Track-It!. This means that if any work order requires purchase of new parts or software licences for instance, there is a direct reconciliation path between the cost and the actual implementation. It also allows all purchases to be viewed and managed as a whole ensuring no unnecessary purchases are made and keeping costs to a minimum.

"Being a charity, we have to make certain that we are using donated funds and admissions revenue wisely at all times. An excellent example of how Numara Track-It! helps us achieve that in the IT department is a function such as software licence management. I know that at any one time I can query the system and receive a detailed analysis of what software we have, when the licences run until and if we are over or under-licensing," Napier stated.

As a convenient and easy to use one stop shop, Numara Track-It! has met each of ZSL's primary drivers by providing:

- ❖ A meaningful snapshot of IT systems and support
- ❖ An accurate record of support calls and work order status
- ❖ A detailed analysis of IT hardware and software assets

Napier summarised by saying, "I needed to know what was on our network and how we could support it. It turns out there were a few surprises to be unearthed in the process but now the support team is more than able to handle ongoing operations. In fact, because we are now so efficient, we are able to handle large scale projects, such as our recent communications network upgrade, without bringing costly contractor staff onboard. Without Numara Track-It! these type of cost savings would have been impossible."

A small selection of organisations that depend on Numara help desk and service desk products

3M A.C. Nielsen	Hewlett-Packard
Abbott Laboratories	Hilton Hotels
Ameritech	Honda-Netherlands
AT&T	IBM
Bacardi	Lloyd's Bank
Cartier	Loughborough College
Charles Schwab	Lucent Technologies
Chase Manhattan Bank	Mercedes-Benz
Chester City Council	Mitsubishi Motors
Chrysler	Motorola
Chubb	Nabisco
Cisco Systems	NHS Tayside
Deloitte & Touche	Nikon
DHL Airways	Pfizer Pharmaceuticals
Discovery Channel	Pirelli
Dr. Pepper	PricewaterhouseCoopers
E.I. Dupont	Quaker Oats
EDS	Reebok
FedEx	Rolls-Royce
Ford	Shell
GE	Sony
Goodyear	Sotheby's
	Texaco
	UPS



About Numara Software

Founded in 1991, Numara Software is a global provider of service desk management solutions. Its flagship products, Numara Track-It! and Numara FootPrints, support over 50,000 customer sites worldwide making it the leader in this market for small to mid-sized enterprises.