Westminster eForum

- **SLIDE1** My name is **Chris Roberts**, and I am **Finance Director** at Trident Garages Limited.

- **SLIDE2** Trident is based in **Surrey** and has

  - 2 **Honda** car dealerships and a **Shell** filling station,

  - with **100 staff** and **50 desktop users**.

- Back in 2005 one of those dealerships held the **MG Rover franchise**

  - You may recall that this was **not** the *best* time to be an MG Rover dealer!

- In 2007 **both** dealerships were now with the **Honda** franchise.

  - Our Citrix Windows terminal server was **5 years old** and

    - suffering **poor performance**,

    - with **frequent daily reboots** required.

  - Audio and video were becoming increasingly important, and these simply would not work on our Citrix server.

  - We had a **"Them & Us"** software allocation policy

    - Managers used Microsoft Office and Staff used OpenOffice.

  - Our PCs were mostly **8 or more** years old,

  - And our 40-user email server appliance was no longer coping.

- We were quoted **£70,000** to replace all our systems with

  - **Citrix** running on a Windows 2003 Server,

  - **Microsoft Office** licences for all staff (no upgrade was possible!),

  - and Microsoft **Exchange Server** for email.

  - In addition **£15,000** would have been required to replace **almost all** of our PCs,

  - A total cost of **£85,000**.

- So, we looked at some **open source alternatives**

- Taking on *Sirius IT* to advise us, they recommended the Linux Terminal Server Project "LTSP".
- Following their advice, in 2008/9
    - we replaced Citrix with an LTSP server at each branch costing £3,500 each,
    - we launched new Linux email and web servers hosted at a cost of £550 each per annum,
    - and we purchased about 20 **"barebones"** PCs for **£100 each**, a total of £2,000.
    - **`SLIDE3`** As for the software, in addition to **LTSP** we choose
        - **Debian GNU/Linux** as the operating system
        - and the K Desktop Environment "**KDE**" (instead of Windows),
        - OpenOffice **for everyone** - instead of Microsoft Office,
        - KDE Kontact **for everyone** - instead of Microsoft Outlook
            - Our MD initially declared that he would not give up Outlook, but when he saw both KDE Kontact and Gnome Evolution his words were *"well that is Outlook as far as I am concerned"*, he was happy.
        - and lastly **Mozilla Firefox** instead of Internet Explorer.
    - **Unfortunately**, we did have to have some **limited access** to Internet Explorer, as
        - several of our suppliers' extranets required Internet Explorer including the **Honda Extranet**.
        - So we added **virtualised** Windows servers to each LTSP server
        with licences costing around £2,500 each.
        - **`SLIDE4`** Internet Explorer is delivered **seamlessly** to each users' desktop.
    - The **total** project cost about **£15,000**, saving **more** than £55,000.

- As to the **migration** to the new LTSP servers,
  - this was helped by **not having to worry** about transfering licences – we were able to roll out **one user at a time**,
  - successfully migrating **all** documents, emails, contacts **and** diaries.
  - We provided a 1 hour *"Introduction to your Linux desktop"*, felt to be sufficient, given that
    - **KDE** is similar in layout to Windows,
    - and the majority of users had **already** been using OpenOffice anyway.
    - But **ideally** we should have provided formal training for at least **some** of the erstwhile Microsoft Office users.
  - So what do our users think of their new systems?
    - Generally **very** positive and **definitely** perceived as an improvement.
    - **Great** buy-in from the management team – who were the ones losing Microsoft Office and Outlook.
    - We also took the opportunity to **relax** our Internet controls, which we believe probably helped user perception.
- The other benefits that this open source strategy has given us, include:
  - Free upgrades **forever**
  - **Whole** system updating from the **vast** repository of free software
  - **Same** software for everyone **without** cost consideration
  - Additional users can be added again **without** cost consideration
  - **Freedom** from viruses
  - **and** with access to the source code **every** problem is ultimately fixable

- although sometimes this can be a double-edged sword, as saying that a problem was **a "Microsoft issue"** used to be enough!

- Overall we have been **delighted** with our move to Open Source, and are excited by the **continual** improvements in our systems.