

Eastleigh Borough Council choose

Text Message Server

The Customer:

Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) is located in central southern Hampshire. The Borough is a combination of coast, countryside, quiet villages and busy towns, stretching from Netley on the banks of Southampton Water, the historic river villages of Hamble-le-Rice, Bursledon and Botley to the developing areas of Hedge End, West End and Fair Oak and the green residential belt of Chandler's Ford - a population of 117,000.

The Council is committed to being as 'open' and approachable as possible to local residents and businesses, and has launched 'Eastleigh Direct' with the prime aim of providing residents with 24 hour access to council services by telephone, web and email.

The Problem:

The Council was keen to utilise improving technology in their ongoing commitment to offer more choice and 24 hour access for customers, so a feasibility study was undertaken into the use of text messaging.

The Solution:

Text messaging provides an immediate and efficient method of communicating with the Council. It is very easy to send a text message, costs very little time and effort and the whole process can be completed in a matter of minutes, without having to interact with anyone else. This method of contact is particularly appealing to the younger generation, who use text messaging as a key form of communication.

EBC have Intel based servers running a windows environment and they now run Text Message Server through Exchange/Outlook. One of the servers runs the Text Message Server with a GSM modem connected. When an SMS message is received, Text Message Server routes the message into the designated inbox on MS Exchange. There it can be processed just like any other email message. SMS messages sent from email are routed to the Text Message Server which then sends the message out via the Internet.

"Integration was a primary requirement for us, but this was not an issue with ProcessFlows' solution."

The Benefits:

The Council has recognised the increasing role that mobile phones play in everyday life by providing a 24 hour text number that provides customers with another means of communication even when they are out and about. Text messaging also has benefits for people who have hearing difficulties.

Text Message Server allows any person with a mobile phone to send a text message to the Council on 07810 855550. These messages are received in the email inbox of Eastleigh Direct, alongside submissions from our website. They are then forwarded onto the correct Service Unit to be processed. It is possible for anyone within the organisation, connected to the network, to reply via email to one of these messages. *"The staff find it very easy to use because they are utilising Outlook just like they would for dealing with any email."*

Text Message Server provides the option to route messages direct to a Service Unit by including the appropriate code within the message. This functionality will be particularly useful for remote staff as well as Borough residents.



Peter Nailor,
Informations Systems Developer

"Some of the products we found were predominantly to send messages rather than receive, this did not fit our requirement. We also wanted a solution that could integrate with email rather than have separate client software for email and SMS. Although some products claimed they could receive messages and forward them into email, in practice this was not the case. After evaluation we found that Text Message Server from ProcessFlows was the solution that best fitted the Councils needs, could demonstrate SMS messaging into email and was the most cost effective option."

"The Council has not commenced using Text Message Server as a marketing tool but is investigating the possibilities. This would be particularly beneficial to the Tourism Unit who promotes various events that happen throughout the Borough. We think offering technology that aids communication is important and with text messaging growing as a standard form of contact we think it is key to include this in our communication strategy," concludes Peter.

