

# Developing local government applications using OSS

Alasdair Mangham  
London Borough of Camden

- Background to Camden
- Why develop using Open Source
- Understanding the new environment
- New skills development
- The way forward

# Background

- London Borough of Camden is one of 33 boroughs that make up the greater London area. Resident population of 200,000.
- Use a mixed ICT infrastructure with both proprietary systems and Open Source.
- Involved in projects developing Open Source Applications since 2001.

# Why Open Source?

- Requirements of E-Government do not always fit in with systems available on the market.
  - APLAWS project -local authority websites
  - CASWEB – community advice agencies portal
  - E-democracy applications

# Buying what is free

- Problems with procuring open source companies
  - They are mostly small SME's so they lack a sales team
  - Local Government procurement is long and time consuming
  - They expect a lot from the client

# Buying what is free

- Open source means that code can be quality checked before it goes into production
  - Do not lose sight of this advantage
- Local Government is not used to this process as it mostly uses contractual clauses to control quality.

# Buying what is free

- Open source means that code can be reused from other projects.
  - Not only ones that have been developed in your own organisation
- Open source potentially means releasing your code back into the community.
  - Depending on which licensing option you choose

# Skills development

- Project management.
  - Team all trained to PRINCE 2 standard
- Negotiation Skills
  - Traditional Client v Provider relationship is disrupted by OS model that requires a different kind of collaboration
- Community building skills
  - Without the community the project will become obsolete



# TCO-ROI-ETC

- Developing applications is not risk free.
- Developing using Open Source carries less risk provided:
  - You build to meet well supported open standards
  - Where possible you build upon an existing project or toolkit
  - You have good internal project management skills
  - You are prepared to share the application

# What next

- Concentration on high end skills
  - Adapting Rational Unified Processing to work with Prince
  - Management of remote contractors
  - Development of ‘Design Authority’ model to improve integration of government specific metadata languages within system architecture

# Useful links

- [WWW.CAMDEN.GOV.UK](http://WWW.CAMDEN.GOV.UK)
- [WWW.APLAWS.ORG.UK](http://WWW.APLAWS.ORG.UK)
- [WWW.CASWEB.ORG.UK](http://WWW.CASWEB.ORG.UK)
- [WWW.OGC.GOV.UK](http://WWW.OGC.GOV.UK)
- [WWW.RATIONAL.COM](http://WWW.RATIONAL.COM)
- [WWW.PRELUDE-PORTAL.ORG](http://WWW.PRELUDE-PORTAL.ORG)

Thank you

[alasdair.mangham@camden.gov.uk](mailto:alasdair.mangham@camden.gov.uk)