Co-innovation

Delivering more for less

PDMS

What is
Co-innovation?

Innovation and how it can help achieve added value has been a cornerstone of many public sector organisations' strategic agendas over the last few years. As technology is undoubtedly one of the key drivers and accelerators of innovation, a fact that is not lost on IT suppliers, 'innovation' is a term that is frequently bandied around. In this paper we, PDMS Limited, put the spotlight on "co-innovation" – an approach to public and private sector organisations working together in partnership to achieve genuine innovation and deliver benefits.

'We want to share and reuse existing purchases across the public sector - not just to avoid paying twice, but to reduce risks and to drive common, joined up solutions to the common needs of government'

Angela Smith *Minister of State for Cabinet Office*

Open Source, Open Standards and Reuse:Government Action Plan

According to Kate Hanaghan of K2advisory, co-innovation "means that as a buyer you should expect suppliers to be able to create new solutions and approaches WITH you, not just for you". From PDMS' perspective, this means working in close collaboration with our clients, seeing the world through their eyes and focusing on beneficial business outcomes rather than simply selling solutions.

There has been a big push recently to engage more SME's in government procurement initiatives, to help tap into this traditionally, more innovation-led supplier base and to help deliver better value for money. SME's, such as ourselves, are often better placed to really deliver on co-innovation initiatives - we are often more nimble and flexible, and cost effective. Delivering innovation need not be expensive. It should more than pay for itself if done well. Nevertheless, for co-innovation to work the emphasis is on partnerships and collaboration; to effectively achieve this, public sector organisations must be open to engaging SME's on a more a more flexible basis, rather than requiring a response to strict specifications.

Back in 2008 in a paper written for DEMOS, Ian Keys and Roger O'Sullivan argue that public–private partnerships increasingly need to be based on a process of defining and redefining problems and answers, rather than contracting for predefined and ready to use solutions. PDMS believes, and our experience demonstrates, that this approach helps deliver real transformation with significant service and efficiency improvements. We advocate a more entrepreneurial approach to working with the public sector as a technology partner, whilst still seeking to reduce risk and achieve better value for money through re-use.

The following case studies details one such relationship through a number of the projects which PDMS and the Police National Legal Database (PNLD) have collaborated on together. It is an excellent example of co-innovation delivering numerous new and national services that have resulted in cost savings to the public sector and tax payer.

Co-innovation
in action

The Police National Legal Database (PNLD) team, a Business Service of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire, provides a range of commercial services funded on a subscription basis to police forces and a range of other bodies. Altogether PNLD's small team provides 20 legal information products to over 500,000 end users and saves the police £25 million every year.

And it's not just police officers, forces and the wider criminal justice community that are benefiting from PNLD's services; their reach extends to other public sector organisations such as local authorities, Trading Standards and to the general public.

PNLD were looking for an innovative technology company that would work with them to move their core services to an online delivery and also work creatively with them to develop new services. One of the key drivers was achieving value for money. As a self-funded Business Service of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire with all revenues derived from subscriptions to the services, the value for money for subscribers was, and remains, paramount.

After successfully delivering PNLD's online legal database, also referred to as their document management system, PDMS has worked proactively with PNLD to remove barriers to the effective use of this primary service. In partnership we have developed a number of new, award-winning shared services based on the same underlying technology platform.
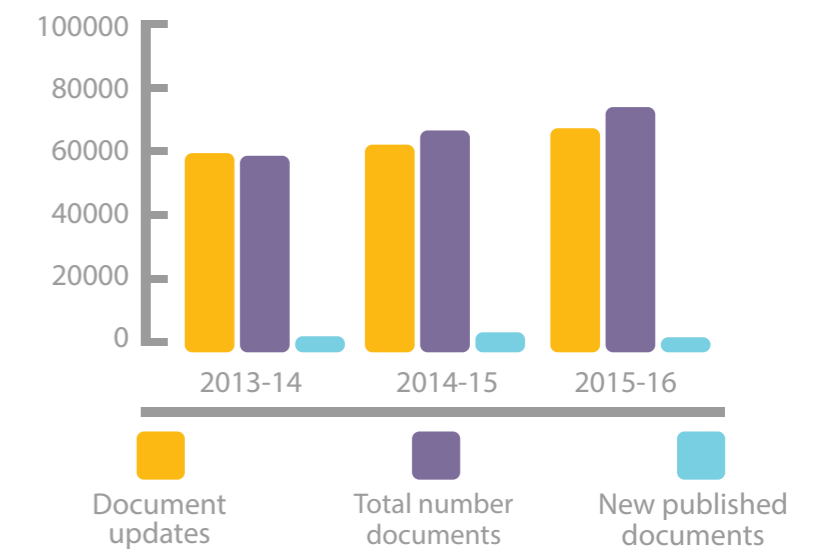
This collaboration between PDMS and PNLD has created a number of nationally important services which have been independently recognised at Cabinet level as making a real contribution to the effectiveness and cost of police information services to the

public, as well as to criminal justice professionals! This collaboration is predicated on a co-innovative approach, where the emphasis is on business outcomes rather than product or licence sales.

The impact of PNLD in providing services to a growing number of public sector organisations, and in significantly contributing to a joined up Criminal Justice Sector in the UK, is exceptional in the following ways:

- The national reach and quality of the services provided.

- The scale and scope of the solutions provided compared with the cost of the operation.

- The technical sophistication of the managed services - which allow the same infrastructure to provide services to the general public on the internet and to police officers on the secure Police National Network (PNN).

- The commercial approach to new projects which is based on the most economic way to provide new services based on the re-use of an existing flexible platform and an agile approach to new developments.

PNLD has managed to expand their products and services whilst maintaining paid subscriptions at the same level. This was only possible through imaginative re-use of PDMS' technology assets and successful, ongoing collaboration between the two companies. Delivering more for less!

Bar chart showing values for years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 across Document updates, Total number documents, and New published documents. Y-axis from 0 to 100000.

Document updates | Total number documents | New published documents

PNLD

Police National Legal
Database

PNLD manage the legal database which is used by all 43 police forces in England and Wales. This system is now mobile friendly and accessible by approximately 220,000 end-users via the secure Police National Network (PNN).

The legal database is a national knowledge management system of up-to-date legal information, and is used by serving and student police officers, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the courts. It is also available on a commercial basis via subscription to other partners within the Criminal Justice Sector (CJS), criminal lawyers and other investigators.

The use of the legal database by investigators and practitioners within the CJS is seen as a step forward in simplifying and speeding up the legal process, and the Trading Standards Service signed up in 2009 and make use of the increasing content specific to their needs.

With an expanding cross-sector customer base, the usage of the legal database has substantially increased since its inception:

•	On the PNN the increase has been from 100,000 events per month to 680,000 million per month.

•	On the internet, from a starting point of less than 5,000 events per month, it has latterly achieved over 20,000 per month.

By delivering tools which enable non-technical users to manage the legal database content via a browser, PNLD have been able to offer greater working flexibility and have improved direct productivity. A spin off consequence has been a built in business continuity and disaster recovery plan.

For external customers, such as the CPS, the courts and other CJS members, the service has significantly contributed to joining up services within the CJS and ensuring the immediacy of communication of changes to legislation and procedures.

A mobile version of the legal database, accessible on hand held devices, provides police officers and staff away from their station with immediate access to solutions to legal issues, thus inspiring confidence in what they are doing and ensuring more presence and visibility on the streets. In 2011 there was a 100% increase in pages viewed on electronic handheld devices issued by forces on the police national network, significantly improving accessibility to PNLD's core product. In addition there has been a 200% increase in the use of the mobile commercial version.

The Home Office's iQuanta site provides forces and partners with access to displays of data which Police Forces submit on monthly or quarterly cycles. This data enables comparisons to be made between forces in respect of the performance of their identified Basic Command Units (BCUs) and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs).

Police National
Statistics
Database

This system increased the existing appetite, within forces, for detailed data to allow analysts to explore more fully the range of information associated with the inferences contained within the iQuanta outputs.

In 2008 the ACPO Performance Measurement Development (PMD) Committee identified a need for detailed data, in a format suitable for more detailed analysis, particularly in relation to crime and user satisfaction. This need was endorsed via the regional structures and sanctioned by the ACPO Performance Management Business Area.

PNLD's reputation and its ability to deliver solutions with its technology partner PDMS, resulted in "the partnership" being approached to come up with another managed service. The new Police National Statistics Database (PNSD) system was needed to provide easy and timely access to forces' data with minimal administrative or financial overhead. Tapping onto the PNLD system would therefore ensure that forces already had access to the central system and that there was an existing 'pooled' budget for funding the development.

The specification for the PNSD was developed by the ACPO Performance Measurement Development Committee (as part of the ACPO Performance Management Business Area) and submitted to the management team of PNLD (who act on behalf of the police service across the country). The PNSD was then developed by PDMS based on the technical platform that was already driving the PNLD document management system and the National Police FAQ Portal, thus achieving PNLD's value for money objectives.

The system was launched via correspondence to all Chief Constables, inviting them to identify a single point of contact for their force to take care of the (minimal) administrative overhead and authorised users for their force.

The overall efficiency gains that the PNSD system brings are difficult to quantify, but data comparison that was not immediately available in iQuanta is now available in a matter of minutes; this has served to both save time and increase the range of data that is analysed. The outcome is better informed decision making and action based on sound and comprehensive analysis. Forces are able to compare detailed performance information around offence profiles, methods of detection and diagnostic user satisfaction findings, at the Force, CDRP and BCU level. The information is of use corporately, to support strategic decision making, and locally for BCU management and dialogue with partners. This supports the continued delivery of performance improvement by police forces.

Ask the Police

In 2005, PNLD and PDMS were actively looking for other ways the centralised shared services provided by PNLD could help benefit the criminal justice community. The result was the Police FAQ portal, a solution to a problem originally identified by an Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspection of Police Communications report.

The website has evolved to become an invaluable resource for staff at police call centres. It has helped to deliver more time savings and ensured more consistency in responses. A Scottish version (www.askthe.scottish.police.uk), which reflects their unique legislation and procedures, was launched in November 2010.

The project has proved to be an efficient and wholly cost effective solution: the 'Ask the Police' website has received well over 50 million hits, whilst the 'Ask the Police' app has now been downloaded over 50,000 times. It has reduced the time and resources that the police spend managing 999 emergency calls, saving the police an estimated £25 million per year! The cost of the initial project was under £50,000, largely because PDMS were able to re-use software components previously developed for PNLD for no additional charge.

| 16,535 | 21,097 | 17,766 | 17,678 |
| 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |

Number of direct public questions answered by PNLD using the 'Ask a Question' facility

Every week the police receive thousands of non-emergency calls from members of the public. Such calls are time consuming and often relate to questions about routine aspects of criminal law and police procedures. It was found that the same questions were asked hundreds of times over – simply because members of the public had no other way to find the relevant information for themselves.

In essence there was a need for a corporate and nationally consistent database of answers to questions which were most frequently asked by the public. By turning to an online database of questions and answers, instead of calling their local police force, the number of non-emergency calls to the police could be substantially reduced, thus saving time and money.

The *Ask The Police* website (www.askthe.police.uk) was developed to provide up-to-date information in a timely and user-friendly manner to members of the public and the police. The PNLD team manages and distributes the content, whilst PDMS provides the underlying technology, by re-using the platform and some of the components designed for the original PNLD legal database/document management system.
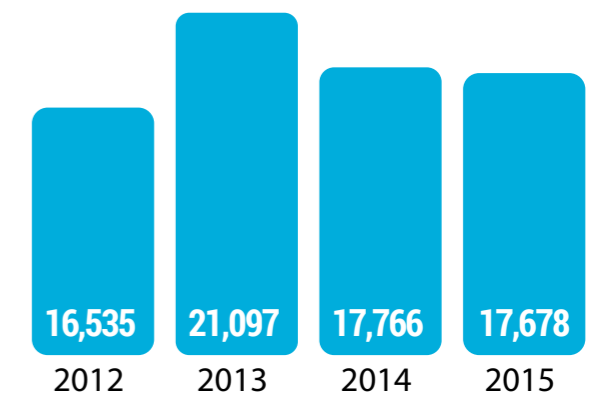
The Ask the Police project was completed within a tight three month time frame. The first phase, the public-facing website, was launched in 2005 by Hazel Blears MP, the then Policing Minister. Initially there were 500 questions and answers created on the portal; today there are over 700. A facility to "ask a question" was also provided, and in 2011 alone PNLD answered 15,240 questions e-mailed via the website by the public.

Over the years, thanks to the way the software was built by PDMS, other additions have been made to the site to assist the public in finding an answer and the police in saving time and effort. For example, local perspectives can be added to answers and local questions and answers can be created. The portal is also now embedded in a local council website, helping drive the localism agenda.

The facility has become so popular that the website now receives an incredible 5.4 million annual hits on the England and Wales site, and 270,781 annual hits on the Ask the Police Scotland website. A free to use Ask the Police iPhone app was launched in 2012 to provide people with quick and easy access to the content whilst out and about.

Providing
help for victims

Working in partnership with PDMS, the system underpinning these websites has been developed over several years to provide a controlled publication of complex information in a simple format, supporting a variety of platforms including websites and Android and iOS Apps. As PDMS had already developed two similar systems for PNLD, we were able to realise substantial cost savings by reusing the same FoundationsTM platform and functionality in the development of the Help For Victims website.
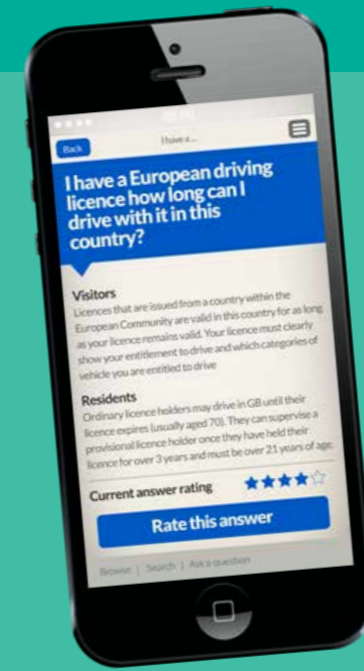
The Help for Victims website features an extensive set of questions – over 270 - derived from the Victims' Code and the Witness Charter covering every phase, from what happens when they report a crime to the police, to what they can expect when the offender has completed a prison sentence. There is also information on hundreds of organisations providing support to victims, witnesses and their families, and information targeted specifically at young people.

Crucially the website has the capability to provide local answers to many of the questions, personalising responses dependent on a user's location (limited at present to the West Yorkshire area). Additionally, personalised answers to questions posed to the site are generally processed within 24 working hours to provide a fast and efficient service to the local community.

As well as finding information, victims and witnesses in West Yorkshire can also use the site to refer themselves to Victim Support and so receive personalised assistance.

Particular to this project, aside from English the website has been translated into the five most frequently spoken languages in West Yorkshire - Gujarati, Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic and Polish, and has a responsive interface, allowing easy access on devices of all sizes - greatly increasing the accessibility of support services to victims and witnesses in West Yorkshire.

By implementing multi-lingual capabilities into the back office functionality, information for translation was set up to automatically export and import between PNLD's translation partner, Capita, saving valuable manual administrative resources.

PDMS has worked with PNLD, providing the technology to help launch another innovative service, Help for Victims, which is aimed at helping victims and witnesses of crime. It features a multi-lingual personalised victim and witness website.

The project followed the publication of the "Victims' Services Commissioning Framework" by the Ministry of Justice in May 2013, which required Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to commission personalised victim and witness services for local people. Under the new framework, local PCCs can commission the services they know will best meet local needs and receive grant funding from central Government to support the services they provide.

The aim of the website is to primarily help victims cope with the impact of crime, and secondly to recover from the experience by providing easily accessible and understandable victims' and witnesses rights and services information.

Ask the Police

The "Ask the Police" and the "Ask the Police Scotland" Apps provide legally verified answers to a wide range of questions the police are frequently asked by the public. They provide detailed answers concerning specific areas of the law which are relevant to numerous stakeholders. It has reduced non-emergency calls to the police and also improved accessibility to the law. To date the App has received over 50K app downloads.

Motoring and the Law

The 'Motoring and the Law' App provides the answers to over 200 road traffic related questions enhanced by appropriate legal content and knowledge acquired by PNLD over the last 20 years. The app also gives Police access to extensive information in the field, increasing their knowledge of complex aspects of motoring law.

Targeted at motoring enthusiasts, industry professionals and members of the public, 'Motoring & the Law' combines the best of PNLD's existing services, www.askthe.police.uk and www.pnld.co.uk, to provide specialised questions and comprehensive answers relevant to motoring law.

innovating
mobile apps

We have worked with PNLD on a number of exciting mobile app development projects. These apps have been created to make the law more accessible and simpler to understand, as well as saving the police time and money.

Help for Victims

In 2016, PNLD and PDMS launched the 'Help for Victims' app and website. These were created to provide easy access to information within the Victim's Code and Witness Charter, and help users find support from the right organisations.

The 'Help for Victims' App features answers to an extensive number of frequently asked questions on topics ranging from restorative justice, to crime specific information and legal processes. Importantly, it further directs victims, witnesses and their families to hundreds of organisations which provide support.

The launch of the new App is the result of a thriving technology partnership between PNLD and PDMS, and is a demonstration of how the innovative use of mobile technology can be used to improve access to information and in the name of a very good cause!

How can PDMS help you?

At a time of significant financial and service volume pressure on public services, PDMS have been and continue to be a proactive voice for change within Public Sector IT, championing co-innovation, agile development and the role of SME's. PDMS are active members of TechUK, ScotlandIS and the Manx ICT Association (MICTA).

PDMS provide a range of solutions through the UK Government's G-Cloud framework and has recently secured a place on Scotland's Application Design and Development Services procurement framework.

We are large enough to deliver but small enough to care. PDMS employs a highly skilled and flexible workforce of 70 staff and holds the UK Government's Cyber Essential Certificate of Compliance, as well as ISO accreditations in Quality Management, Security Management and Environmental Management. PDMS has an extensive track record in public sector software, website and app development working with clients including the NHS and central and local government.

Our track record demonstrates...

- PDMS can help you deliver cost effective new services through a co-innovation, partnership-based approach.

- PDMS will provide you with value for money through re-use.

- PDMS will reduce the risks of bespoke software development to you, through the re-use of our existing technology platform and components which have been tried and tested in hundreds of successful systems.

- PDMS will provide you with personalised services, based on long term relationships between our team and your staff.

- PDMS can reduce your procurement costs, as we are accredited on the G-Cloud framework

Find out more

Please contact Giles Milner for a chat about how we can help you deliver real business benefits - through a partnership and co-innovative approach. Together we can deliver IT solutions which cost-effectively solve your business problems.

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