

Re: Failed Win XP Upgrade Wipes Out UK Government Agency

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.general/2004-11/18850.html>

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If someone really upgraded 80,000 computers without testing the upgrade first then they have only themselves to blame!

"hermes" <hermes@messenger.com> wrote in message
news:euDnK3M1EHA.3416@TK2MSFTNGP09.phx.gbl...

- > *"Most of the desktop computers in the UK's Department for Work and Pensions were paralyzed for four days on Monday, when a failed upgrade took them off line. The outage, covering 75-80 per cent of the DWP's 80,000 PCs, is one of the largest in the UK Government's not entirely impressive IT history."*
- > <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/homeaffairs/story/0,11026,1360163,00.html>
- >
- > *"Pension and benefit payments face disruption after what is being described as the biggest computer crash in government history left as many as 80,000 civil servants staring at blank screens and reverting to writing out giro cheques by hand in the latest blow to a hi-tech Whitehall revolution.*
- > *A week-long crisis in the giant Department for Work and Pensions created a backlog of unprocessed claims with up to 80% of the ministry's 100,000 desk machines disrupted or knocked out by a blunder during maintenance.*
- > *Engineers battling to fix the problem last night claimed 95% were functioning fully again as they prepared to reboot the entire network after offices closed to the public.*
- > *Alan Johnson, the work and pensions secretary, has ordered an internal inquiry into the role of Microsoft and the American contractors EDS, who run the ministry's network as part of a £2bn information technology deal.*
- > *The disruption is the latest in a line of government technology failures and follows last week's resignation of the head of the Child Support Agency, part of Mr Johnson's empire, after the disastrous introduction of an EDS system contributed to only one in eight parents receiving the correct amount.*
- > *The DWP said some new and amended benefit claims this week would be delayed but it sought to play down the impact of the technology problems, pointing out that the department's mainframe computers were not affected.*
- > *But internal DWP correspondence seen by the Guardian, backed up by*

- > interviews with staff, appears to contradict public assertions that the
- > disruption was minimal and most of the system continued operating
- > normally.
- > A "major incident report" distributed on Monday warned of "major
- > problems", with hourly updates issued to senior managers by fax or
- > telephone because email on the department's intranet was blocked.
- > The DWP established a "crisis management centre" to resolve the problems,
- > with Microsoft troubleshooters flown in from mainland Europe to join a
- > high-level team including EDS technicians.
- > A memo circulated yesterday within jobcentres said 30% of problems could
- > be eased by today with "a full solution potentially taking another 24-48
- > hours", and the difficulties running into the weekend.
- > "At this point there is no known solution or ETA," said the memo. "We are
- > hopeful that some interim measures that are being considered may release
- > some users from their current deadlock."
- > A routine software upgrade on a small number of PCs last weekend is
- > believed to have gone disastrously wrong when an incompatible system was
- > downloaded on to the whole network.
- > The DWP said last night that progress had been swifter than expected,
- > insisting contingency plans had worked.
- > "Pens came back out and in many cases hot desking was used," said a senior
- > official. "The problem was quite random so you could potentially be
- > sitting down at one desk and your mate next door couldn't access the
- > system."
- > Trade union leaders called on ministers to drop plans to cut 40,000 jobs
- > in the DWP and a total of 104,000 civil servants across the government
- > following the computer crisis.
- > Mark Serwotka, general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services
- > Union, said: "Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse after the
- > experiences of the CSA we have what can only be described as near-meltdown
- > with IT across the whole of the DWP.
- > "Yet again we are seeing thousands of hardworking staff, many of whom face
- > the axe, trying to deliver essential services with one hand tied behind
- > their back.
- > "The department and the government are hellbent on axing thousands of
- > civil and public servants, saying IT will enable them to do so, but yet
- > again we are seeing IT systems come to a grinding halt and fail.
- > "For the government and the department to contemplate axing thousands of
- > jobs when the IT clearly isn't delivering is not only irresponsible and
- > foolhardy, but some would argue pure madness."
- > Texas-based EDS has already seen £12.1m withheld by the government from an
- > ill-fated £450m CSA project. Mr Johnson is said to be considering
- > scrapping the contract.
- > Labour has spent some £1.5bn on over-budget or scrapped computer projects,
- > many inherited from the Conservatives, prompting National Audit Office
- > reports.
- > The Swanwick air traffic control centre, due to open in 1996 at a cost of
- > £475m, started six years late and £180m over-budget, while £300m was spent
- > on a scheme, later scrapped, to use plastic cards to pay benefits via post
- > offices.
- > EDS failed to get an Inland Revenue contract renewed after complaints

- > *about its work.*
- > *Keith Wylie, a PCS national officer, said: "I cannot remember a crash this*
- > *big."*
- > *He added: "It's a massive failure and unless it's fixed quickly it's going*
- > *to result in significant delays in benefits being paid out. If it was two*
- > *years down the line and those 40,000 staff had been lost, there would have*
- > *been no one to write out the giroes."*
- > <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/homeaffairs/story/0,11026,1360163,00.html>
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- > *I wonder if the UK National Health Service is regretting awarding*
- > *Microsoft a £500 million contract now?*
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- > *hermes*
- > *DRM sux! Treacherous Computing kills our virtual civil liberties!*
- > <http://protectfreedom.tripod.com/index.html>
- > <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~rja14/tcpa-faq.html>
- > <http://anti-dmca.org/>
- > http://www.eff.org/IP/DMCA/unintended_consequences.php
- >
- > *Windows XP crashed.*
- > *I am the Blue Screen of Death.*
- > *No one hears your screams*