

## Wates Group

### Effective IT Estate Management Helps Wates Group Support Rapid Business Expansion

#### Profile

One of the largest and most successful family-owned construction companies in the UK

#### Company

Wates Group

#### Location

United Kingdom

#### Industry

Construction services

#### Solutions

- LANDesk® Management Suite
- LANDesk® Management Gateway Appliance

#### Key Benefits

- LANDesk solutions give Wates efficient control over the complete IT estate to support rapid business expansion as the number of computers and locations grows by 45% and 44%, respectively
- Automatic software deployment dramatically cuts installation times from days to hours
- LANDesk helps Wates do more with less; in 2010, the IT team performed 15,000 new product installs and software upgrades compared with 1,000 deployments four years ago without additional headcount
- Advanced asset management capabilities save money on licensing costs and meet stringent compliance standards
- Single, future-proof platform simplifies IT management
- Real-time information helps Wates address potential issues proactively, reducing the number of calls to the service desk

#### Overview

Established in 1897, Wates Group is now one of the largest and most successful family-owned construction companies in the UK with over 2,000 employees, 11 offices and a turnover of £1 billion. The organisation's commitment to customers, employees and industry best practice has secured it many accolades, including The Sunday Times "100 Best Companies to Work for 2010" and The Sunday Times "Top 60 Best Green Companies 2009." Wates Group was also named Major Contractor of the Year two years running by *Building Magazine* in 2009 and 2010.

#### Challenge

In 2006, Wates Group was looking for a solution to help manage its growing IT estate and support the company's rapid business expansion. At the time, the IT department was responsible for 1,200 PCs split 70/30 between laptops and desktops at 90 sites and 11 regional offices. Just four years later, Wates had extended its reach to all parts of the UK and had opened its first overseas office in Abu Dhabi. As a result, the number of PCs had grown exponentially to 2,300 across 160 construction sites and 11 offices, with a 10-percent increase in laptop usage.

Celsus Joseph, Desktop Manager of Wates Group takes up the story: "Not only did we have to contend with the sheer volume of assets but the proliferation of locations added to the complexity. Employees at construction sites were off the corporate network, sometimes weeks, even months at a time, and they had to be supported by multiple technologies, everything from 3G cards, satellite systems, broadband and traditional landline connections. We had no effective way of monitoring our assets and no means to control them remotely. The situation was becoming a major headache especially for a relatively small IT team such as ours."

The majority of processes were done manually, which was labour-intensive and time-consuming, a situation that was further compounded by having three separate products to monitor and deploy all hardware, software and applications across the business.

"The time had come to rationalise our technology and scope out a viable, longer-term solution. The search was on for a system that could handle our complete IT management activities from a single platform, one that could provide a flexible path for the future," Joseph continued.

#### Solution

Following a rigorous evaluation of the top three vendors in the marketplace, Wates selected LANDesk, initially deploying LANDesk® Management Suite and the LANDesk® Management Gateway Appliance in 2007 for automatic software deployment and remote control. Compared with other vendors, LANDesk met all Wates' requirements: robust, scalable technology that could guarantee a proactive IT service to all users now and in the future, combined with a team of people who shared the same approachable ethos to doing business.

"The fact that LANDesk matched our strict criteria perfectly clinched the deal," Joseph said. "We now had a solid remote control platform and could manage all endpoints outside the corporate network efficiently and securely for the very first time. We consider LANDesk an extension of our own team, a true partner who can support our goal to resolve issues before they come anywhere near the service desk."

For example, using live trend analysis information in the LANDesk system, Wates was able to foresee staff demand for new software and browser packages such as Microsoft Office 2007 and Office 2010 compatibility kit as well as Microsoft Internet Explorer 8. As a result, it could roll out these applications quickly to all 2,300 users, minimising the number of calls to the service desk.

Software installation is now a simple, speedy process without disruption to the user. Most installations are now possible within the hour compared with hours or even days before the implementation of LANDesk. Remote control means that users do not need to be physically at their desks, they just turn up the next day, switch on their PC and the software automatically loads, a real benefit to running business as usual and critical to developing trust between IT and the business.

Since first deploying LANDesk in 2007, all parts of Wates' 20-strong support departments, including the desktop, asset management and service desk teams, now use the LANDesk® solution and have benefitted from the expanded and advanced asset management and patch management capabilities of the system.

Using LANDesk, Wates now has a clear picture of its entire IT estate and can re-allocate resources, so, if someone has not used their copy of Adobe Writer for six months and another member of staff requests a copy, the IT department can transfer the licence from one user to another. This real-time view saves time and money.

## Results

According to Celsus Joseph, LANDesk software has brought considerable tangible benefits: "By managing our IT estate effectively and in real-time, we are confident of meeting stringent compliance standards and we have a powerful commercial tool that demonstrates the strategic value that IT can bring to the business."

LANDesk definitely enables Wates to do more with less. Take the remarkable increased speed of software deployment. Wates' seven desktop support engineers carried out 15,000 new product installs and software upgrades in 2010 compared with just 1,000 in 2006. Recently, 30% of the user population requiring the project management tool Power Project had the software up and running within just 10 weeks, a process that would have taken up to six months before LANDesk. As Paresh Varsani, LANDesk Administrator of Wates says, "We consider LANDesk to be another engineer."

Wates is particularly impressed with the customisation of the LANDesk product portfolio and the confidence LANDesk inspires in presenting a truly future-proof platform. A large part of this trust comes down to Wates' regular participation in the many LANDesk customer forums where users are asked for feedback and input into future product development. In addition, unlike other vendors, LANDesk offers a lot of information online via its self-service portal and community forum. An added bonus is the opportunity for Wates to interact with other users and find speedy solutions to issues.

Next on the horizon is the roll-out of Wates' Microsoft Windows 7 environment, the primary driver for upgrading to the latest version of LANDesk, version 9, scheduled to go live in April 2011. Wates is working closely on the project with LANDesk partner EasySAM, a specialist IT audit consultancy whom the asset management team turned to two years ago when they needed expert help in delivering an important software licensing and compliance initiative. Since that time, EasySAM has provided ongoing specialist training and support and has been instrumental in helping Wates maximise its original investment in LANDesk.

Additionally, Wates will benefit from the advanced reporting functionality and more granular role-based access rights within the latest version of LANDesk.

As a company, Wates is praised for its environmental achievements and aims to attain 100% in terms of meeting stringent landfill targets on its construction sites. Wates plans to replicate this success within IT and may look to the LANDesk® power management solution to help it achieve this ambitious goal in the future.

*"By managing our IT estate effectively and in real-time, we are confident of meeting stringent compliance standards and we have a powerful commercial tool that demonstrates the strategic value that IT can bring to the business."*

**—Celsus Joseph,**  
Desktop Manager  
Wates Group

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