

Data#3 Customer Story

# City of Fremantle

*City of Fremantle drives productivity  
with Microsoft Surface device  
program from Data#3*

**Data#3**



## Objective

The City of Fremantle needed to upgrade an ageing device fleet while moving to a new office. It was important that modernising their device fleet would not increase burden on their busy IT team.

## Benefits

- Significantly reduced time spent supporting an ageing fleet
- Procurement and deployment of devices ready to use out of the box
- Docking stations and accessories were installed in the new office
- Staff more agile with the capability to work on the go
- Improved mobility, productivity, and collaboration
- IT team are able to focus on other tasks

## Testimonial

**“The new devices have transformed the way that our IT team is viewed within the organisation and it has gone a long way to improving relationships with other departments.”**

Joel Hurst, IT Manager, City of Fremantle.

## Approach

The Microsoft Surface device fleet in use at City of Fremantle had been provided by Data#3 as part of a previous project. When the lease approached its end, the emergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic altered their replacement plans, and a decision was made to buy out the devices. A competitive tender was subsequently issued seeking modern devices that would not only better support their modern workforce, but also ensure the best value and outcome. The City of Fremantle determined the Data#3 proposal best met its needs of service delivery paired with competitive pricing.

## Solutions & Services

- ✓ Project Services
- ✓ Procurement
- ✓ Microsoft Surface

## Project Highlight

**“When the new building was ready, the docking stations and accessories were already in place. It meant our people could get straight to work.”**

Joel Hurst, IT Manager, City of Fremantle.



## Data#3 Customer Story

### City of Fremantle

**“I think at the end of the day our people just wanted to do what they could to provide service to the Fremantle community through such a difficult time.”**

**Joel Hurst, IT Manager,  
City of Fremantle.**

## The Background

Situated 20 kilometres south of Perth, the City of Fremantle (“the City”) services an area of 19 square kilometres and supports a vibrant community of households and businesses. Known for its environmental focus, Fremantle became WA’s first carbon neutral city in 2009, and is one of only two councils in Australia to achieve One Planet certification for sustainability.

When the City’s fleet of Microsoft Surface laptops neared end of lease, the initial plan was to replace them with new devices. In the wake of global device shortages and COVID-19 disruptions, the decision was made to retain the existing laptops by buying out the lease, and delay procurement.

## The Challenge

For organisations around the world the early stages of the pandemic required rapid adjustment, and the City of Fremantle was no different. Under normal circumstances, as the device fleet approached the end of a lease, the IT team would have issued a tender and sourced new devices to arrive in time for an orderly changeover. As IT Manager, Joel Hurst noted, these were far from ordinary times.

*“We had most people working from home more than they had previously, and we worked hard to enable that shift. At the same time, devices like laptops were almost impossible to get, especially when you are looking for hundreds at a time. We made the choice to buy out our lease, and keep the laptops we had, so that we could keep everybody moving.”*

As disruptions persisted, the City’s laptop fleet aged. Faults and breakages increased, which meant that the IT team was kept busy performing repairs and troubleshooting.

*“Fortunately, my team is very resourceful. When one machine became faulty, we would create a working machine from two or more broken laptops. We did what we had to so that the users could keep on working,”* said Hurst.

*“I think at the end of the day our people just wanted to do what they could to provide service to the Fremantle community through such a difficult time.”*

A particular challenge was failing batteries. Typically, device battery life decreases as laptops reach end of life, and problems become more common.

*“We were dealing with machines that had swollen batteries, or that couldn’t retain a charge, so users would have to keep their laptops plugged in all of the time. For those in the office, that limited the way they worked in meetings or anytime they needed to work away from their desks. For those at home who were often juggling family duties, they had fewer options of where and how they could work,”* explained Hurst.

While Hurst acknowledged the professionalism of the City’s staff as they worked through highly unusual circumstances, he said that frustration clearly increased as the devices aged beyond their usual lifespan.

*“The laptops were coming up to five years old, and you just wouldn’t normally expect them to be used that long in the workplace. They were very good laptops, they just aged and couldn’t support the increasing demands of a growing workforce. I think that it did affect the feeling that users had towards the IT team, it also affected our reputation in the council, which was not a good situation.”*



Data#3 Customer Story

City of Fremantle

**“One of the advantages of partnering with Data#3 on this project was that we already had the accessories we had previously invested in, which meant we would not have to purchase everything again for the new laptops.”**

Joel Hurst, IT Manager,  
City of Fremantle.

## IT Outcome

The City of Fremantle went through a competitive tender process, with responses proposing devices from a number of vendors. After considering which option would offer the best value to the City in terms of cost and outcome, Hurst opted for a range of Microsoft Surface devices including the Microsoft Surface Laptop 4, Microsoft Surface Book 3, HP G6 tower, as well as monitors and accessories, chosen to suit the varying roles of users.

*“One of the advantages of partnering with Data#3 on this project was that we already had the accessories we had previously invested in, which meant we would not have to purchase everything again for the new laptops. They were also competitive on cost, and they proposed a very practical process for the changeover, taking into account the way we work,”* explained Hurst.

Device shortages were still affecting supply, and Data#3's inclusion of a project manager was helpful as the project progressed. The City's IT team was not only juggling the provision of a new device fleet, but also dealing with delays on the new building as workers were affected by lockdowns and workplace restrictions.

*“When we needed Data#3 to install the docking stations, it was still a building site. We had to put them through our safety training first, and they had to wear personal protective equipment for much of the deployment. We would have to check with the electricians when they would need to switch off power, so we would know when they could test monitors and other equipment. Some days, it would not be possible for them to enter the building, so we would schedule them to work on other sites on those days, as they were installing equipment across six locations,”* recounted Hurst.

*“We were constantly having to adjust our plans and we needed Data#3 to work around a changing situation, which they most certainly did. Their project manager was excellent and even when we did hit a problem, he addressed it very quickly.”*

When the building opened, the Data#3 project team worked closely with the City's IT department to make sure that the changeover of devices ran smoothly for users with minimal disruption. Hurst said that communication was key in making sure everything went to plan.

*“Having worked on large-scale device refreshes before, I knew that it was very important to give specific instructions to users about backing up any locally saved files, and reminding them that anything not backed up would be gone with the old machine. We scheduled times, and one of the Data#3 team and one of my team worked with each staff member, talking them through the setup of their new laptop as well as making sure everything was ready to go. Our teams would walk in with an old device, and walk out with a new laptop, completely set up for them, in around half an hour.”*

Research finds that 63% of IT managers say their resources are drained by device management and support<sup>1</sup>, and before the upgrade, Hurst was one of them. Since the changeover, and with staff working on reliable laptops, the IT team has enjoyed a reduction in device support requests.

*“Our helpdesk was kept very busy when they were supporting hundreds of five-year-old devices, because there were frequent problems. Now, even when a machine gets dropped and broken, we can swap them out quickly – this time with no duct tape involved,”* said Hurst.



## City of Fremantle

**“We were constantly having to adjust our plans and we needed Data#3 to work around a changing situation, which they most certainly did.”**

**Joel Hurst, IT Manager,  
City of Fremantle.**

## Business Outcome

When the users were finally able to move into the new building, everything was ready for them. Workstations were equipped with docking stations and monitors, so staff could simply plug in and start work.

*“In the new building, we operate an activity based working system, and people can work anywhere, so they choose a desk and get going. As they now have new laptops with new batteries, they can pick up their device and take it to a meeting, whatever they need, without having to worry about plugging it in. They are more mobile, which suits the environment, and means they can collaborate better now that they have the right tools in place,”* commented Hurst.

For most users, hybrid working has become the new normal, with days divided between working from the office and home. The new fleet of Microsoft devices make it easier for users to adjust, and to make the most of the change, with a wealth of upgraded specifications designed to improve user experience. The Microsoft Surface Laptop 4, for example, is lighter and features an exceptional HD screen and studio quality microphone, making online meetings more rewarding and less frustrating.

*“The new devices have transformed the way that our IT team is viewed within the organisation and it has gone a long way to improving relationships with other departments. Now that people are working on laptops that really suit their needs, and help them to work better, that friction has gone,”* said Hurst.

The reduced support demands have had a profound effect on the IT team, and Hurst said they are happy to now focus their attentions on new projects and services.

*“It really was becoming time-consuming, for us and for the users, to deal with machines breaking down so often. It was a distraction we didn’t need. We have a skilled team that is no longer being interrupted by frequent device problems, not to mention working on new devices ourselves, which means we can keep building towards improvements that benefit our staff and community.”*

## Conclusion

With the City of Fremantle workforce enjoying its new custom-built building and devices that suit their needs, the feedback has been *“absolutely positive”* according to Hurst.

*“People have contacted us and told us they appreciate the way the project was handled in such challenging circumstances, and how easy they found the device changeover,”* explained Hurst.

*“Our staff are able to be more productive and they enjoy the improved flexibility and mobility they have with their modern devices.”*

Given the intensity of managing a relocation amidst a global pandemic, and dealing with construction delays, the advantages of working with an experienced project manager from Data#3 on the device refresh were clear.

*“The project manager was excellent, communicated well with my team, and was always flexible when dealing with delays from our side. Even though there were supply delays on the devices, which were unavoidable, they constantly adjusted what they were doing to get the job done. They often worked on a building site, worked around power outages and changing safety needs,”* Hurst concluded.

*“It helped that they knew how we worked which meant they were able to align with our team – they really cared about the outcome as much as we did.”*

---

<sup>1</sup> IDC (2017), Transforming Device Lifecycle Management with Device as a Service. [Online] Available at: [http://idcdocserv.com/download/HP\\_IB\\_DaaS\\_3317.pdf](http://idcdocserv.com/download/HP_IB_DaaS_3317.pdf)

**Data#3** Customer Story

## **City of Fremantle**

## **Data#3 and Microsoft**

Since 1994, Data#3 has combined forces with Microsoft to help our customers adapt and grow. Today, we are Microsoft's largest Australian business partner with the highest level of competency across the Microsoft ecosystem. Our hundreds of accredited consultants are ready to help our customers deliver the digital future; from enhancing productivity and collaboration with Microsoft 365 and the latest Surface devices, to transforming business processes with Dynamics 365, to ensuring our customers get the most value from Azure cloud. Our scale and expertise enable our unparalleled support to customers selecting, deploying, managing and securing Microsoft applications, products and devices.

**Data#3**

 **Microsoft**