

Why HS2 selected Kahootz for online collaboration

HS2 has polarised opinion ever since the decision to go ahead with the project was announced in January 2012. More than three years later (and despite an election result that means it is now almost certain to happen), the political controversy around the £50 billion high-speed rail link continues.

A quick glance at some HS2 headlines from last month shows the extent of the division in attitudes towards the project. While former transport secretary Andrew Adonis wrote [an article for City AM](#) that declared 'The HS2 debate is over: It's time to embrace the benefits', the Guardian published a collection of [sceptical reader letters](#) with the headline 'HS2 – why it's time to pull the plug on the fantasy'.

This dispute is essentially between those who believe HS2 can deliver the proposed economic benefits to the Midlands and the north of England, and those who believe the money should be spent on other infrastructure projects, such as improving local transport networks. But whatever your opinion on HS2, there is little doubt that the scope and scale of the project presents a major challenge for those involved in its delivery – including CIO James Findlay.

Collaboration through the supply chain

Last year, HS2 was looking for an online collaboration tool to support early-stage consultations with its many stakeholders and suppliers. Findlay selected Kahootz, via the government's [G-Cloud framework](#), for our ability to provide secure, flexible and cost-effective [online workspaces](#).

"Our supply chain is extensive and Kahootz is helping us provide our engineering teams and suppliers with as much flexibility as possible when engaging with them, while aligning all these activities with our cloud-based development strategy," Findlay [told Computing in September 2014](#).

With the project effectively still in the design stage, 300 users across various divisions within HS2 are currently using Kahootz to aid collaboration with key stakeholders and suppliers. The organisation, even at this relatively early stage of its development, already has a large number of relationships with construction, IT and professional services providers to manage. The number of users is expected to rise to about 3,000 once construction begins in 2017.

In a separate interview with Findlay last September, [Computerworld UK revealed](#) that HS2 procured Kahootz at a price of just £2 per user per user per month – certainly cost-effective online collaboration software for such a large organisation. "It's a very good, secure method of providing significant collaboration, document and data exchanges between the organisation and the supply chain," the CIO explained

Agility and innovation

Findlay is an enthusiastic supporter of the G-Cloud. He claims to be the first ever user of the framework and has praised its success in opening up areas of public sector business that were previously closed off to SMEs.

Across the public sector, the themes of agility and agile working have been moving up the agenda this year. Looking back on Findlay's comments to Computerworld UK in that context it's clear that he believes the flexibility and speed of procuring services from SMEs via G-Cloud can help organisations to achieve the level of agility they need to be successful.

"We're new in relative terms and therefore haven't got the same legacy challenges as other departments ... We can be quick on implementation and move quickly, so we need people who can cope with rapid changes, ambiguity and innovation," he said.

Here at Kahootz, we're proud to offer our online collaboration platform to public sector bodies through the G-Cloud – and we aim to continue helping them to achieve organisational agility and innovation by using cloud technology.