



Chrome Flex Case Study

In 2022 Framework launched the Digital inclusion project. The project was designed to increase the access to digital resources throughout Framework and offer skills to Service users.

Throughout the project we have used ChromeOS Flex to power our Laptops and PC's, this case study will explain why it was chosen and the benefits it had delivered to the project.

Cost Effectiveness

When the project began, one of the primary goals was to decide which operating system we should use. We had already had 100 laptops donated and expected more but needed a standard OS to use across all our current machines and future ones. We initially experimented with Windows and versions of Linux.

Windows would have been too costly, many of the laptops donated were not powerful enough to run it, or would not be able to run Windows 11 which would be essential once Windows 10 became obsolete. Linux had too many variations for it to be used effectively across devices and lacked essential features we needed for ease of use by service users.

ChromeOS Flex had just been released that year and we found that it was by far the best fit for our project.

- It would work with many low spec and old laptops which we had already been donated and it had an extensive list of supported devices.
- Machines would be supported years after Windows 10 which was the second-best option at the time
- Due to its design, it wouldn't require anti-virus software to be installed and updated
- It would update automatically reducing the need for site visits
- It was free and hence reduce the costs associated with refurbishing laptops to essentially zero

ChromeOS Flex immediately presented itself as the best option for our project, far surpassing all the other alternatives available.

Accessibility

The Digital inclusion project is aimed at individuals who are digitally excluded. This means people who lack the skills or resources to access the internet effectively.

People who lack digital skills can find using a PC/Laptop very intimidating. So, one of the additional benefits of ChromeOS Flex is its ease of use. When users log onto a Chrome device they are immediately taken to the internet browser. With Windows or Linux, you would need to locate the browser and deal with superfluous apps opening as well as update, prompts etc. We've found this to be a benefit for service users as it reduces any confusion for those lacking skills and understanding of OS environments and points them to what they are using the machine for.

Framework has many service users for whom English is not their first language. ChromeOS Flex allows us to have Google translate appear on the internet browser as well as letting users choose their language of choice when they turn on the machines. This has been a big benefit for us as it allows service users to use machines themselves, empowering them to take more power over their lives.

Sustainability

Our project has little funding and relies solely on donations made by our partners.

We receive a lot of laptops that are no longer useful to our partners due to them becoming obsolete and not being compatible with newer, faster and more resource heavy versions of Windows, such as Windows 11.

One of the benefits of ChromeOS Flex is that it is a 'resource light' operating systems that outsources a percentage of its processing needs to the Cloud. This gives some of the oldest slowest machines a new lease of life and be utilised again for years to come.

Our project was gifted a number of machines that ran windows 7, a now obsolete operating system. These machines would take up to 10 minutes to properly turn on and become ready to use. Anyone who has tried to turn on an old pc after a long time is aware of just how slow they can operate. When these computers are wiped and ChromeOS flex installed, they can boot up in seconds and are ready to use. This offers a high-speed, user-friendly experience on machines over 10 years old.

Being able to utilise ChromeOS Flex has therefore added years of life to machines that otherwise may have been discarded.

We have calculated that Chrome Flex has added 1000 years of life to around 350 laptops and desktops that otherwise would have been left unused or discarded.

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