

Case Study

Codegate and Hand Held Products Prove to be First Class in University Challenge

Overview

Industry: Education

Application: Vehicle Parking Management & Asset Surveying

Product Solutions (Hardware and Software): Dolphin® 7900 mobile computer, Codegate Adaptive Technology (mobile client and mobile gateway)

Hardware Partner: Hand Held Products

Executive Summary

Remote data capture can play a key role in productivity and efficiency drives within large organisations. When the University of Reading needed a solution for two different projects across its three campuses, it chose a bespoke mobile solution from Codegate that included Codegate Adaptive Technology, a flexible software development environment, and the Dolphin® 7900 mobile computer from Hand Held Products.

Institution Profile

The University of Reading is one of the 20 most research-intensive universities in the UK. It is internationally recognised for the excellence of its teaching across a broad range of disciplines, with degree courses in over 60 subjects, and more than 250 adult education (public) courses.

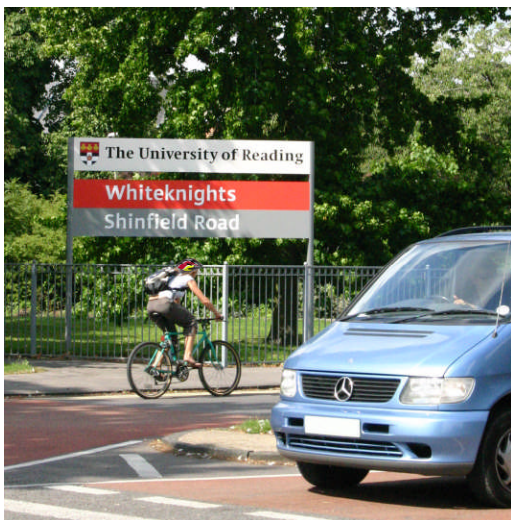
The Challenge

For the Facilities Management Directorate (FMD) at the University of Reading, accurately tracking and monitoring assets, their status and deployment, and policing vehicle parking was proving a time and resource intensive operation. Three departments within FMD – Project & Design, Maintenance and Security Services - wanted to start capturing and confirming data remotely across the campuses in an effort to improve accuracy, streamline operations and relieve pressure on their resources.

There were two main areas that the University was looking to address, the first was vehicle parking management and the second was asset surveying.

The University's large workforce and student population make the job of the University's security services staff a challenging one indeed. Not only do they need to ensure that vehicles are parked in designated parking areas, they also need to identify that each car does in fact have appropriate parking permissions for the area that it is parked in.

"We were looking for a software solution that could integrate with our existing databases, and hardware that would be portable, rugged and user-friendly ... to support all the functionality we required."



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Keeping track of the University's broad portfolio of assets across three campuses was also a challenge. With equipment in use almost 24/7, staff, engineers and contractors alike needed fast and accurate information about the location and status of equipment to keep the University and its equipment operating effectively.

Historically, each of these operations was undertaken using a paper-based system requiring staff to complete paperwork wherever they were around the campuses and returning it to a central point for inputting into the computerised system. This was not only resource intensive, but also left room for delays and errors.

The Solution

The search for a suitable software and hardware solution took the form of a formal tender process and one of the companies invited to tender was end-to-end mobility solutions specialist Codegate.

Kevin Doyle, the FMD's Business Systems Manager, commented, "We were looking for a software solution that could integrate with our existing databases, and hardware that would be portable, rugged and user-friendly with both barcode and image capture capabilities to support all the functionality we required."

"We chose to work with Codegate because they offered a cohesive solution and they are an established company with a good reputation."

Codegate proposed to develop a mobile client and mobile gateway software to address the challenges of all three departments. The software would integrate with the University's existing Wren database providing remote access to the subsets of information required.

Codegate also recommended the Dolphin 7900 rugged mobile computer – a device packed with technology, including wireless full area network (WFAN) with co-located GSM/GPRS, 802.11b and Bluetooth radios that gives seamless, real time data and voice communications, anytime and anywhere.

Kevin continued, "We chose to work with Codegate because they offered a cohesive solution and they are an established company with a good reputation. We also liked the robust nature of the Dolphin 7900s, their large screens and the quality of the photography images they produce. They are also very easy to use."



*University of Reading Library,
Whiteknights Campus*



Dolphin 7900 Rugged Mobile Computer

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The Results

The Security Services team is now using Codegate's solution to carry out its security checks. Operators input the registration numbers of vehicles parked inappropriately straight into the mobile computers and can then access details such as status, and a history of any previous parking offences. The intelligent system then indicates the appropriate action to take, such as issuing a ticket or a formal warning. The mobile computers are also used to take photos of vehicles and parking violations, to provide evidence of illegal parking.

Not only does the new system make available all the information needed to decide if an offence has been committed and enable accurate information and images to be captured, it also eliminates the need for additional data entry at the end of the security check as the security management software is automatically updated with new offences during synchronisation.

The Project & Design and Maintenance departments use the new system for asset management surveys. Engineers, contractors and staff can verify exactly what the asset is and find out key statistics about it such as its location and status.

Now the university can create an accurate record for each asset in the field and this is all updated in the main database when the mobile computers are synchronised within the University's Wren system. This means that wherever a member of the team is on campus, they can now verify that they have the correct asset for servicing, repair and maintenance, and no longer have to spend time manually updating records at the end of the job.

Kevin Doyle remarks: "The initial response to the new system has been very positive. University personnel using the new system can now download data directly into our Wren database, and this gives us a quick and cost effective method of keeping the database up to date. This new approach minimises costs and creates efficiencies across the departments involved."



*The University of Reading,
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