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Spirit News Autumn 2016

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Spirit Data Capture's newsletter for customers who are interested in information and news relating to mobile enterprise technologies and data capture solutions. In this issue, you can find the following articles:

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Recent reports and guides

- Are consumer or rugged devices best for field service?

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. If you would like more information on any of the items below, please call us on 01928 718800 or send an email to: helen.jones@spiritdatacapture.co.uk.

Industry news and views

Amazon's threat to retail stores in the US

Amazon's continuing growth is now threatening the very future of retail stores across America. A recent article in Yahoo! Finance says that the online giant now has "a warehouse or delivery station within 20 miles of 44% of the US population".

This means that Amazon's delivery costs are lower and it can deliver rapidly – often by the same day or even the same hour. Although stores such as Walmart are often closer, Amazon's extensive choice, combined with such fast deliveries, could make it the preferred method of consumer purchasing, potentially sounding the death knell in the future for many retail outlets.

...and they're also taking over the skies!

Amazon is also changing the face of retail deliveries, as reported by the online magazine, [eDelivery](#). In its bid to provide ever faster service levels, the giant retailer has been experimenting with the use of drones to deliver packages.

The article points out that drones aren't just faster than lorries – they're also cheaper to run and don't depend heavily upon human resources (with all of the associated baggage such as pay claims, strikes, sickness etc.) It remains to be seen how this all works out in practice, of course...

Warehouse delays in going mobile could be foolhardy

A recent blog by Xplore highlights the increasing importance of using mobile technologies to streamline the effectiveness of warehouses and distribution centres and to ensure that any disruption to operations is minimised. The article points out that: *“Mobile technologies provide real time tracking of goods on the move and allow for real-time routing assistance, resource planning, and inventory control.”*

It explains that using mobile technology is effectively just a case of replicating what works on other systems and transferring it to a mobile computer platform. This in turn will help to reduce the likelihood of a system failure, which could be catastrophic for a business, its suppliers and its customers.

The importance of mobile solutions was underlined by Bridget McCrea in Logistics Management. She reported that many organisations are still using paper-based spreadsheets and are reluctant to upgrade to mobile technology until their current systems become obsolete. This, indeed, is likely to be a very false economy.

To access the Xplore blog, please [click here](#).

To read the Logistics Management article, [click here](#).

Note: Xplore is celebrating 20 years of rugged tablet innovation. The company recorded record profits for the 2016 fiscal year, with revenues growing by 136% to a total of just over US\$100 million. Xplore is now the global number two provider in the rugged tablet market. The results follow the company's acquisition of Motion Computing last year.

Help for healthcare

A recent blog by Zebra - *‘Why technology is key to improving efficiency and patient outcomes’* - explores the pressures faced by the NHS and the possible solutions that could be found. [You can read the blog here](#). For instance, did you know that:

- Over a million patients need NHS treatment every 36 hours
- Two thirds of hospitals are now in deficit due to financial pressures but demand for healthcare continues to rise
- The funding gap is expected to reach £30 billion by 2020

However, a key solution to improving efficiency and enhancing service levels whilst keeping costs under control lies in the use of the latest technology. For instance, centralised data can help healthcare organisations to assess the level of patient care being provided. Barcoding helps to track drug use and to minimise the likelihood of counterfeit drugs being introduced.

The blog states that *‘joined-up care’* - connecting all healthcare services, from hospitals to pharmacists using digital technology - is essential. Innovations such as Zebra Bluetooth smart wristbands can track patients through a hospital and monitor their progress. Other aspects – such as storing data in the cloud and taking advantage of the Internet of things – are also important. Indeed, many of these developments are essential for maintaining high levels of patient care and for ensuring that the NHS can continue to function.

Where next for wearables?



A LinkedIn article this month by Tom Goodwin suggests that the industry - and Apple in particular - might be missing the point when it comes to the design and use of wearables. He argues that one of the main reasons why wearables such as smart watches haven't really taken off is because smartphones have been so successful. They've become the primary means of communication for a whole spectrum of activities.

Goodwin suggests that instead of effectively trying to compete with smartphones, wearables should complement them, and become part of a whole, integrated ecosystem of personal devices (smartphones, laptops, tablets, smart TVs etc.). He continues by saying that wearables such as smart watches should serve three main purposes:

- A small screen that provides nudges and notifications to reduce phone usage
- A data input device to track your movements and behaviour
- An external interface with the modern world

[Find out more.](#)



Industry trends and new releases

In a Galaxy far, far away...

The Samsung Galaxy S7 has just been launched – it's a powerful and impressive device, which features the new Android operating system. However, there are also still thousands of Galaxy S6 devices out there (we've sold quite a few of these units and they are very popular). But, like almost any device ever manufactured, they have their own special quirks and users have been quick to comment on features they don't like or that seem to be missing.

In response to this, Digital Trends has published an article by Simon Hill that looks at '*25 annoying Samsung Galaxy S6 problems and how to fix them*'. Many of the issues that people are worried about can be easily solved. To check out these useful tips, [please click here](#).

Connectivity and the cloud

Ensuring consistently reliable connectivity is an issue that most organisations face as user demands continue to rise and the number of mobile devices outnumber the people on our planet. Over 70% of all mobile communication takes place over WiFi and it's estimated that over seven billion new devices will be WiFi-enabled by the end of next year. Meanwhile, there's also been a dramatic increase in other connected items, due to the growing popularity of the Internet of Things.

As a result, more and more manufacturers are turning to cloud-based networking and cloud-managed WiFi solutions as a way of solving the problem of unreliable connectivity. This is a more cost-effective, simpler and less resource-intensive approach than traditional hosting on a proprietary network. Consequently, some exciting and very versatile solutions are beginning to find their way onto the market – watch this space for more details.

A little Nougat from Android

Google has now released its Android 7.0 operating system (also known as Nougat). A key feature of the system is the ability for two apps to run simultaneously on the same screen. It's also more adept at coping with more complex 3D graphics. The new release is currently only available on a few devices but Google wants as many people as possible to upgrade to the new operating system once manufacturers have carried out the necessary device checks.

To find out more, take a peek at the [BBC's recent online Technology article](#).

M3 Mobile SM10LTE

M3 Mobile has released the new SM10LTE, a rugged PDA with a 5" full-touch HD TFT LCD screen. This new, slim device has a dual operating system - Android 5.1 Lollipop and Windows 10 IoT Mobile Enterprise. Its features include a 1.3GHz Quadcore central processing unit, a 1D / 2D scanner, an 8.0M



autofocus camera, and an optional RFID reader - and it comes with an IP65 rating.

To find out more, please [contact Spirit](#).

Panasonic FZ-B2 Mk2

Panasonic's new Mark 2 version of the FZ-B2 rugged 7" Android tablet offers greater performance and even more flexibility than its predecessor. The new model has an Intel® Atom™ x5-Z8550 Quad Core processor and an Android™ 6.0 Marshmallow operating system and boasts a 32% increase in performance on the previous version. It's slimmer and fanless and has an eight-hour battery.

The new model has a number of business options and three customisable areas where combinations of a bar code reader, smartcard reader Wi-Fi and 4G can be specified. For further information, please [contact us](#).

Unlocking the mysteries of ATEX numbers

We've had some interesting correspondence lately about the letters, numbers and symbols that appear on some of the ATEX-certified Xplore devices that we sell (e.g. the XSlate D10, B10 and the Bobcat). This is typically the form in which they appear:

II 3 G Ex ic IIC T5 Gc
AEx ic IIC T5 Gc
-20°C ≤ Ta ≤ +60°C

This diagram explains much of what appears on the first two lines:



The third line gives the ambient temperature range within which the tablet is certified to be used. This is a major differentiator of the Xplore units, as relatively few devices are certified to 60oC (which isn't particularly high when operating outside in the sun on Tarmac, steel decking or if the tablet is left in a vehicle in the sun).

New ePoD module from Spirit

We've recently added an exciting new software module to our Mobile Connect™ family. It's called Mobile Connect Delivery and provides a versatile and high-quality electronic Proof of Delivery (ePoD) system. The new, off-the-shelf module is suitable for businesses of all sizes and is packed with features. It can be quickly configured to meet your specific business needs.

For a more detailed explanation of the capabilities of Mobile Connect Delivery, [contact us](#).

Recent reports and guides

Are consumer or rugged devices best for field service?

A recent research report from Field Service News has taken a closer look at the devices being used by

field service engineers.

Most field service companies have now moved away from paper-based, manual reporting in the field – indeed, many are already on their second or third iterations in terms of digital devices. But what sort of device do the engineers favour? This report suggests that almost two thirds of these companies have opted for consumer-grade devices; whilst for rugged devices, the most favoured type used is the tablet.

However, those who opt for consumer devices are driven mainly by price considerations – whereas those companies who need devices for their field engineers that will be reliable and will function well under a range of conditions overwhelmingly choose rugged devices.



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