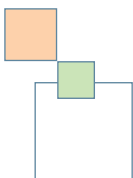


York finds strong support from Spirit Data Capture

Mobile computers and other handheld data capture devices are now fairly ubiquitous – they are used by many different industries and for many applications. But the effectiveness of these solutions can often depend upon the level of support provided. When the University of York needed to replace its ageing system, one of its first priorities was to find a supplier that could offer comprehensive support and an in-depth knowledge of mobile computing solutions. The University opted for an independent consultancy – Spirit Data Capture Limited.



The University of York was founded in 1963, when it had just 200 students. It now has 11,500 students and over 30 academic departments and research centres. The university is known for its academic excellence and (along with Cambridge) boasts the highest scores in official teaching assessments. The 2008 Research Assessment Exercise placed the University among the ten leading institutions in the UK for research and underlined its position as one of the world's top 100 universities. ▶



Case Study

The University recently decided to upgrade the automated system that it uses for stocktaking and to track items issued across the counter. Martin Sperring, the University's Stores Coordinator, explains: "Our existing barcode system had become rather antiquated and the software platform was unstable. The problems were compounded by a lack of effective support from the supplier."

The section heard about Spirit Data Capture, an independent mobile computing consultancy, through a supplier to the North Eastern Universities Purchasing

Consortium (NEUPC). The University asked Spirit to source a suitable solution that would meet all of its needs.

"Effective support from Spirit was a key criterion," recalls Martin. "We wanted them to find a system that would be reliable, accurate and easy to use." Spirit recommended the Mobile Compia M3, the world's lightest and slimmest fully-featured PDA (Personal Digital Assistant). This proved ideal for the University's requirements.

The Mobile Compia devices were subsequently installed, and are now being used to capture data relating to stock that is issued from stores within the University's departments of Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Electronics. The data is uploaded daily through a web interface onto an Agresso Management Accounting system.

The transactions are posted to the system's Inventory module and can then be charged to the appropriate departments. Stores also use the M3 devices for stocktaking – they are used to count stock items at the 'coal face' and to transfer the data back to Agresso for completion.

Spirit provided further help by developing specialist software for the Mobile Compia PDA so that it integrates fully with the stores' host software. The links enable the data to flow seamlessly from the M3 to the Agresso, via the section's Computing Service web page.

Martin Sperring continues: "The new system is excellent – the Mobile Compia M3s provide us with a much smoother, easier and more user-friendly system. As a result, stores now have two options for issuing stock – using the mobile device or by requisition. The new devices provide us with a much more reliable method of transferring data than our previous system."

He adds: "I have been impressed with Spirit's response to any issues or concerns that we've had. They've been very supportive and have resolved every issue that's cropped up so far. I would be happy to recommend them to other people and to use them again in the future."



"The new system is excellent – the Mobile Compia M3s provide us with a much smoother, easier and more user-friendly system."

Martin Sperring
York University Stores
Coordinator

spirit
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