Many organisations are pursuing the ideal of ‘paperless’ operations. One that is already getting close to that ideal, with the help of independent consultancy, Spirit Data Capture Limited, is Dublin Airport Authority. The Authority selected Getac Z710 rugged tablets for use with a new asset service and maintenance tracking application in Terminal 2. In trials, this has already boosted efficiency and reduced the use of paper by 70%.

Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) is a state-owned airport management company with some 3,000 employees. Its main activities include the operation and management of Dublin and Cork Airports as well as global airport retailing through its subsidiary, Aer Rianta International.
To improve efficiency, the Asset Management department wanted to test an asset service and maintenance tracking application that would work in conjunction with its Computerised Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS) at Dublin Airport’s Terminal 2. This forms part of the Asset Care and Asset Management’s Lean Workflow initiative.

CMMS Central Planner, Gerard Delahunt, explains: “We wanted a rugged and versatile mobile computer with a battery life that would last for a 12-hour shift. It also needed to be splash-proof and have 3G and WiFi capabilities, and a screen size of about seven inches so that we could view documents and carry out check sheets.”

After several weeks of research and meeting different providers, he came across an independent consultancy, Spirit Data Capture Limited, during a Google search. Spirit offered the Authority a choice of eight devices. Gerard continues: “It was quite difficult to get a device that met all of our requirements, including the need to be future-proof (for instance, so that it could also provide barcode scanning and could be used for other applications).”

Ultimately, the department opted for the Getac Z710, a fully rugged tablet. The Z710 uses an Android operating system and has a host of useful features, including a 7” LCD touch screen that can be read clearly even in sunlight; an HD webcam; robust connectivity options (including WiFi and optional 3.5G WWAN); an optional barcode scanner; and a five megapixel camera. It also has a battery that has a life of up to ten hours.

Gerard remarks: “It was difficult to find a device that met all of our requirements. However, what we particularly like about the Getac Z710 is the built-in barcode scanner and its great battery life. Most other devices failed to meet our criteria because they had a very short battery life or because they used the camera and an app in place of a barcode scanner.”

Initially, the new Getac devices will be used solely for the CMMS. The Authority’s core system is Mainsaver 11.6, and it is now using a Spidex Web Module on the Getac Z710s. This is a web-based platform that allows technicians to pick up emergency jobs as well as helping them to carry out planned maintenance.

“So far,” says Gerard Delahunt, “We have been running an extended trial in Terminal 2 with our Building Services Technicians. They use the Getac tablets to carry out day-to-day tasks. Previously, our operations were 100% paper-based in Terminal 2 but since the introduction of the Getac devices, they are now about 70% paperless. The only reason we aren’t 100% paperless is because I haven’t had time to develop all of our web-based check sheets yet!”

“This in itself is a massive achievement with many benefits, including a significant reduction in administration, no printing costs and no filing requirements. The checks are all stored electronically with each work order. The Z710 is a great, robust device that meets all of our needs and the users would all like to have one each to make the process even more efficient!”

He adds: “With real-time data recording from the Getac tablets, we can have live data for our Operations Centre to ensure that our asset care meets our agreed Service Level Agreements. This means a safer environment for passengers and technicians, with the introduction of a quick risk assessment that is carried out on the device before starting a job.

“Our next steps will be to look at getting email and using the devices to view PDFs, drawings, manuals etc. We are also considering using the Z710 for our baggage and BMS system, to assist with fault finding. We might also use it with barcode applications in the future.”

Gerard concludes: “Spirit has provided us with support throughout this project. Overall, it has been a pleasant experience dealing with them: they provide a very efficient customer service, with nothing ever being an issue. If the trial is successful in Terminal 2, the next phase will be to roll out the Getac tablets across the Campus, including Terminal 1, the airfield and Cork Airport.”

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