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Spirit News Summer 2017

Blistering sunstroke! The time has arrived for Spirit's summer edition of our ezine for customers who are interested in information and news relating to handheld mobile computing and barcode scanning solutions.

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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 trends and new releases

Robot wars

A recent online news item from the [BBC](#) reports on the growing importance of robotics and artificial intelligence in warehousing. In particular, it takes a look at how Ocado is currently using sophisticated software to sort thousands of grocery orders. The company is also working on a robotic hand that can pick up fruit without damaging it.

At Ocado's Andover warehouse, 'swarms of robots' are being used to collect groceries and take them to a human packer. This type of development is just further evidence of the onward march of automation – which, the article suggests, won't necessarily reduce the need for human personnel but will just require people with different skills.

Keeping up with GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) aims to provide stronger data protection for individuals within the EU - including the UK, despite the ongoing negotiations about Brexit. It also applies to the export of personal data outside the EU. It will come into force on 25th May 2018 – so companies here need to be

ready for it.

Amongst many other considerations, GDPR requires businesses to keep records of personal data (including even online identifiers such as IP addresses) and processing activities. The Information Commissioner's Office has prepared a useful document called '[Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) - 12 steps to take now](#)'. In line with GDPR requirements, Spirit has sent out an email to customers on our database asking whether they are happy or not to remain on the database. Are you happy to be on the database? Please send us a quick email to let us know. Thanks.

End of life for some Windows operating systems

Microsoft has decided to stop supporting Windows Embedded Handheld 6.5 in January 2020, and there will be no further upgrades after this point. Similarly, Windows Embedded CE 6.0 will reach the end of its supported life in June 2018 and Windows Embedded 8.1 Handheld in June 2019.

Current users of these operating systems therefore need to start thinking about migrating to another system well in advance of these dates. If you're not sure what will be best for your company, have a chat with Spirit about the various software options available, which include migration to Android (for which we can also provide support).

WiFi in the cloud

With increasing numbers of mobile devices requiring access to network and Internet resources, issues with wireless networks can become extremely costly – and include not only coverage but also maintenance and support costs. One increasingly popular management option is the use of cloud-hosted management platforms. These remove the need for physical controllers and replace them with access points that are managed from the cloud.

Some solutions even allow existing access points to be connected, eliminating the need to replace your entire wireless network whilst providing the added benefits of a cloud-managed infrastructure. One example of cloud-based networking is Extreme's Azara Wireless Wing Cloud solution. For more information, give us a call!

Industry trends and new releases

Latest trends in mobile devices

Field Technologies Magazine has been looking at the latest trends in mobile devices and suggests that companies are increasingly favouring affordable rugged mobile computers rather than consumer-grade devices. The magazine also suggests that aspects such as ruggedness, screen size and economics will continue to be factors that drive sales.

This trend is echoed by an article in RCRWireless News that explores the rising fortunes of the rugged tablet market. These devices have become thinner and lighter, more rugged and with better displays. They are also more powerful and faster than ever before. Meanwhile, consumer-grade tablets are failing to meet the demanding specifications required by industrial and mobile workforces. So, the future looks bright for rugged devices.

Let there be light...

Phillips has developed an interesting new warehousing tool - Light Based Indoor Positioning – which was piloted in a Carrefour hypermarket in Lille, France in 2015. This new solution is based on visible light communication (VLC) technology. It uses the LED lighting in retail stores and warehouses to transmit a unique code from each ceiling light by modulating its frequency in a way that can't be detected by eye. However, it can be detected by a smartphone camera or Zebra handheld device, which can then use an app with location-based services to pinpoint the user's position within the building to within 30cm.

Indoor Light Based Positioning effectively acts like an indoor GPS. It enables employees to navigate easily to customers, colleagues or stock. Heat maps of the building for footfall and usage can also be produced to assist with stock planning.

A new insight into device performance

Zebra has recently introduced two new services that are designed to give customers greater insight into the health of their devices and their business performance. The Asset Visibility Service (AVS) allows customers to check the status of their Zebra mobile computers and printers and to confirm their repair status and history. It has online dashboards that are easy to read and provide recommendations for any corrective actions that might need to be taken to ensure that the devices continue to perform well.

The Operational Visibility Service (OVS) is similar but is designed for larger estates and has more advanced features than AVS. It has two options – OVS and OVS Connect. The latter is an enterprise mobility management solution that connects with a customer’s SOTI MobiControl system. It provides a wealth of operational information that can be used to drive higher business performance levels.

Getac ZX70

Getac has introduced this compact, lightweight but powerful fully rugged Android 6.0 tablet. It’s a thin device with an ergonomic design that enables it to be held comfortably in one hand. It also has the best battery runtime performance of any device in its class. The ZX70 is IP67 rated and comes with an 8MP camera, Wifi and Bluetooth. As an added bonus, it has a three-year warranty.

The ZX70 has a 7 inch display that can be read in bright sunlight. It also uses Getac’s revolutionary LumiBond 2.0 touchscreen technology, and a hard-tip stylus is included for signature capture etc.

Recent reports and guides

Defining the Intelligent Enterprise

A new operational concept has been developed recently, which pulls together some key technological trends, including the Internet of Things (IoT), mobility and the cloud. This new concept has been dubbed the ‘Intelligent Enterprise’. Last year, a joint symposium was held that brought together senior leaders from industry and technology to define the Intelligent Enterprise.

The symposium also looked at the opportunities that this new operational concept presents and at current best practices for organisations of different sizes. The report of the symposium can be found on [our website for more detailed information](#).

Mobile computing – an electric solution

A recent online issue of Electricity Today carries an interesting article from Xplore Technologies about the use of mobile technology in the utilities sector. It argues that electric utilities played an important role in the early design and development of rugged tablet PCs and proved that the real-time capture of critical data in the field can deliver high levels of efficiency.

The article looks at five reasons why the use of mobile computers within the sector is now becoming increasingly prevalent – and that they are, in fact, an essential requirement in today’s rapidly changing marketplace. For the complete feature [click here](#).

Mobility investment trends

Over the last two or three years, Enterprise Mobility Transformation Exchange has interviewed hundreds of CIOs from organisations across Europe and the US to determine their main investment priorities.

The results - which include analyses of investments in security, apps, data, the Internet of Things and the cloud - have now been pulled together in a detailed report, ‘2015 – 2017 Investment Trends’. For more information, you can find a copy of the report on our website [here](#).

Global mobile data traffic

Cisco has produced a White Paper called: ‘Cisco Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2016–2021’. This looks at the latest projections and growth trends in the market.

One of these trends is that cloud-driven mobile apps are on the increase. Meanwhile, there has been a continuing growth in the smartphone market as well as in tablets and machine-to-machine (M2M) connections. The White Paper can be [found here](#).

Recent Spirit case studies

Two recent case studies in which we’ve been involved are IG Doors and the Royal Opera House:

- London’s Royal Opera House is home to both the Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet. The venue wanted to streamline some of its customer-facing processes involving tickets and vouchers, and asked Spirit for advice. Spirit suggested the Zebra MC40, and the Royal Opera House began using the devices with an application for scanning vouchers for programmes and champagne. They will also eventually be used for ticket scanning, to reduce queuing times.
- IG Doors is the UK market leader in the development and supply of high-performance doors to the new build and social housing refurbishment sectors. The company needed a range of mobile enterprise solutions for its new factory in South Wales. We recommended ultra-rugged Zebra MC92 mobile computers, Zebra VC70 and DS3608 scanners and GK420D mobile printers. The new

devices have speeded up processes whilst providing a high level of accuracy.

To read the case studies in more detail, please [visit our web page](#).

Spirit in the spotlight

This new feature takes a closer look at some of the people you might come in contact with as a customer of Spirit.

Andy Turnbull

Andy is our Technical Services Manager and has over ten years of IT support experience, having worked previously as a Senior Support Engineer and Supervisor with software firm AppSense. His current responsibilities include overseeing our Helpdesk and Support departments and helping to drive forward improved customer relations by enhancing the customer experience and meeting their technological needs. He has also helped with a few large-scale projects.

In his spare time, Andy likes playing squash and is a big Newcastle United and Warrington Wolves fan (and a season ticket holder for Warrington's rugby league team). He used to swim for Cheshire and is now trying to get back into it, having swum in Salford Quays recently.



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