

An e-government case study



The UK eWell-Being Awards 2003

Wireless commended: Liverpool City Council's wireless devices improving council services

At a glance

- Wireless handheld ticketing devices for more efficient parking enforcement in the city
- Improved safety of field staff/ parking attendants through better tracking
- Link to DVLA system to report vehicles with out of date Vehicle Road Tax

"The project is an excellent example of the potential of wireless technology to improve the efficiency of government services and increase the safety of the staff involved".

Judges' comments

Parking enforcement is not the most popular service provided by local government. However, it plays an important role in keeping traffic flowing. Liverpool City Council has shown that appropriate use of ICT can make a more efficient service and ensure the safety of personnel.

The council set out to provide improvements in the delivery of parking controls through an integrated software package, and also to reflect the value of field personnel and the importance of their role in parking enforcement. Providing parking attendants with the most up to date, user-friendly technology has meant that they can carry out their role more efficiently, accurately and safely.

The main objectives of the project were to:

- Improve the safety of field personnel
- Identify habitual offenders
- Identify and log of out of date Vehicle Road Tax (linked to the DVLA)
- Reduce paper use
- Reduce the number of 'challenges' to the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice.

Initially each parking attendant was trained and then issued with a wireless hand held computer. The wireless device was programmed to interface with the parking management system (COPPT) and to update the system with the details of each ticket issued.

On identifying a parking offence, the attendant logs the details such as the vehicle's registration number and location. The screen of the handheld device then lists the codes for various parking offences, allowing the attendant to log the relevant code against the offending vehicle. As the ticket is printed off through the handheld wireless device, the

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information is uploaded to the main office-based IT system, allowing the non-field personnel to access up-to-the-second details of the case.

The safety and security of the parking attendants has also been improved by use of this technology. A bar code reader on the hand held device registers with the bar codes on

specific pay and display machines around the city which then logs the location of the attendant via a GSM radio link onto the back office system. This tracking system is extremely useful in monitoring the route and whereabouts of field staff throughout the city, and is a crucial development in helping to protect their safety.

The introduction of the handheld devices has led to a significant reduction in the amount of paper used both by the field workers and back office staff. Prior to their introduction, tickets were hand written and duplicate copies were retained. The introduction of the wireless devices has led to a reduction in the size of the issued ticket by over 50% and, as information is uploaded electronically to the central system, there is no longer a need to generate duplicates.

Furthermore, reducing incidents of illegal parking through a more efficient system has a positive impact on traffic flow through the city, and therefore can help to reduce congestion, especially in the city centre.

The identification of vehicles without up to date vehicle tax, and the subsequent notification to the DVLA, helps to identify those vehicles that are being driven illegally. In some cases, vehicles without up-to-date roadtax may also be void of a valid MOT or may be being driven without relevant insurance cover. Identification of these vehicles assists in the city's overall traffic management strategy.

The Council's future plans include the integration of digital camera and voice recording mechanisms to the handheld devices, as well as a facility for allowing the field staff to accept payment from parking offenders on the spot, through a swipe attachment on the handheld device.

With thanks to SustainIT for providing the information found in this case study.

Liverpool City Council website: www.liverpool.gov.uk

SustainIT website: www.sustainit.org

eWell-Being page: www.sustainit.org/ewell-being/ewb_awards.htm

UK CEED website: www.ukceed.org