

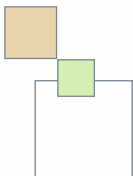
Spirit supplies a powerful enterprise device to Newcastle City Council

Hand held enterprise devices are proving to be the way forward for many organisations that need units that are flexible, rugged and reliable for their mobile workforces. One such body is Newcastle City Council. Its Environment and Regeneration Directorate has recently invested in Motorola MC35 Enterprise Digital Assistants, supplied by Spirit Data Capture Limited.



Newcastle City Council's Environment and Regeneration Directorate was formed from a recent amalgamation of the Neighbourhood Services and Regeneration divisions. Its aim is to plan and deliver a range of front line services and regeneration activities. These are central to the City's vision and values as it seeks to ensure that it is in a position to manage and promote regeneration.

The Directorate already has an in-house Works Management System. Over the last two years, the Council has been working closely with a partner, APD Communications, to deliver a remote job dispatch solution which is closely aligned with the Works Management System. Initially, some 128 Building Services Officers were equipped with pocket PCs. The solution is now being rolled out to the Environmental Services divisions, covering pest control, bulky articles, localised services and city centre operatives. ▶



Case Study

The original pocket PCs are being phased out, so the Directorate started looking for a replacement, in the form of a versatile 'enterprise device'. The new devices would have to be robust and resilient, with a built-in mobile phone and camera. As they will be used in various environments, the Directorate also specified the need for a dust-proof battery case and a good support contract.

Other criteria included Bluetooth and WiFi, an in-car charger and an extended battery life. One final specific requirement was that the devices would need to be supported by Vodafone if at all possible. Two devices were found that met all (or almost all) of these criteria. After comparing them carefully, the Directorate opted for the Motorola MC35 Enterprise Digital Assistant.

The MC35 incorporates enterprise connectivity, functionality, durability and manageability within a compact device that is designed for ease of use. It includes mobile voice and data communications, image capture and bar code scanning capabilities. The unit has a sealed battery case and is being added to Vodafone's list of recommended products.

Sandy Twynholm, the Directorate's GIS Development Manager, comments: "While sourcing a supplier for the devices, we carried out an Internet search and discovered an independent consultancy, Spirit Data Capture Limited. We subsequently asked for quotations from them and from two other suppliers, and Spirit offered the best value. We therefore asked them to supply the MC35 devices for Environmental Services."

Spirit's response to our needs has been very good – especially their ability to get the devices on trial, and the level of technical support they have provided during the trials.

Sandy Twynholm
GIS Development Manager

The MC35 is being used to host the client application developed by APD Communications. This works on a message-based system that sends, receives, deletes and updates jobs in real time. Job requirements are collected by the Directorate's call centre and then allocated to operatives via the Works Management System which then dispatches them to the hand held units.

The Motorola units have initially been trialled with the Council's Highways section, which needs particularly rugged devices. Spirit helped the Directorate to resolve some initial connectivity issues, and ensured that the software and hardware were compatible with the

Council's applications. This also involved migrating the original software to Windows Mobile 6.0, which offers better facilities and an even longer battery life.

Sandy Twynholm continues: "The trial has been successful and we are now starting to roll the devices out to the various parts of Environmental Services. Our operatives like the MC35s, and we are delighted with the range of benefits they provide. These

include improved productivity, greater customer satisfaction, and lower administration, operational and paper costs.

"The Motorola devices also have a lower carbon footprint and result in reduced management, accommodation and fuel costs. Spirit's response to our needs has been very good – especially their ability to get the devices on trial, and the level of technical support they have provided during the trials. We will certainly use their services again in the future."