

# RFID



## Carmarthenshire County Council IT Asset Management



***Desktop, Laptop, Mobile Phones: RFID keeps track of valuable IT assets.***

Like all local authorities, Carmarthenshire County Council depends on a wide range of computing devices installed in many different working environments. With over 3,000 office staff and 14,000 devices spread across more than 140 sites, the Council faced the challenge of keeping track of its technology assets.

Carmarthenshire uses an IT asset register, a system providing control of software assets, and an IT help desk system that depends on accurate data on user hardware configurations. There were difficulties in keeping the records accurate and in step. The Council needed a better way to manage the information about their workplace IT hardware. They chose RFID technology because of its benefits over other approaches, such as bar-coding, by making it easier and quicker to check the location of devices and by making it easier to tag some of their smaller assets such as smart phones and PDA's in a robust manner. They chose to work with Core RFID because of their expertise in this field.

### Trial Implementation

Carmarthenshire started by implementing a trial application - testing out how well different sorts of tags would perform in the workplace. The Council needed to be sure that tags would be easily readable, irrespective of the technology to which they were attached; that read ranges would be such that audit staff could quickly detect a number of tags for a given configuration (monitor, printer, system unit and so on); and that tags would be robust enough to be used on portable devices and would remain attached without affecting their use. Carmarthenshire also wanted to find tags that could be used on the growing number of small form factor devices such as palm tops, PDA's, Blackberries, smart phones and USB memory sticks.

The Council sourced its initial requirements for their trial from CoreRFID, a specialist in RFID technology and asset tagging applications. CoreRFID provided bespoke tags and customised readers to meet the Council's individual requirements, helping them to solve the technology problems and the challenges presented by the pilot's timetable. CoreRFID sourced tags and readers quickly to meet the pilot's project plan.



**"RFID is improving the accuracy of our IT asset records and making it easier to carry out audits across our many sites." Alison Waters, Finance & Procurement Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council.**

***"CoreRFID made sure that we had the technology we needed, on time, for our pilot."  
Giles Nunn, Technical Development Officer, Carmarthenshire County Council***

## An Integrated IT Asset Audit System

The pilot demonstrated that RFID tags would meet the Council's expectations of cost, ruggedness and ease of use. For the operational system Carmarthenshire needed a solution that would integrate with their existing helpdesk application and asset database. They also wanted to be confident that they could link it, if needed in the future, to their Altaris software asset management system. In addition Carmarthenshire was also interested in the future possibility of using the same technology to keep track of changes in the asset park, monitoring new installations, changes of location and removal of systems. Carmarthenshire recognised that this would need a proven, adaptable software system that could collect data from readers and integrate with the appropriate back end systems.

To meet the Council's requirements, CoreRFID are implementing their IT-Tracker software package, customising it to fit Carmarthenshire's procedures and data integration specifications. CoreRFID also provided the necessary tags, readers and support for the implementation of the system.

Using IT-Tracker, assets are identified with the necessary RFID tags. Carmarthenshire's IT auditors each have a personal RFID identity tag, a PDA equipped with an RFID reader (pre-loaded with the details of which assets should be in a given location) and the IT-Tracker application. The auditor signs on and can then scan the tag of any asset in a given room. The system reports missing items and items that were not expected to be present. The auditor follows on-screen menus, completing input boxes as required. By knowing which devices are expected to be in the location, auditors can follow up on missing items immediately.

Data is collected automatically from the tags and reconciled with asset lists so that accuracy is improved and the need for paperwork is reduced. Manual entry of data is kept to a minimum, reducing the risk of errors. Both the auditor and the asset are identified during data collection so that a clear chain of accountability is established. Data is stored in the PDA as each check is undertaken. The data entered for each asset is uploaded wirelessly and imported into Carmarthenshire's IT SQL Server 2005 database and their Remedy help desk systems.

Using CoreRFID's IT-Tracker application, high frequency tags and SD card format readers that could be used on existing PDA's, Carmarthenshire County Council are now in the process of rolling out their system to support all 140 Council sites. CoreRFID are supplying customised tags for the Council and for the Council's suppliers so that tags can be attached at source on certain devices.

By working together, CoreRFID and Carmarthenshire County Council have achieved a speedy implementation of a robust and capable system that helps protect assets worth over £5 million.

### The Benefits

Carmarthenshire County Council's RFID based asset audit system provides access to up to date information on IT assets:

- Simple for auditors to operate making it easy to audit IT assets
- Integrates with Remedy Help Desk and SQL Server 2005 asset management systems
- Increases accountability & reduces audit errors
- Improves information on asset location and configurations
- Low initial cost
- Automatic report generation

Using IT-Tracker for asset data collection lets Camarthen County Council make better use of its assets.

## About CoreRFID

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