Keep the jackpots coming

Industry Warehousing / Distribution / Service

Market Gaming

Applications Inventory Management
Service Job Tracking
Asset Management

Products Intermec 2100 Access Point
Intermec Janus 2020 Computer
Intermec Mono 700 Computer

YSolutions

Wireless at TABCORP

As gaming is one of Australia's most common past times, it is more than likely you have touched a TABCORP gaming machine sometime in your recent history. When one of Australia's largest gaming suppliers needed to upgrade it's tracking solution, it was inevitable they would turn to a wireless solution.

The requirement was always for TABCORP to control the location and configuration of gaming machines for internal purposes, as well as meeting compliance requirements relating to legislative issues regarding type and placement of machines.

TABCORP need to track the receipt, issue and location of machines as well as handling those returned for repair, configuration changes, general maintenance and their eventual destruction. Essentially, the database is a birth to death record of every movement and every configuration and alteration related to each machine.

Wireless at TABCORP

Mr. Munro went on to say, "The use of barcodes is not new to the application as the batch system we used previously was based on the barcode concept. The major benefit of the new system has been the elimination of discrepancy investigations which occurred when the data was processed by batch after the warehouse activity was completed. The new Gamma Solutions system gives instant validation, or advice of variation, so that the events in the warehouse are updating the database in real-time."

When a batch tracking solution no longer gave TABCORP the "up to date" information required, it was time to evaluate how their current business model could be automated into real-time. Gamma Solutions provided this as a fully functional solution, delivering all software, hardware and integration services.

John Munro, Warehouse Operations Manager, explains how the TABCORP operation functions. "TABCORP carry out all changes through a gaming logistics centre based on preplanned activity. TABCORP had been tracking these activities using a batch system with barcode scanning, recording the activities and later matching these with database records. However it was only after the event that reconciliation between scheduled and actual events could occur. When an overhaul was completed the game installed sometimes differed from that originally scheduled.

The batch system generated an investigation of any variations to planned activities. However, the update to the database occurred some time after the event, thus significantly delaying the reporting of issues.

To speed up the process a new system utilising Intermec wireless equipment was proposed. Record activity is now instantly communicated to the central Oracle database with all activities being verified at the time the event takes place. Any variation is instantly investigated and authorised, including machine destruction and the allocation of a replacement.

In the warehouse, all shipments are scanned to check that the number of units, and their configuration, is correct. This includes units shipped for destruction".

In this first stage of the implementation, the system utilised Intermec Janus 2020, character based computers. Communicating back to an Intermec proprietary Open Air wireless access point. That was four years ago.

Recently this has been migrated to incorporate the new IEEE 802.11b standard. This was easily achieved using the patented Intermec 2100 Dual Radio Access Point, which allows for both radios (Open Air & 802.11b) to reside in the one box, saving costs in cabling, installation and upgrade time.

Why the change? It was seen as advantageous that TABCORP could make significant use of their WEB server residing on the TABCORP intranet. This meant that a Pocket PC operating system on a hand held was the likely answer. With its rugged design and full Pocket PC compliance, the Intermec 700 terminal was a complete fit.

With the large touch screen on the Intermec 700, all fields related to a gaming machine can be displayed on a single screen. The long lasting battery life can handle a full days work without a re-charge and the keyboard and built in scanner allow for easy data entry. A fully integrated IEEE 802.11b radio completes the unit for total wireless connection.

Currently both systems function side by side in the same environment. Over time the Janus 2020 units will be replaced completely with the newer 700 Pocket PC devices. This was also a significant part of the Gamma solution, the ability to integrate both text and Pocket PC based products back to the one Oracle database. No reason to throw out old technology, just migrate it.

Michelle Atallah, Software Development Manager for Gamma Solutions explains, "On completion of a task the operator must select one option from a range of options displayed on a "pop-up menu". The large Intermec 700 screen displays all options on a single page and in large fonts. This makes the process simpler, faster and, most importantly, less subject to error.

Mr. Munro finished with saying, "The solution disciplines were not difficult to implement and their compliance with legislative and internal requirements gave management confidence in a highly sensitive area of the operation".

Intermec 2100 Access Point
• High speed wireless access
• Enterprise roaming
• Radio Independent ™
• 10/100 Ethernet
• NEMA4/IP54 Sealed
• -25º to 70ºC

Intermec Janus 2020 Computer
• Telnet, VT / 5250, DOS 6.2
• 2.4GHz Radio, 1.6 Mbps
• Inbuilt scanning options
• Large, high contrast display
• Rugged casing, IP54 Sealed
• -20º to 60ºC

Intermec Mono 700 Computer
• Palm size form factor
• 2.4GHz Radio, 1.6 to 11 Mbps
• Pocket PC operating system
• Rugged casing IP54 Sealed
• Scratch proof touch screen
• -20º to 60ºC

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