iformpro

Technology Supplies supply products, equipment and machinery and turn-key bespoke workshops to schools to meet the needs of a developing design & technology curriculum.

The company has over 25 years' experience in the UK-wide supply of a vast range of quality and affordable products to schools and colleges backed by outstanding customer service and technical support.

We are now considered a leading supplier to schools and colleges of a wide range of equipment including workshop machinery, tools, materials and resources covering major curriculum areas of Design & Technology, CAD/CAM and Engineering.

THE PROBLEM

Our services range from the supply of tools and machinery to the delivery of completely bespoke workshops and learning facilities. Our highly trained engineers travel to our client's sites to service and repair the machines and equipment and to ensure that installations are compliant with the latest Health and Safety regulations.

Our continued success has seen an increasing number of customers adopt our services and this forced us to look for more efficient ways of communicating service delivery, installation outcomes and customer acceptance sign-off for the service work.

Our services, both workshop installations and maintenance contracts are used nationally across the UK and overseas. Due to the nature of the environment within which we work, our business is safety critical. This was a further driver for us to find an appropriate a real-time reporting tool for our installation and service teams.

In 2012 we implemented Digital Ink, a paper-based digital pen and paper service reporting solution from Footprint Solutions. Whilst this solution provided us with real-time information, each time an engineer visited a site, 30% of that visit was used capturing details of asset types, serial numbers and the installation location before any testing or quality inspection work could begin.

The inability to pre-populate our digital pen and paper forms with critical customer, site and equipment information was a real pain. All of our service work is repeated periodically and to re-enter this information each time we visited a site was highly inefficient.

Whilst the Digital Pen and Paper solution meant that service paperwork was delivered back to our head office in a timely manner, the hand writing recognition of the solution was extremely inaccurate.

We needed to find a replacement technology that would return service reports back to our head office in real-time, with more accurate hand writing recognition and which would be capable of pre-populating our service forms with site and machine information.

THE SOLUTION

The team at Footprint Solutions were aware of the shortfalls that we were experiencing with the Digital Pen & Paper Solution, DigitalInk™. Fortunately for us the Footprint Team had developed a tablet-based service reporting solution called iForm Pro™.

"iForm Pro™ provided an integrated and easy to use reporting tool with a more accurate hand writing recognition engine built in. We found the solution simple to use from day one and our service engineers loved the fact that it was an integrated device with no fiddly Bluetooth pairing or pen and paper to configure" commented **Stuart Hickman, Technical & Engineering Manager at Technology Supplies.**

> *iForm Pro™ is quicker than the digital pen solution that it replaced and all forms are now 100% accurate allowing the administration resource that had been validating the Digital Pen forms to be reallocated to more proactive tasks.*

The migration from the Digital Pen and Paper to iForm Pro solution was quick and easy. The redesigned forms allowed us to remove the digital pen character entry boxes and simplified the forms for the engineers whilst providing more professional output for the end client.

iForm Pro™ is quicker than the digital pen solution that it replaced and all forms are now 100% accurate allowing the administration resource that had been validating the Digital Pen forms to be reallocated to more proactive tasks. The digital-pen based solution would require approximately 2 hours admin resource to review a single site form whilst liaising with the engineer about illegible writing / inaccurate information capture. Switching over to iForm Pro™ means that we could review 10 forms during this same 2 hour window!

"iForm Pro™ removed our service sheet print costs overnight which delivered a saving in excess of £22,000 per annum, easily covering the annual cost of the solution. There really has been no down side to migrating from digital pen to the tablet solution " commented **Stuart Hickman, Technical & Engineering Manager at Technology Supplies.**

iForm Pro™ used pre-loaded data to underpin the forms drop down option lists. This means less keying of data by our engineers which has dramatically improved the quality of returned data from the system. In addition to the increased accuracy of the output the Technology Supplies team were also overwhelmed at the solutions' ability to capture photos that the engineer can then draw and write on prior to attaching them automatically to the service form.

"The ability to take a photo of a machine and to then write onto it highlighting safety issues has proved invaluable. If an engineer has concerns about the safety aspect of any machine, they can now photograph the machine, mark up their concerns and email this immediately to a more experienced colleague or supplier. It's like having all of our most experienced engineers at every site, every day" commented **Stuart Hickman, Technical & Engineering Manager at Technology Supplies.**

"The hand writing recognition used in our Digital Pen and Paper Solution, DigitalInk™ was fairly crude when compared to that used in iForm Pro™. The user is able to write completely free-hand text onto the tablet and this is accurately converted to data. Digital Pen technology is great but it largely relies upon the user writing one upper case character per box and that's just not convenient for an end user.

We wanted to deliver a solution that could deal with hand written passages of text with 100% accuracy. The latest 'predictive handwriting conversion' that we have incorporated into iForm Pro makes this a viable proposition

If the user's hand writing isn't clear, the solution will present three possible word suggestions and the user simply selects the word required using the stylus. It's simple and it even includes a spell checker!" Commented **John Sant, Director at Footprint Solutions.**

The iForm Pro™ solution is being developed to automatically generate service sheets for clients who want to process periodic service appointments more efficiently. For Technology Supplies, this means that the solution will soon be able to highlight when equipment needs to be serviced and automatically generate the job sheet before emailing this as a diarised appointment directly to the field based engineer.

"The great thing about working with the team at Footprint Solutions is that they are 100% service focused. When we request new business forms they are turned around in a couple of working days. It's also massively refreshing to work with a service partner that invests in new technology and more importantly drives their existing clients to migrate to more efficient and cost-effective solutions such as iForm Pro™ commented **Stuart Hickman, Technical & Engineering Manager at Technology Supplies.**

SUMMARY

iForm Pro™ was an attractive replacement technology for the Digital Pen and Paper solution from day 1. The true cost of running Anoto digital pen pattern is only really understood when you take on an Anoto™ solution and it equated to 8p per job sheet printed.

The annual cost of running iForm Pro™ is now less than we used to spend on the print and distribution costs of Anoto™ approved, printed service sheets. The solution is entirely cost-neutral to maintain.

The migration of the Technology Solutions forms from Digital Pen to iForm Pro™ was completed in a matter of days and the design team minimised any changes avoiding the need for any extensive form retraining.

Pre-population of service sheets with customer site and machine information enabled the engineers to provide more detailed service reports without having to spend any more time completing the form on-site. This has in turn allowed us to send more detailed remedial quotation information to our clients within quicker time frames. In summary we have improved our service levels dramatically as a direct result of using iForm Pro™.

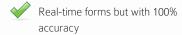Engineers are now able to complete machine inspection notes using free-hand written notes. The stylus provided to the engineers means that form completion on the tablet is as natural as using pen and paper.
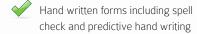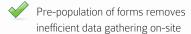
The real-time benefits of the Digital Pen solution are still available on the tablet but we have been able to reallocate two full time employees who previously had to re-key and validate pen captured data. iForm Pro™ delivers 100% accurate information every time.
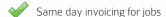
The cost of running iForm Pro™ is cheaper than the cost of printing our service sheets using the Anoto Digital Pen technology.
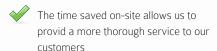
THE BENEFITS

- Real-time forms but with 100% accuracy
- Hand written forms including spell check and predictive hand writing
- Pre-population of forms removes inefficient data gathering on-site
- Same day invoicing for jobs
- The time saved on-site allows us to provid a more thorough service to our customers
- No more paper scanning / data entry
- Removed all service sheet print costs
- Cheaper to run than a paper-based system
- Fast and affordable set-up costs

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> **Stuart Hickman, Technical & Engineering Manager at Technology Supplies.**

For your free trial of iFormPro call us today on:

01565 873 918

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