

# Mobile working revolutionising Environmental and Planning Departments



Bolton Council selected MX, NDL's Mobile Application Platform, to supplement its corporate mobile working programme. It has successfully mobilised a number of services within its Environment and Planning departments, which has already resulted in an **estimated yearly saving of £60,000**. It has now used MX to create a mobile app for its new extended recycling scheme, supporting the delivery and removal of bins. As a result, it is **saving approximately £10,000 per year**.

## The Challenge

Bolton Council had already successfully embarked on a mobile working programme. It had identified Environment and Planning as the best place to start as this has a significant number of disparate systems and the largest number of field workers.

Bolton's Environmental Services Performance and Improvement Team within its ICT Unit went through a stringent selection process for a generic, device-agnostic corporate mobile platform which would integrate easily with back-office systems and cope with intermittent internet connections. In particular, it wanted to be able to tailor the solution to its current business processes rather than the other way around, and it needed to meet ambitious expectations for return on investment.

As a result, it selected MX, NDL's Mobile Application Platform from NDL's Digital Transformation Suite. MX is a corporate server platform which allows users to design, deploy and manage multiple bespoke and secure mobile applications across different types of devices. Using these applications, mobile workers can operate on- or off-line, taking information from back-office systems with them and updating it from the field.

Bolton embarked on a successful programme of mobile implementations, including highway safety inspections, which is

## Key Benefits

- Eliminated manual re-keying
- Improved customer response time
- Optimised routing
- Better stock control



MX is a great tool for mobilising systems as a single platform across lots of different devices. It enables economical and rapid development of mobile applications, and it's now a game changer since we've moved to iPhones. Not only does it support our efficiency programme: it also helps to improve the way we deliver our services to customers.



Chris Lloyd  
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saving more than £50,000 a year; environmental quality surveying, which is saving £10,000 a year; and flood risk management monitoring, which is a new legislative requirement.

It is also in the process of implementing public rights of way mobile inspections, while a recycling participation monitoring project using MX assisted in a successful bid for a Defra grant of £100,000 to support recycling marketing.

It then identified its extended recycling scheme as the next area which would benefit from mobile working. With 124,000 properties in the area, this was going to comprise a total of 400,000 bins on new managed weekly collections. If this was controlled by paper and all the updating of back-office systems was carried out manually, it would result in a huge administrative overhead. An alternative approach was needed: Bolton therefore decided to create a new mobile app to support the delivery and removal of bins.

## The Solution

The new recycling scheme comprises five different containers for different waste streams. Residents can also order liners or ask for bins to be removed; in addition, crews deliver leaflets and calendars.

Previously each case for a delivery or removal of a bin would be raised in the Lagan CRM and logged into the Oracle scheduling system to identify the best time; this would then be printed out and handed to the relevant crew. Now, this has been replicated on iPhone 5s with ruggedized cases. This took **only 10 days to develop, test and document** and works as follows:

- The data for the day is downloaded on to the iPhones; the delivery driver can then choose the best route based on either time since request or route capacity
- The app gives all the information needed for each delivery. It also provides the facility to call the customer if there is a problem getting access, or

to ring the office. Updates on deliveries can be recorded which are sent back to Oracle and then on to Lagan

- The app also shows stock levels needed for each round, ensuring more efficient loading of wagons. This used to be carried out on paper and was very difficult to administer
- Drivers have the choice of syncing with the back office to update jobs and receive new delivery details after each delivery or after 10 deliveries

## The Benefits

In the first month after the new service went live, **1,900 new recycling containers were delivered**. These deliveries no longer entail printed paper and/or any manual input into Oracle or Lagan, while customer requests, which used to have a response time of a week, can now receive an almost immediate response. **Average customer waiting time has been reduced from over two weeks to five days, and the delivery rates of drivers has nearly doubled** because their time can be spent delivering rather than planning routes.

It has been estimated that using mobile working to support the new recycling system has **saved £10,000 per year**.

## What's Next?

Bolton is now enhancing its current mobile implementations, in particular by moving some of them over to iPhones or iPads. It is also developing a mobile pest control service which will integrate with Lagan CRM, and an asset management and inspection system for memorial headstones.

For more information about NDL's Digital Transformation Suite;

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