



Assisting the Police with their enquiries

Introduction

Kiosk Europe discovers how Cammax has worked with the London Metropolitan Police Service to develop a leading edge multilingual kiosk-based platform that has made life easier for both Police and visitors to police stations...

Cammax are one of the industry's longest standing kiosk suppliers, having been set up in 1999, since when – as Julian Rooney, the company's Managing Director told Kiosk Europe the solutions his business has supplied have evolved immeasurably.

"The kiosk information systems we developed some ten years ago are really no longer applicable [to the UK] today, as almost everyone has the Internet at home or at work - and of course, a growing number of people have a smartphone in their pocket. As a result people have come to expect more from a kiosk system they encounter," he says.

Cammax's client list is impressive, with self-service kiosks having been supplied to many of the world's largest organisations.

Today, the firm's clients include the NHS, Procter & Gamble, Manchester City Council, various Police Constabularies, The Birmingham Bullring and Orange Retail to name but a few.

At the Kiosk London show in October, Julian gave an interesting presentation on how kiosk technology has been deployed at a number of police stations across London in a bid to assist foreign language speakers – many of whom are visiting a UK police station for the first time.

To assist these station visitors – and the staff who deal with visitors on a front-of-office basis - as well as those police officers that process people in the custody suite - many of who are under caution and/or have been arrested - Cammax, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Service, has developed a multi-lingual communications kiosk platform.

Initial contact

According to Julian, the kiosk system is really designed as an initial contact solution for the police, and the idea behind the project started in the lengthy run-up, he says, to the London Olympics of 2012, when it became clear there would be many different nationalities visiting London.

"We were told that London is going to get around 4.3m visitors for the Olympics, and the Metropolitan Police needed a multilingual interaction system to deal with visitors for whom English was not their primary language," he says, adding that the police

soon realised that a kiosk-based solution was very necessary.

The issue with human translations, says Julian, is that although an actual interpreting session may only take 15 to 20 minutes to complete on an interview basis, the charging clock is effective running as soon as the interpreter leaves their house.

This means, he explained, that the actual cost of an interpreter could easily be four hours for even something that is quite simple.

"The kiosk system we developed is a two-screen systems that uses 256-bit SSL encryption for the transmission of data. The first screen is normally manned by the police officer and the second is for the interviewee," he says.

In total, Julian says that there are over 300 languages spoken in London, with Cammax's kiosk system being designed to support the top 20 languages in detail (covering approximately 90% of language requirements), and 100 languages in total.

Not everyone is under arrest

The reality, he adds, is that most people go to the police station because they have lost something or have had something stolen - perhaps a mobile phone, etc. And contrary to popular belief, they are not all under arrest. The use of a multi-lingual kiosk, he says, makes life a lot easier and less stressful for all concerned – including the visitor – and this is its great strength.

All the screen's words, he adds, are also available in a spoken word format, just in case the interviewee cannot read – whilst this may seem surprising in the 2013, he notes, there are many parts of the world where people have not always had the luxury of a complete education.

It is this flexibility with the kiosk, he says, that makes it so useful for all concerned.

In use, the police officer drives the conversation forward, using a system that is menu-based and which is based on a simple tree and branch format.

Julian told his audience at the show that the multilingual kiosk system is also very useful for the deaf and hard of hearing, as the MPS have informed his team that the deaf or hard of hearing do not like visiting a police station, owing to the stress it can create. Via a unique interface, members of the Deaf Community select their preferred method of communication: lip-reading, written notes or an extensive set of Sign Language video questions and responses.

"This is because there often has to be sign language and written notes involved, and this creates stress on both sides. The kiosk multilingual system avoids such problems," he says.

Once the conversation has finished, the log is then stored.

In the Metropolitan Police deployment, there are two types of kiosk: front of station and back of station, in the custody suite. If an arrest is made, the log files are encrypted and stored as appropriate.

According to the Cammax Managing Director, from a technical point of view, the kiosk system is a dual screen platform that is controlled using a single KVM switch supported by 256-bit AES encryption and USB-based hardware.

It allows the MPS to engage with its incredibly diverse communities and allows these communities to access Police Services.

Against this backdrop, he says that he expects that his firm's 100 kiosks deployed so far will have helped contribute towards the reduction in interpreting costs.

Are the kiosks strictly necessary?

"Most certainly yes. Under the Police & Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) – which dates to 1984 in its original form - the arresting officer must explain – in their own language – what they are arresting someone for. Under the Human Rights Act, they must understand why they are being arrested. The kiosk system is a very effective way of doing this," he concludes.

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