



# Portsmouth City Council selects Casio's DT-X30 to enable Parking Enforcement

Hand-held Casio device loaded with Xerox's Parking software keeps Europe's second most densely populated city in free flow.



## Background

As the UK's only island city with limited road access routes, enabling constant free flow of traffic remains essential to the 200,000 residents who live in the thriving naval city of Portsmouth and surrounding towns. The populace swells even further in the summer months as around 8 million visitors flock to the seaside attractions in Southsea and Old Portsmouth. With a population density higher than that of London and large swathes of terraced modern and Victorian houses with limited off road parking, Portsmouth City Council's team of 36 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) patrol the busy streets to ensure that parking restrictions are enforced to keep the streets free flowing. No mean task when you consider that the CEOs patrol and monitor 26 city car parks; a new park and ride scheme; 35 resident parking schemes and metered parking zones.

The Council recognises in such a populous area, the acute pressures on parking and has for many years endeavoured to deliver a strategy of education and sensibly enforcing road safety to the benefit of its most vulnerable residents whilst ensuring parking schemes are operated fairly to encourage

responsible payment provision. To support any violations under the Traffic Management Act, Officers need to fully comply with reporting procedures and capture irrefutable evidence.

Michael Robinson is the Parking Operations Manager at Portsmouth City Council, responsible for the management of the Enforcement Officers, equipping them with optimal technology to facilitate this demanding frontline job. He explains "Our objectives are transparent and twofold. We want to decrease congestion and improve productivity across parking operations to ultimately benefit the city's residents. The CEOs are at the forefront of traffic management and were previously equipped with hand-held devices that included an integrated camera, but were seriously hampered with reliability issues. Frequently they either wouldn't work at all or worse, they would break down mid shift."

Portsmouth City Council contacted their incumbent parking enforcement providers, Xerox, (formerly Spur Information Solutions), to provide practical advice on the best hardware platform to run their contravention issuance application, Si-Log, together with their back office processing system, Si-Dem, to assist delivery of 40,000 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) annually. Given the poor state of the legacy devices the brief from the outset was very clear; combine a hand-held device that would provide maximum robust reliability no matter how severe the usage or conditions, with the ability to communicate and transmit information in real time using wireless GPRS. Under guidance from Xerox, two evaluation models were issued to four CEOs and after four months of trials, resultant usage feedback unanimously swung the purchasing decision to the Casio DT-X30, beating the other competitive models in all key purchasing aspects. **Trial feedback noted the good GPRS functionality; wireless download technology, robust ergonomics; an integrated camera; and was detailed as being easy to use.** As a result, the order for forty units was placed and rollout began.

## The Solution

At their Guildhall Parking Operations base, equipped with the Casio DT-X30, officers were quickly trained on how to effectively use the unit, transferring their skills onto the

roads of Portsmouth within just a few hours. Two years down the line, the traffic violation issuance process is totally seamless between the CEO, their hand-held and the supporting software with fully optimised flow of events:- After establishing that a contravention has occurred, the CEO classifies the contravention from the drop down menu within the Si-Log software; inserts additional notes if needed using the DT-X30 backlit keyboard; takes up to five image captures from different angles for watertight evidence using the flash 'always on' 2 megapixel camera; prints the Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) through the unit's Bluetooth capability that transmits to their belt printer, and lastly affix the PCN to the vehicle. The CEO then presses 'submit' to transmit all the evidence immediately back to Parking Operations and into Si-Dem for processing and upload online within minutes so that the vehicle's owner can, if required, see the detail of the contravention on their return to the vehicle.

Later this year, further gains in CEO productivity will be achieved at the first stage of the PCN issue process, as Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is delivered within the Si-Log software. Currently, with 35 resident parking zones in place, Portsmouth CEOs firstly check resident-only parking zone records to establish if a contravention has occurred using Si-Dem back office functionality to identify which cars hold valid permits and in which areas. The CEOs refer to this process as checking the white list, with the onscreen permit being checked manually, but within the next 6 months, virtual permits will be issued online using ANPR to immediately establish if a vehicle belongs on the appropriate resident zone white list. In addition, the cashless parking solution, RingGo that facilitates permit and cashless parking via mobiles, on account or via an App service, can also be cross checked directly through the Casio DT-X30 without the need to review RingGo account detail separately through mobile phones.

## Results

The desired usability and ongoing reliability continues to be delivered through the Casio DT-X30. CEOs continue to report ease of use and comfort of use as a result of the ergonomic design fitting comfortably into their hands, safe in the knowledge that it remains rugged beyond compare, with even 1.8 metre drops directly onto concrete proven as no issue.

The high levels of reliability extend to extreme weather conditions and long battery life across each shift. Being on the coast means CEOs can be subjected to the extremes of the British weather. But the unit powers on through, rain or shine, with an easy to view, IP67 waterproof rated, large 3.5 inch transfective colour touch LCD screen remaining visible even in Southsea's glaring sunlight. With no ability to recharge between shifts, battery longevity remains essential and reassuringly, it continues to span across 9 hours and beyond. Even if battery life became exhausted, information is held within the units' memory and can be recovered

immediately on power up. Gone, are the frustrating days of memory loss and associated data loss on shift. **Overall, the unit has proven so reliable that the four spares ordered initially for redundancy have never been activated.**

Savings in processing also occur back at Parking Operations base where many layers of extra administration have been removed using Si-Dem's notice processing software to automate the backend administration process including creation of follow up reminder notices. Also gone are the days of manually uploading images and matching them to the offending vehicle. Michael comments. ***"Having a working integrated camera that delivers enough clarity of image to succeed in verifying an offence immediately is a bonus. In the back office, this saves us at least 3 hours a day uploading and matching images via time and date stamps to each PCN. Now, it's part of the upload, instantaneous and indisputable."***

Since adoption of the DT-X30, year on year, there has been a marginal increase in the number of PCNs issued together with a slight decrease in the time to settle offences, linked to the fact that all the CEO notes, sketches and high definition photos are available real-time and acting as evidence in compliance of the Traffic Management Act.

Michael summarises his purchases and advocates their ongoing use ***"The Casio DT-X30 combined with Si-Log has far exceeded our expectations and effectiveness both in terms of robustness, ease of use and the ability to transmit evidence. We haven't had a single usage complaint from the CEOs and neither have we had a single breakdown in two years. We now have an end-to-end seamless process and they are a valued and essential item in the battle to keep the streets of this city free flowing."***

## Key points

- Real-time communication
- All weather visibility
- Ultra-rugged performance – IP67 and 1.8 metre drop tested
- Easy and comfortable operation for long shifts
- Long battery life
- Large 3.5 inch colour touch screen
- Integrated camera

