A FAMILY AFFAIR

Established in 1976, Harlow Group Storage (HGS) is a family owned and run business that provides outsourced warehousing facilities to a variety of customers operating in industries as diverse as product packaging and machine tool components.

Located close to where Hertfordshire borders Essex and within easy reach of the motorway network and Stansted, Heathrow and Luton airports, the company's 40,000 sq ft facility offers high quality storage space for 6400 pallets.

The multi-user warehouse is temperature controlled and sensors and fans strategically placed throughout the racking ensure that the store remains at between 10 and 30 degrees at all times.

The site operates between 6am and 10pm, seven days a week and typically processes in the region of 250 orders a day. This equates to some 3000 pallet movements in and out of the warehouse every week.

Pallet loads arrive from HGS's clients' global suppliers and are stored before onward delivery to the clients' manufacturing sites around the UK. Most of the orders picked are full pallet loads but, in line with trends across the industry, HGS have noticed a growing requirement for break-bulk and low level order picking at the facility.

To ensure that loads are put away and picked as time and cost efficiently as possible, HGS uses a fleet of electric-powered Flexi G4 articulated trucks from Narrow Aisle.

HGS managing director Tony Sando has always been an advocate of the articulated truck concept and, this year, when the expansion of one of HGS's blue chip contracts meant the company needed to increase the size of its fleet, he ordered four new Flexi G4s.

"We have been using Flexis for many years and have been impressed by their build quality, versatility and reliability," explained Tony Sando. "We had operated both reach and counterbalanced trucks to pick and put away but the Flexi performs both jobs in a single unit."

Until the articulated truck was introduced, companies like HGS had little alternative but to operate a two truck system with a counterbalanced machine working outside and feeding a reach truck inside the store or warehouse. With the arrival of articulated machines users realised that they could eliminate this often costly and generally inefficient arrangement. The Flexi loads and unload lorries and delivers pallets directly to the racking in a single operation. By doing so, it increases efficiency and productivity while abolishing double handling and the costs associated with running a bigger truck fleet than is necessary.

Incoming orders start to arrive at HGS from around 8am onwards. Full pallet loads are taken from the lorries to a covered marshalling area where they are checked against the accompanying paperwork and entered into HGS's SAP –based warehouse management system. The system automatically allocates a pallet position within the racking and a barcode label is printed, fixed to the pallet and scanned. Another barcode label on the racking is scanned by the truck operator and if this corresponds with the label on the pallet the operator is sure that he is at the right location.

A VNA racking system designed and installed by Redirack ensures that HGS make good use of all available storage space. With 11 aisles and 23 racking runs, the system offers seven pallet levels, although in one aisle it has been designed to accommodate half height pallets. The Flexis that serve the racking are capable of lifting full loads to heights of nearly eight metres.

The aisles are 1.8 metres wide and the Flexis enter each aisle with the palletised load to the front (like a traditional counterbalanced machine) before turning the pallet through 90 degrees to put it away.

Because of its design, the Flexi is perfectly suited to working in narrower aisles alongside order picking staff and this means that when required, low level order picking can be undertaken at the site without creating the kind of health safety and productivity issues sometimes associated with other warehouse products such as guided VNA machines and man-up Combis .

According to Tony Sando, HGS's drivers really enjoy working with the Flexis.
"Some articulated truck cabs look spacious from the outside but, when you sit inside them in the operator's position, the front overhead guard posts seem very close. The G4's roomy operator's cabin ensures greater comfort throughout even toughest shifts and the truck's automotive style accelerator and brake pedal layout ensures even more leg space for the operator and improved safety," he says.

Tony Sando believes that the attention given to the comfort of the operator during the development of the G4 has played a significant role in helping HGS to achieve virtually zero stock and pallet racking damage throughout store. "The forklift operators find the Flexis a joy to work with. – both inside the warehouse and outside in the yard area. In fact I'm sure some of our truck operators think it's easier to stack pallets with a Flexi than it is to park a car!" he adds.

HGS is very much a family concern. Tony's father, Dennis, who sadly died earlier this year, started the business and Tony's two sons, Ryan and James, are operations and project & compliance manager respectively. According to Ryan, the company's clients welcome the personal attention they receive. "Our client base ranges from blue chip household names who store 6000 pallets a year with us to smaller businesses who may only keep three pallet loads with us," he says. "But they are all important to us and we strive to offer the same high level of service to all of them. We need a reliable and efficient forklift fleet and the Flexis more than meet our requirements."
www.flexi.co.uk

Editor's Notes: About Narrow Aisle Flexi
For over 30 years, Narrow Aisle Ltd has been one of the world's foremost manufacturers of very narrow aisle (VNA) equipment. Narrow Aisle manufactures and markets the award-winning Flexi range of articulated forklift trucks together with a series of VNA products which includes man-down and man-up trucks, order pickers and specialist heavy duty reach trucks.
Trucks, designed and manufactured at the company's UK manufacturing plant are distributed world-wide through a fully supported distributor network, while Narrow Aisle Ltd also has outsourced manufacturing with a partner company in the Far East for the Asian and American markets.

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LOAD NOTICES

SEMA publications and codes of practice refer to load notices for different types of storage equipment. It is important that correct loadings are maintained. This means that maximum limits should not be exceeded and that the distribution of the load is in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.

These notices comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 which in turn implement European Council Directive 92/58/EEC on minimum requirements for the provision of safety signs at work.

The Directive standardises safety signs throughout member states of the European Union so that the same message is conveyed to workers moving from site to site. Colour coding for safety signs is as follows:

Red Circle – Prohibition Sign
Prohibits behaviour likely to increase or cause danger

Yellow Triangle – Warning Sign
A sign giving warning of a hazard or danger

Blue Circle – Mandatory Sign
A sign prescribing specific behaviour

Green Rectangle – Emergency Escape or First Aid Sign
A sign giving information on emergency exits

The regulations require employers to ensure that safety signs are provided where risks to health and safety have not been avoided by other means, eg engineering controls or safe systems of work. However, safety signs are not a substitute for other controls.
SEMA believes that load notices should be sufficiently informative yet concise in appearance so that workers are able to observe and heed their message during normal working operations. Load notices should contain adequate information, free of intricate detail such that maximum space is devoted to the main message which can be comprehended at a glance.

For example, a fork lift truck driver working in a warehouse of multiple bays of racking will not generally stop to read 'fine print' on a load notice. The driver does, however, need to be aware of loadings and key potential hazards. In the case of racking this will also include certain beam spacings.

SEMA has worked closely with the Health and Safety Executive on the information to be contained on the load notice both to meet the requirements of the regulations and to apply a 'common sense' approach to practical working situations.

In accordance with the regulations SEMA also recommends the use of appropriate site briefings and training so that employees are fully informed of their duties and are aware of and understand the meaning of safety signs before work is commenced. This is important because the HSE reports "research indicated that not all safety signs are understood". Sometimes they contain too little information, sometimes they can contain too much! It is SEMA's belief that load notices in the storage industry across Europe can fall into both groups and it is with these points in mind that SEMA chooses its approaches which is intended to be simple but effective.

sema

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proteus puzzle win a bottle of champagne!

Sudoku for Fun

Fill in the blank squares with the numbers 1-9 so that every row, each column, and every 3x3 box contains all the numbers from 1-9 without duplicating any.

Once you have found all the numbers cut out the grid and send it along with your name and address details to:

Linda Rodway, Proteus Software Ltd,1730 Solihull Parkway, Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham B37 7YD
www.proteussoftware.com

SCHMITZ CARGOBULL

Will improvements in disc brake design impact on the haulage sector? Derek Skinner, technical director of Schmitz Cargobull (UK) Ltd, thinks so

If you're specifying a new trailer – either a reefer or a curtainsider – you need to give careful consideration to the performance of the braking system.

Apart from the obvious safety implications, the efficiency of the brakes will have a dramatic impact on maintenance costs throughout a trailer's working life.

Traditionally, of the two most popular brake systems – disc or drum-based – drum brakes have been the most widely used within the trailer market.

Some operators' apparent preference for drum brakes is, perhaps, a legacy from the days of the earliest disc systems which, for various reasons, had a reputation for malfunctioning. However, huge leaps in design coupled with massive improvements in manufacturing techniques, mean that demand for disc brakes is now growing significantly as the economic and performance-related arguments in their favour become more widely understood.

According to Derek Skinner, technical director of Schmitz Cargobull (UK) Ltd, there is a myth among trailer users that maintaining disc brakes is as costly – if not more so – than looking after drum brakes.

"Based on past problems with disc brakes, trailer maintenance firms have, to some degree, helped to perpetuate this misconception by continuing to make extra provision in their contracts for anticipated problems with disc systems," he says.

Skinner continues: "However, the truth is, that when it comes to the whole life cost of running a trailer, it can be clearly demonstrated that disc brakes are, in fact, notably cheaper to maintain than drum brakes."

Of course, both disc and drum brakes require routine maintenance if they are to perform at their peak. But, Skinner argues, because they have more moving parts, drum brakes require more regular maintenance than the disc-based alternative.

"It is worth noting," he says, "that carrying out even the most straightforward and routine checks can be considerably more time consuming if drum brakes are fitted. For example, when the pads in a disc brake wear down and their replacement becomes necessary, it is a relatively straightforward matter of removing the wheel, taking the old pads out and fitting the new ones in their place. However, changing the linings on a drum brake also requires the drum itself to be removed and, as a result, the user can expect to incur higher labour costs."

When it comes to on the road performance, Skinner claims that disc brakes also score highly.

"The disc system's design, is far better suited to getting the maximum out of the latest generation EBS and anti-locking braking systems," he says. "EBS systems require shorter brake response times to ensure that functions such as roll stability operate at their peak. When the brake is 'pulsed' to help prevent roll-over if a truck and trailer combination enters a bend too quickly, a fast and precise response is needed. A drum brake's mechanical clearance makes it ill-equipped to respond at the optimum time to a modern EBS system's signals." Derek Skinner says that a disc brake's speed of response is further enhanced by the lightness of its component parts and cannot be matched by drum models with, what he describes as "the inherent inertia of their relatively heavy parts."

Skinner points out that high performance sports car manufacturers were the first to realise that disc brakes outperform drum brakes. "Now the rest of the road transport industry has embraced them – from family car makers to motorbike manufacturers," he adds.

"Although drum brakes have been around seemingly forever and are, undoubtedly, popular products that work well for a lot of haulage operators, the use of disc brakes is gathering momentum all the time in this sector and, in my opinion, it will not be long before disc brakes become established as the norm for the trailers as they have for trucks," Derek Skinner concludes.

POSSIBLE BOX ITEM WITHIN FEATURE
Schmitz Cargobull provide both drum and disc brake options for use with their extensive range of standard and bespoke curtainsider and refrigerated trailers. The company also manufactures its own disc axle at its factory in Altenberge, Germany. The axle features components supplied by some of the leading names in the industry, including Brembo, who supply the discs, FAG , Knorr Bremse, Welweler and AL-KO.

The clever design of the axle incorporates a unique disc configuration that allows extra cooling and less heat transfer to the bearing. Overheated bearings are one of the single biggest causes of hub failure and so to prevent premature failure Schmitz Cargobull has designed its axle to allow greater ventilation and the longest path for the heat to travel from disc before it reaches the bearing.

Another notable design feature of the Schmitz Cargobull disc axle is the ability to change a disc without opening or exposing the sealed bearing. This means that the bearing is less vulnerable to ingress from dust or other debris.
www.cargobull.com

Editors' notes: About Schmitz Cargobull
Schmitz Cargobull (UK) Ltd is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the German-owned Schmitz Group, the biggest manufacturer and supplier of semi-trailers in Europe. The Group produced some 50,000 units during the 2006/7 business year at manufacturing plants in Germany, Spain, Lithuania and Great Britain. This figure is forecast to rise to 100,000 units by 2010. The UK factory is situated at Harelaw, County Durham and employs over 230 personnel involved in the design, manufacture and sales of refrigerated, dry freight and curtain-sided semi-trailers specifically for the UK and Eire markets.

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WAREHOUSE INDUSTRY NEWS

Sponsored by Proteus Software Ltd

TO SKI OR NOT TO SKI, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Until last week, I had only ever put on skis twice before in my life. The first of those was 20 years ago, when I visited the dry ski slope in Gloucester, although must admit that I can't recall actually using the skis to any noticeable effect. About three years ago I went to the Snow Dome at Tamworth, where the snow, whilst manufactured, was at least real. I was part of a group of about 15 who had a lesson for an hour, most of which was spent watching other people fall over, and probably resulted in me skiing a total distance of about 50 metres in that whole session. So when the work social club organiser suggested a weekend in Andorra in January, I was not convinced that I had the necessary experience to participate. However, in the interests of team spirit (or for the potential amusement of my more experienced colleagues), I decided to join in. Fortunately, I was not the only one in that position, so we split neatly into two groups, those who knew they did not know what they were doing, and those who thought they did.

The beginners were taken to nursery slopes on the first day. Having donned the skis, we started on a slope that seemed quite steep. A few runs down there, some instruction on "snow plough" stopping, and the instructor thought we were ready to move on to the next slope. Things went pretty well having mastered the button lift, and snow plough turns. A whole day without falling over! We were now prepared for the second day. "Ready to move onto the third stage?" asked Graham our instructor, although it was not really a question. Unfortunately the ski lift on that slope was broken. "You have all been doing well so perhaps we will try part of a blue run instead," Graham continued. "Just remember to control your speed with turns," he added. I was going well until half way down, when a steep edge appeared on my left had side. My speed had accelerated, and at that point I lost confidence. I am sure you can guess the consequence, which is shown on the attached picture (the red blob in the snow is me). Anyway I got back up, and carried on as if I had just been having a quick nap. The lesson had ended and Graham disappeared, so I decided to practice turns again on the nursery slope, by myself, before venturing onto the blue run again. One of my colleagues, who shall be nameless, having successfully negotiated that short section of the blue run, decided on the next circuit he would try something different. This was not an entirely wise decision on his part, as the consequence was bruises to both his body and ego. The advice of the instructor had been that you keep you speed down by turning. But inexperienced skiers like my colleague find that their skill is not sufficient to turn enough, with the inevitable result that their speed gradually increases to a point where they are going too fast to turn at all. The only solution then is to go for it and hope – the trouble is that hope alone does not keep you on your feet.

It is the same with implementing a warehouse solution – hope alone will not ensure success. Just like Graham, our ski instructor on the slopes, we have a planned and structured approach to system implementation that, if followed, will ensure success. An analogy to starting on the nursery slopes is worth pursuing. The nursery slopes of system implementations involve the same steps, training, and gaining an understanding of the basics. We gain experience of 'turning' in a controlled 'test' environment before we venture onto the more advanced slopes of live operation.

The PROTEUS Application Consultant is your ski instructor as you implement the system. We have a five step process to effective systems operations:

Business study
The PROTEUS business consultant works with the client to identify exactly how the system will operate within their warehouse environment.

Training and set up
Within this phase the application consultant and the client work together to set up the system as defined in the business study, and the application consultant also provides formal training in the use of the system.

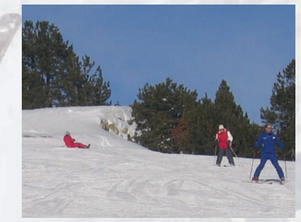
System proving
During the system proving period, sample transactions will be processed through the system to ensure that all results are as expected.

Live operation
The application consultant will be on hand to guide you during the first days of live operation.

Review
After a period of live running has elapsed, the application consultant will carry out a review of the system usage with the client, and recommend any changes that could be made to improve the effectiveness of the system within the client's warehouse operation.

This proven process will ensure that the implementation of the system is successful. If, like my colleague, you try to 'run before you can walk' the metaphorical result may well be the same. You will finish in a heap on the floor. A carefully structured approach means progress is made step by step, and we only move to the steeper slopes once the more gradual ones have been mastered. Time and effort spent on the 'nursery slopes' in terms of training, familiarisation and system proving will play dividends when you come to the 'red and black runs' of live operation in peak periods.

Howard Turvey MD
www.proteussoftware.com



Proteus®

PSION TEKLOGIX

RFID should be on the radar screen of any business with automatic data collection and identification applications due to its advanced capabilities and potential business benefits, says Duncan Smillie, managing director of Psion Teklogix (UK) Ltd

Although the 'techies' have long pronounced RFID as the next big thing, its take up has been slower than many pundits originally forecast. Growth has been stifled for a number of reasons – not the least of which was the fact that the technology was expensive to implement which caused the major retailers to baulk at the idea of putting tags on every pallet, let alone every individual product. But as the true cost of implementation begins to tumble, it now appears that RFID tags are set to become ubiquitous.

Interestingly, there has been a lot of discussion recently about who is leading the charge to RFID. Historically, those retailers that have embraced the technology – Wal-Mart, House of Fraser and Marks and Spencer are perhaps the most widely publicized long term advocates – have pushed their suppliers to adopt tagging. In many cases though, the suppliers were reluctant to make the necessary investment and preferred instead to sit on the sidelines complaining that RFID brought no benefits to their business model.

This, it would appear, is changing and in many cases it is now the suppliers who – having woken up to the fact that putting RFID tags on pallets and cases can bring dramatic improvements to the on-the-shelf availability of fast moving consumer goods – are pushing their retailer clients to speed up the roll-out of RFID within their supply chain.

But it is not only the major retailers and their suppliers that are focusing on the potential efficiency gains of RFID. There are many examples of industries that can benefit, or have benefited, from the use of the technology and its ability to transform data access and collection processes.
Many of today's fastest-growing RFID application segments are baggage handling, rental item tracking, manufacturing and field services. Airlines feel they can significantly reduce incidence of lost baggage via RFID – thereby notably reducing the associated costs. Many mechanical items that need constant maintenance and/or monitoring, such as fire suppression systems, are also prime candidates for RFID given the increased data log accuracy afforded by the technology. RFID is also a burgeoning technology for wildlife and livestock tracking with more than 50 million pets and 20 million livestock already tagged with RFID chips worldwide.

So what will become of barcodes? Most people accept that, for the immediate future, barcodes will remain the primary means of automatic data capture because they are a well established and inexpensive technology. It will be several years - perhaps decades - before barcodes are eliminated from the supply chain, if, indeed, they ever fully disappear.

But, while many companies have their logistical operations working extremely well with barcodes, the unique capabilities of RFID over traditional bar coding make it an intriguing option to complement data collection and product identification in the supply chain and almost all major Warehouse Management System providers now support RFID applications in their software.

It seems inevitable that RFID will eventually bring about a paradigm shift in global industries in which automatic data collection is a key component. This is because the efficiency gains will drive huge savings – the early adopters will utilise RFID to gain competitive advantage, and the remainder of the market will begin to adopt to remain competitive. Of course, greater adoption will lead to lower costs, eliminating what has traditionally been a primary barrier to entry.

Outside of the supply chain, many customers are looking to deploy automatic data collection infrastructures for the first time and in many of these cases, RFID represents a compelling technology that can be – and has been - implemented with immediate benefits and a quick return on investment. Therefore, RFID could conceivably grow more quickly over the next few years in closed loop applications such as healthcare, manufacturing, field data capture, maintenance logging, etc.

The reality is that RFID should be on the radar screen of any business with automatic data collection and identification applications due to its advanced capabilities and potential business benefits. Influential companies are adopting RFID – and insist that those with whom they do business follow suit. The transition to RFID will not occur immediately, market indications suggest that the shift is beginning to gather pace and no forward focused organization can afford to get left behind.

Psion Teklogix is a leader in the automatic data collection market with over 30,000 wireless system deployments over the last 25 years. Whether you are looking to deploy RFID into your supply chain, or into a mobile computing application with automatic data capture requirements, Psion Teklogix can help. We offer the professional services, the technology and the experience required to help you successfully deploy RFID for your business.

BENEFITS OF RFID OVER TRADITIONAL DATA CAPTURE METHODS

No direct line-of-sight required
RFID uses radio waves to exchange data, which eliminates the need for line of-sight between the reader and the tag. Therefore, unattended reading stations can be set up to identify objects – for example, on a conveyor belt or within a transport container. RFID tags can be read through cardboard, plastic or paint allowing tags to be embedded into pallets or cases, giving much greater flexibility in their placement.

Multiple simultaneous reads
RFID allows multiple tags to be read simultaneously while still uniquely identifying the various objects being tracked. Bar codes must be read one at a time. Therefore, RFID can be advantageous in high-speed reading, sorting and material handling applications.

Read range
Active tags can be read from over 100 feet (30 metres) away whereas long range scanners have a maximum of approximately 40 feet (12 metres)

Data capacities and read/write capabilities
RFID tags data capacity can exceed 256kb and some tags have read/write capability – information on the tag can be customised or updated. In a field data capture application, such as equipment maintenance, the capability to write to an RFID tag could be highly advantageous for accurate record keeping. Barcodes do not have the same level of data capacity, and data cannot be added to printed barcodes.

Ability to withstand harsh conditions
Damaged barcodes in harsh environments or scanners that do not have clear optics provide a challenge for efficient data capture. RFID systems are not subject to these same limitations, and can therefore perform strongly in harsh applications such as outdoor utility meter reading

Lifespan
RFID tags can be reusable and can be packaged to be extremely durable. This helps amortize initial system costs and provides strong total cost of ownership (TCO) advantages compared with identification methods that must continually be replaced.

Advanced monitoring
In conjunction with monitoring equipment, RFID tags are capable of recording time, temperature or other variables of an object as it travels through the supply chain. This can be an important factor with sensitive cargo such as food or livestock.

www.psionteklogix.co.uk

About Psion Teklogix
Psion Teklogix is a global provider of solutions for mobile computing and wireless data collection. The company's fully integrated mobile computing solutions include rugged hardware, secure wireless networks, robust software, professional services and exceptional support programs. With over three decades of industry experience, Psion Teklogix has customers in more than 80 countries around the world, and over 36 sales and support offices in 17 countries.

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GPRS what is it good for?

In this day and age we all carry a mobile phone, and some of us carry more than one, but when we get into the shop we are hit by a barrage of information about mega pixel cameras, quad-band GSM and GPRS. But although we understand most of the terms do we truly know what GPRS is, and more importantly what does it do?

GPRS stands for General Packet Radio Service, and is a system for transmitting packets of data, so it is an ideal medium for sending information within an industrial environment.

There are many advantages to using GPRS one of which is being the always on principle. With normal telephony communication once a connection is made costs are incurred, while with GPRS you only pay when data is transmitted, so with an open connection you can have cost effective two ways transmissions.
An excellent example is a refrigerated lorry. With the use of GPS (global positioning system) you can track exactly where the vehicle is at any moment in time thus ensuring goods receiving know exactly when to expect a delivery, but also the temperature within the unit can be checked and recorded to ensure food stuffs are stored and transported correctly. This reduces waste through ensuring the produce is supplied within the required parameters. Allied to this to the airtime costs of between £5 and £6 per month it makes the use of GPRS cost effective.

For more information on how GPRS can be used in a multitude of applications please view the website www.actecomponents.co.uk.

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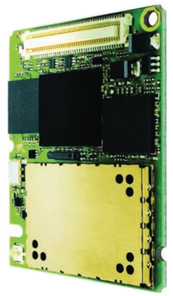


ACTE Components LTD

Announcing the release of PROTEUS® Dashboard v2 Warehouse Management tool

Proteus have released version 2 of our real-time graphical Warehouse Dashboard, an activity monitoring tool for warehouse operation managers. The Dashboard gives managers a picture of their warehouse operation at a glance, as it comprises of different dials and gauges representing the differing areas of activity in the warehouse.

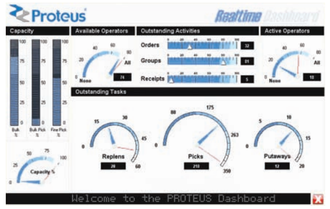
Once connected to the Warehouse Management Database, Proteus® Dashboard dynamically updates by constantly refreshing data, at the rate specified by the user. Changes are registered on the Dashboard immediately, altering the views accordingly.

The Dashboard has also been designed to have a Message Display, which displays Action Manager Messages and Alerts; alerting the warehouse manager to any discrepancies or completed tasks.

Dashboard users are also able to view historical statistical timing data. This data can be viewed for the entire warehouse by specific year, month and day, or for a specific operator.

The Dashboard can be seen in operation on the Proteus stand at the Logistics Link series of exhibitions, the first for 2008 being held at Sandown Park on 5th & 6th February, with a further two exhibitions held later in the year.

For further information on Proteus Warehouse RealTime Dashboard please call Linda Rodway on +44 (0) 121 717 7474 or email: moreinfo@proteussoftware.com



TOUCHSTAR SPREADS ITS WINGS AND OFFERS EVEN MORE FLEXIBILITY WITH ITS LATEST RUGGED MOBILE COMPUTER.

TouchStar

Over two decades ago, TouchStar became pioneers of solid and portable touchscreen computers, acquiring a huge installed base and blue chip clients that include most of the World's biggest airlines and the giants of the fuel industry, such as Total and BP. TouchStar has recently added to it's family of rugged mobile and vehicle-mount computers, with the launch of the new TouchPC Kestrel. The rugged mobile computer packs a powerful feature set that can be deployed in many industrial environments. The Kestrel provides excellent functionality for all mobile computing applications, whether on a van delivering the morning bread or delivering the fuel for domestic central heating systems.

Key features

- Unrivalled Clarity: The TouchPC Kestrel provides maximum unobstructed visibility with its sharp 640 by 480 (101mm x 75mm) full VGA TFT colour display that supports virtually any software application. The bright, touch-sensitive display is readable in all lighting conditions.
- Integral Printer: An integral 2" or 3" printer avoids the need to use a separate portable unit, eliminating the need for battery management of a second device.
- Integral Scanning : Integrated bar code scanner and mag-stripe card reader (optional)
- Designed with the end-user in mind: The ergonomics of the unit have been maximised in order to allow for comfortable extended operation when used outside of its vehicle mounting.
- Industry Standard Operating Systems & Components: The Embedded Windows CE 5 based Kestrel comes with an Intel XScale processor. This ensures that applications run at maximum power and speed.
- Superior Communications: On-Board GPRS allows the transmission of captured data from a remote to a central office location via an external data network. The on-board GSM module also provides the ability to make mobile telephone calls via Bluetooth connection to an external audio device. Integrated GPS also enables vehicle navigation and tracking using TomTom software. Vehicle location can constantly be transmitted in Real time, this ensures visibility of your mobile work force in Real time. Integrated Bluetooth allows the Kestrel to upload and download data or communicate with a separate printer or barcode reader, if required.
- Multiple Connectivity : Serial RS232 port and a USB port allow easy connectivity to a large range of peripherals.
- The vehicle cradle makes docking and removal of the Kestrel a simple task, however, it holds the Kestrel securely whilst the vehicle is in motion.

Standards Compliance

- Impact resistant, flame retardant UV stabilised polycarbonate case
- CE Emission EN55022: 1998 Class B Limit
- EN55024: 1998 Amendment A1:2001 Annex B, FCC, CFR:47 March 2003 Part 15.107, 15.109, Limit B
- EMC Testing: AS3548 (Australia)
- Emissions: RTCA/DO160D Limit M (for on-board aircraft usage) (Global)
- Compass Safe distance: RTCA 160D Section 15.3 & Class Z (for on-board aircraft usage) (Global)

Typical Application Areas for the Kestrel

In common with the entire range of TouchPC units, the Kestrel has been designed to fulfill a huge variety of commercial mobile computing applications. Client requirements don't start and stop with hardware procurement. Clients require software that will facilitate the move towards a rapid data capture environment, regardless of the industry sector within which they operate. In order to achieve this they also need to secure a seamless interface between software and hardware. TouchStar can provide a multitude of software packages, developed over many years and governed by an intimate understanding of the industry sector which they are aimed at. TouchStar can also provide clients with an added and vital reassurance.....**the Kestrel is part of a proven, fully integrated and robust hardware-software solution.**

The following represents two typical application areas for the Kestrel.

Van Sales

A typical scenario emphasising the Kestrel's capabilities, combined with TouchStar's VanStar software, can be found in a delivery scenario. At the start of a shift, the Kestrel is collected from its cradle where it has been fully charged overnight and all the days work has been uploaded via Ethernet from the main office. Once the operator places the Kestrel into his vehicle, he logs on and starts his shift. Instantly, the Kestrel tells the operator where to go by giving him turn by turn navigation instructions (Integrated TomTom Software) to his first drop. At each drop, the operator delivers the required product or products to the customer. Simply by following the on screen instructions, the driver can pick accurately the items and then capture a signature on the screen as Proof of Delivery. A receipt can then be printed and given to the customer. To save additional time, the Kestrel will now navigate the operator to the next customer site. Thus ensuring that the operator takes the best possible route to maximise fuel efficiency and reduce his carbon footprint. Data can also be transmitted to or from the Kestrel whilst out on the road.

Should a potential customer wish to order an emergency delivery, the office can send a direct message to the Kestrel. In turn, this will be scheduled into the days work to maximise time and fuel efficiency. Once all deliveries have been complete, all the data recorded by the Kestrel can be sent back to the office, without the need for the operator to return to the depot. Invoicing can be done instantly a delivery has been made.

Airline Point of Sales

By combining the Kestrel with the software from sister company Novo Ivc, TouchStar are able to provide the World's most advanced, rugged, hand held, touch screen P.O.S. system. With fully integrated peripherals, extensive battery life and high speed processor, the Kestrel combines seamlessly with the SkyPos software system to revolutionise on-board retail.
TouchPC's and SkyPos software are already used by over 40 Airlines and caterers and this solution:

- Creates an audit trail - heightens control and reduces shrinkage
- Provides detailed reporting - optimizes product mix and price point
- Delivers full automation - electronic interfaces to banks, cashiers office, marketing, purchasing and HR scheduling
- Brings Increased efficiency - unrivalled levels of operational speed and ease of use
- Heightens customer perception of operator - cutting edge, professional and highly reliable retail solution
- Enables complex calculations - special offers, multiple foreign currencies, loyalty points and VAT allocation
- Large internal memory storage can hold thousands of transactions including details of all stolen credit cards from around the world.

Benefits

- Speeds up the flow of information for management analysis.
- Enables the matching of supply and demand to maximise profit margins.
- Gives greater flexibility in managing product mix, pricing and promotional activities.
- System reduces the amount of paperwork involved in the control of the retail business, both on the ground and en-route.
- SkyPos eradicates human error by making all calculations (e.g. VAT and foreign currency).
- The provision of a Kestrel touch screen mobile P.O.S. improves passenger perceptions of the sales experience, which is quick and easy with professional logoed receipts.
- Ability to record sales by seat using cabin planograms
- Improved auditing procedures and supplier monitoring
- Compatible with all USB data pens

Each Kestrel / SkyPOS system is designed to meet the individual requirements of each and every customer. By doing this TouchStar provide some of the world's largest Airlines with the level of service which they require to operate effectively in this most unique retail environment

In Summary

"The Kestrel offers an ideal combination of technology, performance and cost, all housed in a sleek black polycarbonate plastic case. Toughness and durability are always guaranteed with TouchStar products," said Chris Edwards, Marketing Manager at TouchStar Technologies. "Its versatility makes this mobile computer a smart choice for gaining efficiencies across multiple market applications."

The Kestrel is available to customers from November 2007 through TouchStar Technologies' sales offices and value-added resellers

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Driving up standards

A determination to drive up professional standards in the warehousing sector underpins UKWA's activities, as the Association's chief executive officer, Roger Williams, explains.

The United Kingdom Warehousing Association (UKWA) was established in 1944 to help with the distribution of vital supplies from war-time Britain's Ports throughout the country. Since this time the Association has strived to improve professional standards within the logistics industry and, as a result, its terms of entry have always been notably more stringent than many other trade associations.

"I do not believe that UKWA can afford to compromise on professional standards if it is to have long term credibility as a trade body and that is why the Association is seeking to take a lead in developing best practice within the logistics sector," says Roger Williams, UKWA's chief executive officer.

To become a member of the Association, all applicants must, in the first instance, undergo a rigorous inspection by a UKWA Council official to ensure that they operate to the highest minimum standards in 11 critical areas of warehousing. Only by demonstrating that it can comply with these standards can a company's membership application be accepted.

However, it had long been a matter of concern to the Association that once this initial benchmark had been achieved no system was in place to force members to reconfirm that they continue to meet the UKWA's required standards of excellence and so, in 2005 UKWA launched its Annual Audit scheme.

"Our ground-breaking audit scheme provides users of third party warehousing services with a guarantee of professional competency," explains Roger Williams.

Roger Williams continues: "The Annual Audit – or AA– was devised by UKWA's Operations and Safety committee in response to a groundswell of opinion that members should be asked to undertake regular operational audits as part of their conditions of membership.

"It is a self-assessment scheme based on UKWA's existing and proven Standards of Warehousing. Member companies undertake the audit themselves and submit their report by a given date every year."

UKWA members' compliance with the scheme is acknowledged by use of the AA logo – a distinctive red and blue design that features the widely recognised UKWA 'warehouse roof-style' symbol and also highlights the year of the assessment – alongside the individual company's details on the Association website and in the UKWA Directory of Members' Services. Since its introduction nearly 70 per cent of members have undertaken the audit.

"The UKWA's board of management is determined to develop the Annual Audit to a position where every member submits annual, compulsory and independent audits. However, it is of course vital that the development of the Annual Audit takes place in a consensual environment and that means that we have a duty to explain the business benefits of participation to those yet to undertake the scheme," says Roger Williams.

Training

A determination to drive up professional standards in the warehousing sector underpins UKWA's activities and a trained workforce is one of the keys to achieving higher levels of professional competence within the sector. As an added value service to its members UKWA has recently entered into a partnership agreement with The Resources Group to provide training for members' forklift truck drivers at attractive rates. The agreement means that, for the first time, UKWA will be provide training throughout the UK.

In addition, the Association has been in discussion with the training arms of forklift truck manufacturers (and UKWA Associate Members) Translift and Jungheinrich to enable UKWA members to make use of their spare training capacity at competitive rates.

"There are so many benefits to employing forklift truck drivers who are professionally trained," says Roger Williams. "For example, turnaround is quicker and smoother, and accidental damage - to both the truck and the product being stored – is reduced. A sympathetically driven machine also enhances truck reliability and, needless to say, improves general safety throughout the facility where the truck is operational."

Roger Williams continues: "Most truck operators have realised the significant cost benefits that are achieved by choosing a forklift truck supplier with the service and maintenance credentials and infrastructure required to ensure that truck downtime is kept to a minimum, However, many truck users – both the bigger fleet operators and the smaller one-off buyers – sometimes fail to see the substantial performance benefits that professionally trained operators can bring to their business.

"Of course, no one should be allowed to operate a truck without first receiving training but even experienced employees can benefit from refresher training. Refresher training may be required if, for example, the operator is involved in an accident or a near-miss incident or if he or she has been observed operating the vehicle in an unsafe manner. It should also be considered if there have been changes to the workplace that could impact on the safe operation of the truck or, perhaps, if the operator is assigned to use a different type of machine – say a reach truck when before they had operated counterbalanced vehicles."

Roger Williams continues: "Training is vitally important to industry. Both the private and public sector is suffering skills gaps and shortages and dealing with some fundamental underlying problems that are damaging the UK's productivity.

"For example, over 60 per cent of employers are finding it difficult to employ people who are up to the job; an estimated 2.4 million workers are considered less than fully proficient in their jobs; 40 per cent of employers report that they have employed somebody in the last year with less skill than they were seeking; 37 per cent of employers think the gap between the skills they need and the skills in the workforce is getting worse.

"This is all depressing but, I like to think that UKWA is doing its part to reduce the decline – certainly in the logistics sector anyway."

Why choose a UKWA member?

As the third party logistics services sector becomes increasingly competitive, customers looking for high quality warehousing and a high standard of service – no matter how large or small their requirement – have the peace of mind of knowing that companies belonging to the United Kingdom Warehousing Association (UKWA) have been operating viably for at least six months and have demonstrated the highest standards in warehousing.
Of course, in today's price sensitive market, the need to drive cost out of the supply chain is often cited as a major reason for using third party logistics service providers. However, perhaps a better reason for engaging outside experts is the in-depth knowledge, flexibility and added value that a specialist contractor can provide and UKWA members undertake an exceptional range of warehousing and added value services.
A determination to drive up professional standards in the warehousing sector underpins UKWA's activities. By joining UKWA a third party warehousing services company demonstrates its commitment to best practice in every aspect of its business.

Warehouse manual

UKWA produces a Warehouse Manual covering every aspect of warehouse management in 18 chapters. Within the training section of the manual, the various components that are now in place to address training needs in the logistics and warehousing industry are addressed. These are;

- Apprenticeships
- Qualifications
- Investors in People
- Skills for business network

Within UKWA's training manual each of these areas is described briefly and sources where further information can be found are listed.
UKWA's training committee is available to assist in answering members' queries or, indeed, guiding members toward solutions to any training-related issues they may have.

Editors' notes: About The United Kingdom Warehousing Association
With over 600 member companies, the United Kingdom Warehousing Association (UKWA) is the UK's only trade association dedicated to serving the vitally important warehousing and logistics sector. Established in 1944, the Association's members control nearly 100 million square feet of warehousing space from nearly 1300 locations across the UK. Although originally established as a trade body for the third party warehousing sector, the Association now embraces all companies that operate a warehousing or distribution facility. Membership is not restricted to those companies based within the borders of the United Kingdom.

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UKWA united kingdom warehousing association

JCB's Teletruk aids robot maintenance on Land Rover's Freelander 2 production line

The versatility of JCB's Teletruk allows it to play a vital role in the removal of production line robots for maintenance at Halewood Operations, home to the Jaguar X-TYPE and Land Rover Freelander 2.

The JCB Teletruk has proved its versatility in a novel application serving a major automotive production line. As part of Land Rover's highly successful Freelander 2 programme, a TLT 35D Teletruk fitted with a fork positioner is used to facilitate the removal of a robot in the event of a catastrophic failure. Previously Halewood had to hire in a crane or dismantle robots and repair them in-situ.

As the production line for Freelander 2 – the latest model from the world famous off-road vehicle manufacturer - is located close to the X-Type line in the plant, there are a host of access issues that the Teletruk avoids thanks to its forwards reach, making it the ideal solution for a robot removal system.

A Teletruk was chosen for this job because it provides an extending boom with a low pivot design within the required weight range and physical size. The 35D has a full forward reach of 2.43 metres, which allows it to lift 2100 kg at a 2 metres forward extension. It can also lift its 3.5 tonnes capacity to a height of 4.4 metres. With no mast obscuring the view, as would be the case on a traditional forklift truck, the Teletruk also provides the operator with clear forward vision.

Able to reach 90 per cent of the applications, the diesel powered Teletruk supplied through the local Gunn JCB dealership provides a flexible solution to the maintenance lifting and slinging problems within Halewood's Body Shop. The low pivot on the extending boom allows operators to work under the overhead systems without catching the guarding while it still is capable of reaching over the fence lines to provide a safe slinging point.

"The Teletruk allows Halewood staff to change the robot for a new one and repair the unit offline," says Mark Roberts Teletruk specialist at Gunn JCB. He continues: "When it came to providing maintenance access for slinging, a stacker truck with a 'nose picker' was used previously. As the Teletruk has a hydraulic system using check valves it provides a robust means of fixing a pulley block to the end of the mast to sling equipment from hard to reach places."

JCB were able to modify the Teletruk to meet the specific needs of the plant. For instance operators needed to be able to slide the fork carriage sideways from the cabin. "We advised Halewood to use a sideshifting fork positioner, which gives the operator the ability to move the forks to the left and right as a fixed pair as well as the ability to move the forks closer or wider from a lever on the control bank inside the cab," says Mark.

Both the JCB factory and the Gunn JCB dealership were able to supply excellent service and technical advice. Halewood requested various demonstration units and detailed information - from emission levels to training packages - which JCB were able to provide without delay.

Mark concludes: "There are now many practical examples where the Teletruk has been the focal point of a major repair to the assembly lines. It is used daily as part of routine maintenance work and provides the team with a reliable multi-use vehicle."

For further information on JCB Teletruk please contact Colin Lawrence on 01538 757500

www.jcb.com