

## FACILITIES MANAGERS- THROW AWAY THE CLIPBOARD AND WET PENCIL!

Continuing our commentary about asset tracking systems, it's logical that the barcode label can be fixed not only to all your school's movable property but also to fixtures and fittings for automating safety inspections and maintenance recording via the unique numbering system.

**The old way** - take a form, put it on the clipboard and go round the school checking things work or doing the regular maintenance. Write down who's done what where on the form for each item, file all the forms, or laboriously key in all the manuscript to XL, slow or what?

**The new way** - As all the boxes on your paper form can be converted to fields on a software program, imagine downloading a database of all your regular safety inspections or walk arounds via your WiFi network to a mobile terminal which has a barcode scanner built into it. The kinds of equipment or fixture can be quite extensive,- smoke and fire alarms, emergency lighting systems, boilers, fire doors, emergency exit doors, boundary fences, trees, security cameras, fire fighting equipment, PAT tests, damage reports etc. Imagine scanning the barcode on any equipment you have to check and instantly display the last set of results. Edit for the latest inspection and the results will be immediately sent back to the web based program for viewing 24/7 from anywhere. Crucially an audit trail of all maintenance and who carried them out and when will be stored, vital for proving compliance with safety legislation and defending reputation if there's a post accident enquiry. The time savings from these modern methods can be quite significant, one county council reduced its monthly inspections and recording time from 2 days to 2 hours!

***"You can't manage what you don't measure!"***

Modern 'cloud' based programs can report instantly who did what when, improving productivity, and enables your oversight anytime from anywhere. Apart from demonstrating best use of public funds and regulatory compliance, there are security benefits, and data migration to other software programs is usually straightforward. The three main users of these programs are staff in finance, IT, and facilities departments for their respective responsibilities.

Creating a Risk Register alongside your Asset Register and maintaining it with modern tools helps convert the process from a chore to being used as a real benefit, as it will save time and therefore money. With such systems you might even consider bringing some of those expensive outsourced maintenance contracts back in house, generating a real return for your asset management investment.

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