

USING MOBILE DEVICES IN ASSET MANAGEMENT- MAKING THE STAFF MORE AGILE!

Continuing our commentary about asset management, let's consider the options for using hand held devices to look after your asset inventory and safety recording on a paper free basis.

Option 1 Smart phone. On the plus side, you may have one of these already so no extra cost is incurred although if already used for other purposes within the school or if a personal possession some form of acceptable use policy may require drawing up, and the insurance position checking. For occasional use where a barcode or QR code app is installed and it links directly with the asset record on the server based program this is fine, but it's slower than other methods as there is no in built scanner and the camera has to be focussed on the label first, not easy in low light conditions or when the label and serial numbers are on the back of the item as is often the case with IT equipment. Care must also be taken when working at height or outdoors as most mobile phones are not ruggedised for drops and showers!



Option 2. Tablet. Most of the comments above apply although there is a larger screen, easier for viewing and record editing, but not quite so portable. It is possible to link an small barcode scanner with your existing tablet via the Bluetooth mechanism to get round the camera issues, fine if you're in one place scanning in a lot of new purchases, but the site manager might not be so keen half way up a ladder managing two devices! Otherwise the latest tablets have barcode scanners built in so just one machine.

Option 3. Barcode terminal. Depending on specification, costs can range from £300 to £3000, but are fit for purpose, having an integrated laser barcode scanner, keyboard, and GPRS connectivity in addition to Wi-Fi, long battery life, and ruggedised features. A smaller screen size is compensated by more portability. They are to be recommended if your procedures include fast paper free audits of room contents or the premises team wish to record many visual inspections in a day's work, achieved by a quick scan of the label.



In summary, a choice should be made after a serious analysis of the procedures you wish to automate, and the capabilities of the user.

“You can't manage what you don't measure!”

Stephen Laing

Managing Director, ASSETtrac Ltd