

Wightlink ticket vending machines

Highlights

- 8 TVMs to complement existing ticket offices
- TVMs designed and built to customer specification within a short timeframe
- TVMs accessible 24/7 for all customers
- Phased rollout a success

Customer requirements

Wightlink provide an invaluable service transporting people and vehicles between the Isle of Wight and mainland UK, and can boast over 4.8 million passenger journeys per year.

Operating three routes, with a mix of catamaran (foot passengers only) and car ferries, between six locations and nearly 48,000 crossings per year; Wightlink required eight multi-function ticket vending machines to be designed and installed across their ferry terminals, some of which experience considerable customer footfall.

The smart ticket vending machines would need to be:

- Durable and vandal resistant;
- easily accessible for all;
- user friendly; and,
- accessible for third-party maintenance

The project has been split into four phases and is set for completion in the summer of 2016. The first phase of the project, to provide ticket vending machines for foot passengers (to complement the existing ticketing offices and offer a 24/7 self-service option) has been completed and will allow customers to purchase boarding passes using either a credit or debit card. Future phases will allow customers to purchase rail tickets for onward travel, purchase tickets for multiple trips; purchase tickets for car ferry crossings and validate smart ticket purchase made online.

Solution and technology

21st Century Passenger Systems Ltd supplied, manufactured and installed eight identical Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) that not only contained the technology required to meet phase one of the project, but included all the hardware that will be required to meet the remaining phases of the project.

Passengers will interact with the TVMs via a 19" touchscreen display, set to meet with DDI compliance, and can pay for tickets using either chip and PIN or contactless. Currently receipts are dispensed via one of two heat-printers, with the two Newbury data printers already part of the build coming into use when phase three of the project allows rail ticket purchases for onward travel.



Solution and technology continued

The TVMs are protected by Watchman software, developed in-house by 21st Century's own software development team. The TVMs can not only detect any machine faults such as dead pixels, but can also tell when they are under attack, shutting down to "play dead" whilst simultaneously taking CCTV footage and sending it to a pre-determined back-office destination.

The units also contain NFC technology, ready to be used as a smart ticket validator/product collection point when the project enters that phase.

Delivery

Although the four-phase approach to product availability has allowed 21st Century time to effectively test the software that will provide passengers with their travel options, the initial build of the TVMs was completed to an extremely tight timescale. The units have been built identically, with different variations of the software powering the ticket purchasing process, depending on their location.

The volume of product variations on offer has allowed the 21st Century software development team to demonstrate its capacity to build solutions to meet the demands of a multi-product and multi-modal transport environment. The team were also able to integrate Wightlink's existing back office systems to provide accurate and up to date information to passengers.

Whilst there are future phases of the project still scheduled for completion, initial reactions to the TVMs has been positive, with passengers being able to use them to purchase crossings and plan their journeys.

