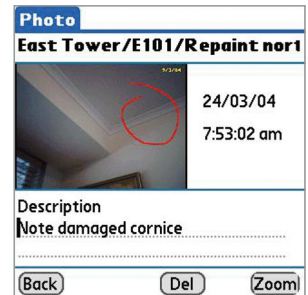


Thiess takes the paper out of defect management

Established in 1933, Thiess is one of the world's leading integrated engineering and services providers, and operates throughout Australia, Indonesia and other parts of Asia Pacific. As a wholly owned subsidiary of Leighton Holdings Limited, it forms part of the largest publicly listed construction and development company in Australia. Thiess is a project-driven company with more than 4,000 staff in Australia.



The challenge

During the construction process, Thiess is contractually obliged to complete certain sections of the build. Each area needs to be free of defects, which requires foremen and engineers to complete a final inspection of the site, noting any defects and arranging necessary repairs.

Previously, staff used a paper-based, manual system to track defects and log where they were located. This data was passed on to administration staff for entry into Excel spreadsheets and categorisation before distribution to the relevant subcontractors. Once the repairs were completed, Thiess was notified and the spreadsheet was manually updated.

The manual data entry was time-consuming, resource-intensive and, as numerous people handled the information, prone to error.

Paul Forghani, manager of Project Services at Thiess, said, "It's not unusual for staff to inspect 190 rooms on a project. Manually managing this process only added to the amount of time it took to record the defects. What's more, as the process involved a great deal of data entry, staff spent considerable time following up and correcting errors. We needed a more efficient way to document and manage defects."

The Solution

Thiess employees had been using Palm® handhelds for personal information management (PIM) for some time. Thiess realised it could take advantage of this platform as a way to capture and manage defect information more accurately.

Thiess turned to Wicket Works, a specialist in solutions for handhelds, who developed TX-501, an application specifically for field-inspection purposes, such as defect management, health and safety checks, aviation inspection and plant maintenance.

Brian McKillop, proprietor of Wicket Works, said, "IT lies at the heart of most modern organisations, but very often the data IT systems need to function is collected using pen and paper, and frequently there are errors or it's left in someone's back pocket."

"Thiess already had a number of employees using Palm's Zire™ 72 handheld, so they were familiar with handheld devices. By installing our TX-501 solution on the devices, we were able to offer Thiess a quick and easy way of electronically recording building defects at a construction site, communicating information to a central computer system at the project office, and making it available to the subcontractors responsible for corrective action."

"We really rely upon our Palm handhelds – they're an extension of our project office and they help us get the job done more quickly and efficiently."

Paul Forghani, manager of Project Services at Thiess



TX-501 is designed for the Palm Zire 72 handheld, which features a 1.2-megapixel camera. Thiess is now able to photographically document defects with a time and date stamp, and annotate the image accordingly. TX-501 on the Zire 72 handheld acts like an electronic notepad so that staff can quickly and accurately capture details of the defect.

The information is then synched with a PC database, and details can be emailed to the relevant subcontractors. Once repairs are complete, staff can inspect and quickly “close off” defects by synching the updated information with the database.

Forghani said, “The Zire 72’s battery life is very reliable, which is important as staff sometimes need to inspect and report on close to 200 rooms. We really rely upon our Palm handhelds – they’re an extension of our project office and they help us get the job done more quickly and efficiently.”

The Outcome

Thiess now uses fewer resources to manage defects, which has reduced costs and freed staff to concentrate on other project areas. By removing manual data entry, defect management has become accurate and significantly less time-consuming.

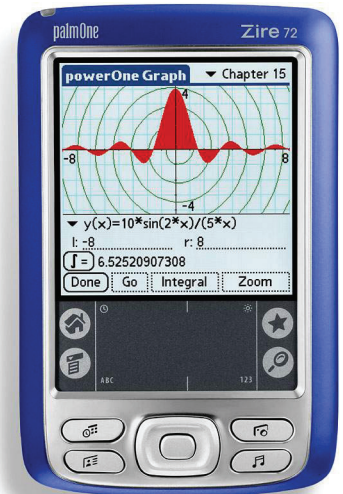
Forghani said, “We now have a much smoother and more efficient process for managing defects, which means we can manage our resources better, and also improve client satisfaction.

“Installation and training took only one day, and our staff have been impressed with the improvements the solution has made to defect management. When we first implemented the application, the Zire 72 and TX-501 were so intuitive and easy to use, staff didn’t require any additional assistance.

“We also have plans to introduce a contract-management application to assist with managing work order projects, such as site maintenance. We’ve been using Palm handhelds for some time for basic PIM, and we will now continue to use them to assist with other critical areas of our business,” concluded Forghani.

There are more than 20,000 Palm OS® based applications solutions- each customised to meet the needs of both individuals and businesses. For more information, please log onto www.palm.com/asia

ZIRE™ 72 HANDHELD



Enterprise
Thiess Pty Ltd

Industry
Construction

Category
Field data collection

Application
Wicket Works, TX-501

Features

- Easy-to-use interface
- Automatic time/date stamp
- Standard and customised inspection fields
- Multimedia data capture
- Centrally managed administration, storage and analysis of data
- Simplified defect trend analysis

Benefits

- A cost-effective solution that is small, light, easy to use and photo-capable
- Reduced paperwork and data entry

Specifications

- Palm Zire 72 handheld
- Palm OS® 5
- Microsoft Windows XP Home/Pro, 2000, Me, or 98.