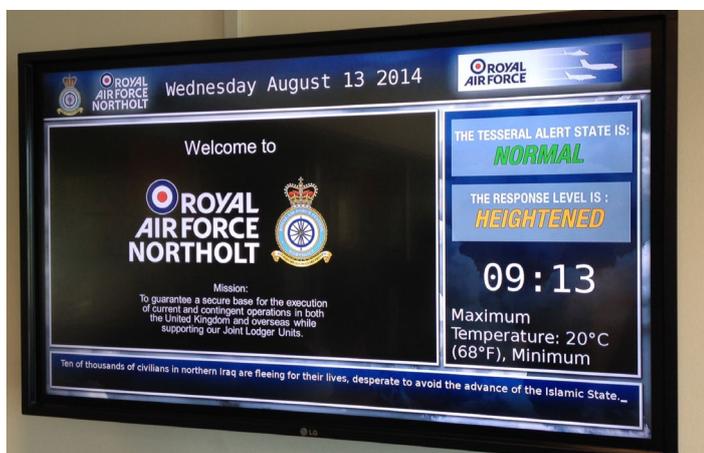


Case Study RAF Northolt

»In the event of a security breach, we can alert the entire base instantly. If it's a suspicious package, we can ensure better procedural compliance and thus a faster activation of operational protocol, thanks to the Fujitsu content controller«

Simon Fenner, Flight Lieutenant, RAF Northolt



The customer

Formed in 1918 in response to the First World War, the UK's Royal Air Force (RAF) is the aerial warfare service branch of the British Armed Forces and the oldest independent air force in the world. Its objective is to support the Ministry of Defence in ensuring the security of the UK and its overseas territories.

Located in the South East of England, RAF Northolt has been an operational aerodrome since 1915 and was selected as the forward base for Typhoon fast jets and other military elements providing security to the London Olympic Games. There are approximately 1,400 permanent staff members and 600 civilian contractors working at any one time from this historic site.

The challenge

As with any large organisation, getting the right information to the right people in a timely manner is a challenge. This challenge is compounded by the fact that a significant proportion of the officers are not desk based. RAF Northolt wanted to find a streamlined, efficient way of delivering relevant content in areas where the target audience would see it.

"We have a closed military system for classified information but it's also vital to disseminate non-classified information," explains Simon Fenner, Flight Lieutenant, RAF Northolt. "Given that a large number of our infantry units don't have routine access to a desk and PC, we needed a solution that's more dynamic than a noticeboard. We wanted to deploy a visually engaging communications channel that could provide customised content across the site."

RAF Northolt was already working with Fujitsu partner UK Networks to roll out a new communications infrastructure comprising a fibre network, WiFi and a VoIP tannoy system. It took this opportunity to investigate whether it could integrate a visual component to help communicate with its staff.

"The majority of our personnel are often too busy to proactively seek out the information we are distributing so finding a way to 'push' the content where they are most likely to see it seemed to be an ideal solution," adds Fenner. "We looked at a number of different vendors and Fujitsu came out on top based on price, flexibility and simplicity."

The customer

Country: UK
Industry: Defence
Founded: 1918
Employees: 37,000
Website: www.raf.mod.uk



The challenge

RAF Northolt wanted to find a better way to communicate with its 2,000 permanent and civilian employees. Static noticeboards were not proving effective in reaching a population that had a significant number of staff without a designated desk or PC, due to the nature of their roles.

The solution

As part of an overall communications refresh, involving installing a non-classified fibre network, the military base deployed eleven 42" monitors to display customised content across the site. The monitors are dynamically controlled by a Fujitsu CELSIUS workstation.

The benefit

- Customised content can be delivered to each screen and controlled by local managers, allowing them to tailor information depending on the location
- In the event of emergency, staff have instant access to critical information, ensuring better procedural compliance and a faster activation of operational protocol
- Visitors are welcomed by a touch-screen enabled monitor which allows them to navigate site maps and contact details for staff
- The displays automatically turn themselves on and off according to predetermined schedules, saving energy

The solution

Together Fujitsu and UK Networks installed the new content distribution solution which consists of eleven high-definition 42" LG signage screens, each networked to one central high-performing Fujitsu CELSIUS workstation. Dubbed the 'Commander Channel', the content workstation connects to the WiFi network and manages the Bright Sign media players and LG monitors. The Bright Sign content player allows RAF Northolt to split any display device image into a number of zones, allowing it to deliver targeted information to any of the zones at any time of the day, month or year.

In addition, the Bright Sign Content Players have a built in web server, accessible from any computer that has access to its network. Once logged in the software allows users with the correct credentials to edit and configure the display output, without the need for special software or dedicated PCs.

There are now screens in the mess hall, the training site, the Guard Room and elsewhere – locations with optimal footfall, including visitors, enabling the base to deliver customised content in an instant.

"For the screen in the mess hall, we might be providing details about social events or sports. At the Guard Hall at the main gate, we can display visitor information and a map of the base," continues Fenner. "It's a dynamic way to create and push information tailored to each specific location."

Fujitsu provided two half-day training sessions to ensure the content administrators were able to effectively control the information throughput: "It doesn't take long to get to grips with the Commander Channel. Now we have a two tier administration system so the Adjutant or the RAF Police, for example, can distribute to every screen while local staff such as the Mess Manager or Training Commander can display information relating to their own location."

Products and services

- Fujitsu CELSIUS workstation

The benefit

Visitors and staff alike now have constant access to the information that matters. The monitor in the Guard Room at the entrance to the base, for example, has touch screen capability which allows visitors to scroll through staff phone numbers or find their destination on a map of the base. On the other hand, displays intended for officers might remind them of policy information.

"It's a great way to keep our staff informed of health and safety regulations or how to report an accident," says Fenner. "As a military organisation, there are many rules to consider and, using this Fujitsu platform, we can keep them abreast of their responsibilities, as well as letting them know that there is a social event that evening."

The monitors also use timers to minimise their energy consumption so those located in offices and daytime locations automatically switch on at 7am and off at 5pm, while those in communal areas come to life at 6pm. But, more importantly, the eleven screens could prove critical in an emergency.

"In the event of a security breach, we can alert the entire base instantly. If it's a suspicious package, we can ensure better procedural compliance and thus a faster activation of operational protocol," comments Fenner. "Even if it's only a severe weather warning, we can get our staff to where they need to be much more efficiently."

Conclusion

With the Commander Channel in place, RAF Northolt is looking to expand its use of interactive, touch-screen technology, centred on the Fujitsu CELSIUS workstation. It's delighted with the ability to bring the right information to the right people at the touch of a button.

"The installation was professional and the quality of the equipment is superb. The initial impressions from all our staff have been very positive."

Simon Fenner, Flight Lieutenant, RAF Northolt

In collaboration with



Contact

FUJITSU
Address: 22 Baker Street, London, W1U 3BW, UK
Phone: +44 (0) 870 242 7998
E-mail: askfujitsu@UK.fujitsu.com
Website: www.fujitsu.com
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