

PRESS INFORMATION

Tesco turns to Abilitec to put a “freeze” on costs

£4½m project will help save over £10 m each year

Abilitec, the rapidly expanding UK 'OS/BSS' solutions provider, has just won the turnkey element of a £4½m contract from Tesco, the UK's leading grocery retailer. Abilitec has developed and will deploy a centralised integrated store alarm and monitoring system for all in-store engineering equipment including refrigeration and air conditioning systems.

Late last year Tesco, working with Abilitec, embarked on its Store Integration Information Management Systems (SIIMS) project, with trials being implemented in 10 key stores. As these were so successful, the system is now being deployed in all 657 Tesco stores.

The scheme is projected to achieve a net saving to Tesco of around £5m in the initial year. Similar savings must also be achieved in subsequent years as operational budgets are automatically reduced to assume the savings. The total SIIMS project is costing in the region of £4½m to implement, with the alarm consolidation and workflow element worth in excess of £500,000 and being coordinated and implemented by Abilitec.

The SIIMS project enable Tesco to be more efficient and better deploy appropriate human and system resources to solve problems as soon as they are identified; thereby significantly helping to reduce produce spoilage due to rises or falls in refrigeration temperatures within each of Tesco's 657 stores. In addition, the deployed systems will enable in-store devices to maintain optimum performance, helping reduce energy usage and increase service intervals. Finally, the real-time monitoring capability will assist Tesco in meeting their commitments to the new EC directives like the Climate Control Levy.

“Connecting every piece of equipment via telephones lines, which was the previously accepted installation standard, meant expensive installations and the hourly connections were producing enormous phone bills,” explained John Holman, engineering manager for the SIIMS project. “The new system, developed in conjunction with Abilitec, now means we can use standard Internet protocols over our WAN which significantly reduces our front end costs on all new installations. In addition operational cost such as; maintenance, energy usage and staff time are all reduced, directly increasing the bottom line profit.”



“Organisations are now realising that they probably have all the sophisticated systems they actually need to effectively run their businesses – but what they lack is the time, resource and knowledge to actually take advantage of those systems, this is where Abilitec provide the vital expertise and business acumen to bring everything together, delivering sophisticated ‘best of breed’ solutions. In addition to Tesco, we have recently delivered Operations and Business Support Systems (OSS/BSS) projects to organisations such as Nationwide Building Society, Chello Broadband, and Virgin Atlantic – with many others expressing real interest in our solutions”

Tesco’s SIIMS project centralises and consolidates the management of key plant by using Micromuse’s Netcool software at the core of the solution. Key refrigeration metrics like temperature, pressure and other operational information is sent in various formats and protocols to tin-store control systems, provided by Intelligent Maintenance Services (IMS). This data is then converted to standard SMNP trap messages that are then forwarded, via the Tesco WAN, to a centralised monitoring system. At the core of this system is Micromuse’s Netcool software that in turn consolidated and manipulates the messages into a recognisable set of alarms that can be managed and actioned by the Call Centre staff.

The network traffic this generates is less than 0.05% of the available 128k bandwidth, so does not affect other WAN usage. As these alarms are received from the stores, Trouble Tickets are automatically generated along with problem reports. When necessary notifications for request s for action are automated using invoq systems AlarmPoint software, the net result being a significant leap forward in control and efficiency.

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