

## Brand brings the fun into Mobile Data

During 2000 South Birmingham College devised the 'Big Top Learning Gateway' project, an IT education resource designed as a funfair attraction. The project's aim is to reach out to those who find it difficult to attend the traditional education system and it enables the visitors to learn new IT skills and build upon those they already possess in a non-threatening environment.



The 'Big Top Learning Gateway' project is the biggest of its kind in the country, it's state-of-the-art mobile data communications technology connects to the Internet without traditional land lines, so wherever the funfair goes the Learning Centre will also go.

The mobile internet classroom was the brainchild of Midlands Fun Fair owner Mr. Robert Wilkinson and has been designed as a fun fair ride and a place to learn. The project is being run by South Birmingham College and funded by the DFEE as part of LearnDirect.

The Learning centre is sited on a 40ft specially adapted trailer. The trailer has 14 workstations installed which make use of Brand's award winning technology to provide GSM access via the Orange mobile network to the LAN (local area network) at South Birmingham College.

Management (spoofing) technology there is no need for users to continually log in and off, when there is no data being sent or received. With Apollo, it releases the phone line which is transparent to the user, so all of the information stays in place as if they were still on-line. This dramatically reduces the costs of the phone bills.



The Big Top Learning Gateway was officially launched on Monday 11th September in Birmingham, by

Mr. Michael Willis, Under Secretary for Education and Technology. Dr. Anne Wright also attended and gave an introduction to LearnDirect, and she commented, "We are very proud that the Big Top Learning Gateway is playing such an important role in UK Online. UFI's LearnDirect is at the forefront of this revolution and the Big Top is one of the most exciting centres in our e-learning network. It will put the fun back into learning and is thought that it will draw all sorts of people who would not usually think that learning is for them." She went on to say, "Like all LearnDirect centres it will be using the Internet to open up a huge range of courses, which people can use at the centre, at home, at work or anywhere that they can get on-line. It is the classroom of the future, a mobile Internet learning centre that has been designed to tour the region with one of it's leading funfairs."



South Birmingham selected Ramesys, UK providers of e-business solutions to take charge of all the project management, infrastructure and support of the network.

More than 10,000 people visit Robert Wilkinson Funfairs every week and the 'Big Top Learning Gateway' will provide a fun learning experience for all those involved. Virtual Makeovers, Games, Competitions and family learning weeks are all things planned for the future using the Big Top.

## Contact details

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# BrandNews

Networking with Brand Communications



Issue 4

## Yorkshire Water get their Mobile Workforce connected using Apollo from Brand



In early 1999, Yorkshire Water embarked on a change programme that would cost £millions and which would result in a more efficient dynamic organisation capable of meeting new business goals. One of their biggest assets, and biggest costs, was the mobile workforce of 600+ engineers. A key element of the change programme was the mobilisation of these engineers, to improve the way they scheduled and communicated with the head office. Real time data was seen as being fundamental to that goal.



of efficiency gains, but Yorkshire Water's goal of a single access platform for all isolated workers has been achieved. One of the key advantages of Apollo is network independence. Because Apollo can be used on any GSM network Yorkshire Water was able to go out to open tender, and has successfully switched from one network operator to another.



Yorkshire Water selected Vancouver based MDSI and Brand Communications to supply their mobile data solutions. MDSI's business historically utilised packet networks in North America, rather than GSM. Brand was brought in to supply their resilient connectivity solution to sit underneath MDSI's application stack and to provide GSM capabilities. MDSI's proven workforce management software and Brand's proven GSM connectivity suited Yorkshire Water's needs perfectly.

All of the architecture is now in place, and the mobile element commenced in June 2000, using Panasonic Toughbooks with integral GSM modules, NT, MDSI's Advantex Software and Apollo. Of course the engineers can use any other applications too, including email, Intranet and file transfer.

This is actually one of several joint projects between Brand and MDSI, including workforce management systems for all of Belgacom's telephone engineers (across Belgium) and Bravida's engineers (Norway).

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"the 'Big Top Learning Gateway' project is the biggest of its kind in the country"

Brand has provided an Apollo Evolution BRI server which is attached to South Birmingham College's LAN. This enables the LAN to be extended to all of the workstations within the mobile vehicle, and can be utilised anywhere the Big Top goes. The Brand Apollo Emulator software, used in conjunction with the Nokia Card Phone II, dials up and connects to South Birmingham College allowing data to be transmitted at 28.8kps using Orange's cutting edge technology HSCSD (high speed circuit switched data). Orange's HSCSD is typically 3 times faster than other mobile network's circuit switched data, and also the GPRS speeds which are available today. With Brand's unique Session

However when Yorkshire Water analysed the benefits of Apollo, they saw opportunities for other areas of the business including the remote deployment of back office applications such as email and Lotus Notes. As Apollo's client software with it's Session Management (spoofing) significantly reduced mobile bills the decision was then made to roll the solution out to all remote workers, not just the mobile staff. In total over 1000 staff have got, or will get, access via Apollo. Clearly the biggest benefits are for the mobile engineers where the cost savings are greatest and where the need to extend MDSI out to the field will pay dividends in terms



## Telenor / Bravida expands its Mobile Data Solution to all its Engineers.



In 1999 Telenor / Bravida selected Brand and MDSI Inc. to provide a full workforce management and GSM mobile data solution to part of its engineering workforce. Since then, Telenor / Bravida have gone on to expand the mobile network to over 2000 of its engineers across Norway, making it one of the largest rollouts of its kind. Bravida are continuously adding new engineers to the mobile network making this project future testimony to the fact that GSM data can really work for field service organisations.

Brand supplied fast, reliable and seamless access from the Telenor engineer's PC into the Bravida internal LAN environment, using Telenor's GSM network. The engineer has a copy of the Apollo Emulator loaded on the PC, and an Apollo Access Server at the host end manages all of the data calls to and from the engineers. The engineers use Telenor's 9600bps circuit-switched data service to log on to the LAN and access job details in real time. That's where MDSI come in because they provide the solution that processes the job data and delivers it to an application resident on the engineer's PC. MDSI's leading scheduling solution (known as Advantex) coupled with Brand's award winning Apollo GSM connectivity solution are perfect partners in extending vital data out to remote engineers.

“Bravida chose Brand because of its unique benefits”

Bravida chose Brand because of its unique benefits of using Apollo via GSM and its 100% compatibility with MDSI. Session Management (spoofing) will save them a significant sum of money, call recovery keeps the application alive even when GSM calls drop, compression results in faster downloads and the simple-to-use client software means the engineer can be much more productive in a shorter amount of time. Above all else, Bravida wanted a proven low-risk solution which delivered tangible benefits very quickly.

## RTM Chooses Brand for Mobile Data

R T Masts Ltd are leaders in the mast and aerial erection service in the UK. RTM has successfully completed over 3,500 radio links in the UK alone and offers a complete service to their customers. They also have more than 4,500 GSM/PCN UK sites completed and also offer a complete site rigging service.



RTM's business means they have a number of service engineers, riggers and other personnel out in the field. RTM needed a reliable mobile data solution to enable them to stay in contact with their staff and the ability to exchange data wherever their staff were located.

RTM chose the Brand Apollo solution. Brand provided an Apollo Evolution PRI server to sit at the host end of RTM's LAN network. The Apollo Evolution is a smaller scale remote access product which is offered by Brand to the small/medium business enterprise. The Evolution has a range of configurations which are able to support between one and several hundred users making it very future proof to any business.

The mobile workers use the Apollo Emulator software loaded onto their PC machines, Apollo seamlessly extends the RTM LAN environment to the mobile worker by using the unique combination of Session Management (spoofing), resilient call recovery, security and compression.



RTM are also future proofed with the Apollo solution to emerging new technologies as Apollo can accommodate GSM, ISDN, WAP, HSCSD, Satellite and PSTN, along with GPRS and 3G early in 2001.

The Apollo solution is giving RTM a viable and cost-effect way of using Mobile Data to stay one step ahead!

## Brand Takes Mobile Data to Newbury

In September 2000, Brand hit the road with the Mobile Data Roadshow. The first port of call was the Newbury & Royal County of Berkshire show. This show is mainly an agricultural event but Brand made the decision to show their mobile data solutions.

The show was a huge success, with much interest in the range of remote access and mobile data solutions on show. People were fascinated by the whole concept of mobile data technology and being able to use it at the show was a real benefit.



## Brand Communications Expand by Opening New Office

Since its inception in 1991, Brand Communications has grown steadily to become the successful company it is today.



With the Head Office situated in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, the decision was taken to acquire additional office space in the Swindon area. This was to cope with the demanding levels of business Brand were experiencing in the Thames Valley Area and the South. The new premises would provide a handy resource for Brand to cope with these demands.

Brand now occupy a prestigious building on the Dorcan Business Park in Swindon, which boasts a vast amount of office space with a conference suite and warehouse facilities. Brand are presently recruiting for staff in the Swindon area to bring additional talent to the Brand team.



## Brand Co-founds the Mobile Management Forum

Recently Brand co-founded the Mobile Management Forum, a consortium dedicated to speeding the adoption of wireless and mobile solutions within the enterprise.

Brand felt that joining the Mobile Management Forum was a major step forward in our efforts to promote the uptake of mobile data solutions. The forum has brought together leading wireless vendors with corporate and government customers to drive early market acceptance of mobile devices and applications.

The Forum was also co-founded by Argo Interactive, Boeing, Compaq, Diversinet Corp, HereUare Communications Inc, Hewlett-Packard, Hitachi, JP Morgan, Motorola, NCR Corp, NEC, Sun Microsystems, Symbian, Synchrologic and XcelleNet.

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