A MOBILE DATA TERMINAL IS PROVING A HIT WITH FLEETS ACROSS EUROPE, INCLUDING SOME OF THE MAIN TAXI OPERATORS

London’s taxi drivers and fleets including Italian energy producer and distributor Enel and Telecom Italia are benefitting from mobile data terminals based on Microsoft Windows CE. And manufacturer Digitax is looking to bring further technology innovations to the wider automotive sector.

Already Abacus Embedded has supplied more than 9000 licences for a growing variety of mobile data applications including fleet management and telemetry. For example, the 3G MDT is a third-generation rugged mobile computer intended to supply all the functions needed for fleet dispatch and management. The feature list includes a touchscreen colour TFT display, always-on connectivity with GPRS, GPS receiver, nine serial ports and two USB host ports, card readers, RGB grabber for video camera, Bluetooth audio and data connections, text-to-speech facility, on board UPS, VGA output, PS/2 keyboard input, Compact Flash socket and true mechanical keyboard. Peripherals include protected GPIOs, high speed IO and analogue channels. All are supported by the unit’s options of Microsoft Windows CE .Net 4.2 and 5.0. The operating systems not only ensure certified compatibility with peripherals, but also provides seamless connectivity with Windows XP computers and Windows Mobile devices carried by drivers.

“Windows is more than just the industry’s standard operating system, it’s also the best for automotive,” said Digitax sales director Javier Pagano. “There are all the advantages of a vast user base, plus widely available software and comprehensive libraries to accelerate our development efforts and those of our customers.”

Abacus also supplied Digitax with touchscreen displays for its new mobile computers. Requirements for the display included high luminosity to ensure good viewability even in...
The terminal has already been implemented by some very large taxi fleets.

The data terminal should help make London taxis even more efficient.

direct sunlight, very high reliability to withstand the severe automotive environment, and guaranteed long-term availability of the product. The company selected a Varitronix 16.3cm VGA TFT display on the basis of its 400cd brightness and high contrast. Features include a light sensor for regulating CCFL backlight intensity to improve viewability under all light conditions, and a robust, moisture and dust resistant resistive touchscreen offering mouse emulation.

“The Varitronix display matches our requirements as it offers a superior image quality compared to other products, allowing sharp rendering of icons and writings,” said Sauro Pagano of Digitax. “Also, being intended for industrial applications, Varitronix guaranteed its long-term availability, as opposed to some displays developed for automotive applications which are only available for a short time.”

Abacus provided Digitax with both the operating system and the display. These units are being supplied to London’s 3500 cabs with London’s biggest taxi operator, Computer Cabs, and more than 5000 MDT-MCU mobile data terminals are destined for Enel, the Italian energy producer and distributor.

As well as selling direct to fleets, the firm works closely with third party software houses and system integrators. For example, Telecom Italia is providing products based on the 3G MDT to urban transport operators, while Selecta Digital Service of Venice is using the Varitronix touchscreen for a short time.”

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