

# Information in the Heat of the Moment

Technology that allows firefighters instant access to potentially life-saving information.



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*Mark Lord, Technical Projects Officer  
for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.*

## Problem

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service needed a rugged, mobile solution that would provide instant access to information for 15 vehicles that were using an out-of-date paper record system when responding to emergency calls

## Solution

General Dynamics Itronix Duo-Touch II Tablet PC

## Applications

A hardware and software solution giving fire crews access to critical information including risk and mapping data, databases on hazardous substances and vehicle information

*Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service chose the General Dynamics Itronix Duo-Touch II Tablets for use on-board 15 vehicles. The tablets are a rugged, easy-to-use solution for tough working environments, including fire and rescue situations.*



## Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service has a simple but crucial aim: to save lives, reduce risk, provide humanitarian services and protect the environment.

The service looks after more than one million people across five constituent councils in the North East of England and is on call 24-hours a day, 365 days of the year to respond to a whole host of emergency situations.

At the core of the service is a fleet of vehicles which includes 31 front-line pumping appliances and 16 special appliances, ranging from aerial ladder platforms to heavy rescue equipment. The crew on-board often need to contact their control room to access vital information to deal with the situation at hand. Historically, that would mean using paper records to find safety-critical information during time-critical incidents.

## Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Fifteen of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's vehicle appliances were still using paper-based information. "There is a direct relationship between gathering and retrieving risk information to support firefighting operations, and firefighter safety," said Mark Lord, Technical Projects Officer for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. "While information was provided in paper form it could not be guaranteed to be up-to-date. Additionally, for health and safety reasons, the amount of equipment kept in the appliance cab was kept to a minimum, which limited access to records."

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service turned to the General Dynamics Itronix Duo-Touch II Tablet PCs to place on board each of the 15 appliances. The rugged, easy-to-use tablets are ideal for tough working environments and perfect for the fire and rescue service.

General Dynamics Itronix's partner company, Steatite, provided a range of hardware including Mobile Data Partnership docking stations and mounts, a Mobitex modem antenna, Cisco WiFi PCMCIA card and Cisco

Aeronet Wireless Access Points, which were installed in 17 fire station appliance rooms.

For Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, the Duo-Touch II Tablet PCs were pre-installed with software that included Asset Co-Modas, Chemdata 2009 and Autodata 2009. Asset Co-Modas allows crews to access updated information to assess risk and analyze hydrant and mapping data in an efficient and user-friendly way. Chemdata 2009 is a database containing more than 35,000 substances with over 112,000 different chemical names. It includes pure trade names with advice to emergency responders for incidents involving hazardous materials, chemical spillages, fires, first-aid, PPE and decontamination. Autodata 2009 provides firefighters with safety information on vehicle technology (i.e., airbag locations, etc.)

Duo-Touch II Tablet PCs have already had a profound effect on the efficiency of the service. Information is now available at the touch of a button, improving the speed at which crucial data can be assessed. Mapping data is provided

directly to the cab and information about the incident is given en-route.

*"All of this ensures our personnel are better equipped with the best information possible when attending an incident."*

*"They minimise risk to prevent loss of life and injury from fires and emergencies."*

*Mark Lord, Technical Projects Officer for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.*

The service has already identified an opportunity to run further applications on the Duo-Touch II Tablet PCs with the installation of building inspection forms that can be synchronised wirelessly on the return to the appliance room.

Mark added, "They (Duo-Touch II Tablet PCs) have made a major difference to the way we operate. It provides the same functionality as those solutions used on the rest of our fleet, but in a more compact manner."



**STEATITE**



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