

# The Imperial War Museum

## Case Study



### The Client

The Imperial War Museum tells the story of wars involving Britain and the Commonwealth from the First World War to the present day. It looks at life in the front line as well as on the home front and explains the causes, course and consequences of the conflicts in an engaging, stimulating and thought-provoking way.

The Imperial War Museum is a collection of five museums. Imperial War Museum London is an internationally-renowned museum which houses key collections including a rich display of art; HMS Belfast is a Second World War cruiser moored on the Thames; The Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms was Churchill's secret underground HQ during the war and is now also home to the first museum dedicated to his life; Imperial War Museum Duxford is Europe's premier aviation museum near Cambridge and Imperial War Museum North in Manchester is one of the most talked-about new museums in the UK.

None are museums of the distant past, but are about people who are still alive today, their great-grandparents, grandparents and parents. The wars of the twentieth century have shaped all of our lives and visitor numbers to the Museum bear witness to people's belief in the importance of learning about and from the past. [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)



*"Cybertill and J2 have proven to be a flexible system that we have used for over 3 years across multiple branches within a geographically diverse and complex organisation. The immediate access to stock, sales and profit information has enabled my team to analyse retail performance in detail and has contributed to a marked improvement in our results."*

Jo Wilks, Head of Retail for the Imperial War Museum.

### The Retail Challenge

Whilst the Imperial War Museum is a charity with all proceeds from visitor traffic and retail sales supporting its work, it nevertheless needs to run with as an efficient and profitable enterprise. The five shops currently handle over 500,000 transactions each year, generating more than £3.5million in revenue.

The shops offer a wide range of merchandise with some 8,000 individual items including gifts, learning resources, CDs, DVDs, posters, models and kits, and over 5,000 books. Each shop has a different theme and customer base, and stocks unique product ranges. This makes life more challenging for the team of buyers and merchandisers that manages them. The Imperial War Museum also has a growing online store ([www.iwmshop.org.uk](http://www.iwmshop.org.uk)) and a mail-order business.

With increased visitor traffic resulting from highly successful exhibitions and events programmes, the Imperial War Museum needed a new electronic point-of-sale system to cope with the expected trading increase in its shops, to help manage stock

more efficiently between sites and to support the company's growing e-commerce business.

#### The Solution

In 2005, the Museum decided to install an EPoS system that would streamline stock management across all its locations and that would ensure that sales during peak trading periods ran smoothly.

As a government-funded body, the Imperial War Museum was obliged to follow a rigorous tendering process. It looked at fifteen EPoS systems before it narrowed its selection down to a short-list of four.

The business was keen to reduce the dependency of its retail staff and its small IT team. The aim was to install a system that was easy to manage and use, which it could keep constantly up to date, with little effort. It felt confident this would allow IT staff to concentrate on managing internal systems and networks, and would equip the retail team to function independently.

#### The Benefits

- Stock can be more efficiently coordinated between multiple sites, and stockholding is reduced as a result
- Improvements have been seen in shop floor operations, and in the logistics and distribution processes
- Store EPoS, mail order and e-commerce have all been brought together on one integrated platform
- Real-time stock and sales data is always accessible and can be managed remotely from any location
- The systems ease of use means that retail staff are less dependent upon IT colleagues

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### The Process

After a thorough evaluation, the Imperial War Museum awarded the contract to Cybertill, a leading EPoS and e-commerce solution provider. The company opted for an integrated multi-channel approach, which brings together its shops, e-commerce and mail-order as a single operation.

The system is delivered remotely from Cybertill's data centre as an internet-based 'Software as a Service'. Cybertill turned to its preferred hardware supplier, J2 Retail Systems, to install its J2 920 PC-based touchscreen tills in each shop.

A real-time, consolidated view of trading covers shops, the online store and mail-order operations. Secure access to sales, cash flow and inventory is constantly available regardless of location.

The 'software as a service' approach has meant an end to concerns about data backups, the server room environment or local network issues. Virtually fault-free performance is guaranteed, and this has had a positive impact on retail operations. When it comes to system updates, Cybertill takes care of them also.

### The Results

Overall, the new Cybertill and J2 solution has cut costs and improved reliability. Stock management has been centralised, giving client Sales and Purchasing Managers access to a detailed audit trail of transactions. This has enabled them to reduce excess stock levels by more than 20% and to adopt a 'just-in-time' approach to purchasing to maximise profitability.

The system is intuitive to use, even for part-time staff who work only a few days a month. This makes it ideal for a retail environment where staff

turnover is high and sales volumes peak at the busiest trading times.

Product lines, sales figures and stock levels are all managed and updated in real time. Sales from the shops, the online store and the mail-order operation automatically register on a single sales database. Customised sales reports are easy to generate against a common view of the business and help the team to identify popular and poor-selling items. Armed with this information, it can respond to sales trends and optimise the product range.

### About J2 Retail Systems

J2 Retail Systems is a specialist manufacturer of PC-based touchscreens, LCD touchscreen monitors and point-of-sale hardware to the retail, hospitality and leisure industries. With 50,000+ units installed worldwide, its clients include Vue Entertainment, Greggs and Thresher Group.

By controlling its own design and manufacture, J2 has built a reputation for innovation, reliability and cost-effectiveness. Credited with introducing 'thin client' EPoS to the market, J2 uses emergent technologies wherever possible to reduce the cost of hardware ownership.

### About Cybertill Limited

Software house, Cybertill, prides itself on providing one of the few solutions that performs as well in a single channel as when integrating point-of-sale activity across stores, e-commerce web sites and mail-order. Users of its 'Software as a Service' range from single-store retailers and independent online businesses through to multi-channel operations and 1,000-store global brands.

Cybertill technology is used in over 3,000 UK and overseas store locations and powers over 500 e-commerce businesses and countless mail-order operations. Clients include Farrow & Ball and St. Paul's Cathedral. The company has been singled out for numerous technology and business awards.

### J2 920

The J2 920 represents leading-edge technology for the most demanding point-of-sale, point-of-service, and point-of-information device markets. This industry-standard open platform uses Intel's latest technology, the M1.2GHz processor, and can operate a broad range of operating systems and peripheral options such as Wireless Connectivity, Dual VGA Screens, CD Rom, DVD, and iButton.

Durability has not been compromised in the 920's sleek and elegant design. Designed with longevity in mind and engineered to withstand harsh environments, this is a robust and dependable system. Cost-effective pricing, J2's trademark 3-year warranty and inbuilt Chip & PIN compliance make it the de facto system for retailers and the hospitality trade.



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[www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

[www.iwmshop.org.uk](http://www.iwmshop.org.uk)



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