

# Allport Streamlines its Warehousing Operations



**For any organisation involved in the forward freighting of goods, the accuracy, efficiency and speed of its operations are crucial factors in ensuring a high level of customer service and retaining key customer contracts. When Allport was in the process of specifying a new warehouse system at its Air Freight Division in Heston, it starting seeking new measures to streamline and improve upon its labelling, scanning and printing operations.**



**Industry:** Warehousing & Logistics

**Application:** Warehousing & Stock Management

**Product Solutions (Hardware and Software):**  
MAC (Mobile Application Cart) Workstation

## Company Profile

Established in 1963, Allport is the UK's leading independent freight forwarder. With over 300 million kilos of goods moving through its road, sea and air distribution network every year, Allport supplies unique freighting solutions for many companies across a wide and diverse range of market sectors. With notable customers such as ASDA and Sainsbury's, Allport was identified in 2003 as the 3rd largest freight forwarder in the UK.

## The Business Challenge

Paul Duke, IT Manager at Allport, explains "The need for new measures to streamline our warehousing operation at Heston became apparent when we were specifying our new warehouse management system. We needed the ability for stock which was not already on our system to be easily added to our main database and to be labelled and scanned into the new system. We did not want the warehouse operatives to have to stop what they were doing, go back to the main office to update the database with the new stock details and then go back to continue with their task. This was a very time consuming and inefficient process, so we decided that we needed to look into a viable alternative to this procedure."

## The Solution

Allport subsequently spoke to a number of its existing hardware suppliers to try to find a mobile and flexible solution that would reduce the time operatives spent on this simple procedure. It contacted automated data capture and mobile computing specialist UniQue ID to ask about its MAC product, a fully-powered, wheeled trolley onto which a PC processor, LCD monitor, keypad, barcode scanner and desktop printer can be securely fixed.



# CASE STUDY

The MAC workstation is a novel way of transforming desk-bound IT equipment commonly used in warehouses and distribution centres for labelling, scanning and printing into a fully mobile workstation. For maximum stability and manoeuvrability, even in the narrowest of aisles, the MAC has two fixed and two full-swivel rubber wheels, with a foot operated wheel break for simultaneous breaking of both the swivel head and the wheel.

The steel construction and rugged build quality make it suitable for even the harshest working environments. Operatives are able to use the MAC for a full shift using the standard battery, and because Allport was able to customise the cart and bolt its existing equipment onto the trolleys, it met its requirements exactly.

## The Benefits

The MAC workstation can be used for tasks such as inventory checks, product labelling and packaging. They are now used in the Allport warehouse for all recording, printing and scanning of stock details right at the point of activity, eliminating the need for operatives to continually return to the main office in order to upload new information into the database. This new system has resulted in a saving of between 10 –20% in man hours, due to the ability to upload information to the database in real time via the wireless network, directly from the MAC Workstation.

*Paul Duke explains, "We really struggled to find a suitable solution to our problem as our existing suppliers could not supply units which would accommodate our requirements. We did look at having fixed workstations and printers placed at various points within the warehouse, however this still gave us the issue of having to interrupt a job to find a fixed station to upload stock details onto the system. We also considered hand held data collection terminals, but the screen size of the units proved to be too small and the issue of mobile label printing still remained.*

*The MAC was the perfect solution to our needs and fitted our requirements as we could accommodate a PC, label printer and scanner onto the same trolley so that all tasks could be performed at the point of activity instead of users having to continually return to the office. The trolleys have been a real hit with the operatives within the warehouse and time has been saved, not only in terms of the warehouse process, but also in terms of the visibility of data to the customer service and operations departments. UniQue ID has been fantastic in helping us to implement this solution and we expect to install further units in our other warehouses in the future."*

