Loudoun County Public Library Improves Service using the QuickScan Imager from Datalogic - Datalogic

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Overview

Libraries turned to bar codes over 30 years ago as a way to track the many resources they provide their patrons. Books, periodicals, music, books on tape, DVDs and users have distinct numbers that are ideal for tracking with bar code technology. Until recently, implementation of bar code technology has been straight forward and worked smoothly; but today library patron expectations for mobile device support makes old implementations inadequate.

When the public library in Loudoun County, Virginia expanded, it was delighted by the large number of new patrons wanting library cards. However, users that kept their membership information digitally on their mobile devices could not leverage their smartphones for library use. In order to improve service, the library decided to implement QuickScan™ imaging devices to scan drivers licenses for faster data entry and to read smartphone screens for mobile device support.

The Challenge

Loudoun County, Virginia, has transformed itself from a rural based economy to a center of high technology. The change began in 1980 with the explosion of the Internet. Technology giants including AOL, MCI, Orbital Sciences, and many more put their headquarters in Loudoun County. The local beauty was augmented by great infrastructure that included the Washington Dulles Airport. Employers were able to attract workers to an area that offered a great place to live along with easy transportation to anywhere in the world.

In 1984, the Loudoun County Public Library implemented the use of bar code technology to track patron activity such as holds, items checked out, fees, etc. This technology has made it easy to give users maximum access to library resources, create online access for patrons, and increase efficiency of library operations.

On February 23, 2013, Loudoun County Public Library's eighth branch, Gum Spring Library, opened. That day more than 6,000 people visited the library, over 1,000 new library cards were issued, and 16,000 items were checked out. The day was a great success but also stressed library systems and staff as each of the library cards issued required extensive manual data entry.

The Solution

Wennie Fleming, Library Automation Specialist for Loudoun County Public Library, turned to BayScan Technologies, a Datalogic Certified Business Partner, for assistance. "We have been working with BayScan Technologies for years and asked the company to help solve our problem," says Fleming. "Data integrity is very important and manually entering over 1,000 new patrons in one day will lead to erroneous data."

Manual data entry, whether entering 1,000 new library cards or just 10, is time consuming and a

potential source of error which impacts customer service. In an effort to avoid these issues, BayScan Technologies suggested the use of imaging scanners that could read bar codes on a patron's drivers license and automatically populate fields such as name and address in the database. The QuickScan™ QD2430 2D imager was selected for its ability to read bar codes in any orientation as well as on mobile device screens.

The QuickScan imager is an affordable device that was specifically created to provide outstanding omnidirectional reading of virtually all codes. This device features an illumination and aiming system that consists of soft, dark red light combined with two blue LED triangles pointing at the targeted bar code. The result is a precise aiming system that provides a fast, reliable scan in an elegant and robust 2D imager.

Datalogic's patented "Green Spot" technology is available on QuickScan devices as well. When a bar code is read, a green spot is projected on the code informing the user of a good read. Green Spot technology is ideal for quiet environments like a library because the scanner sound can be turned off so as not to disturb library patrons.

Results

Loudoun County Public Library has implemented QuickScan handheld bar code scanners at each of its eight branches. Today, application for a library card is simple, fast, and accurate. New patrons present their drivers licenses which are scanned and the information is automatically entered into the library system. Next, a library card that contains a bar code is scanned and assigned to the new patron and the transaction is complete. The process takes a fraction of the time needed for manual data entry. Wennie Fleming says "what used to take five minutes now takes a matter of moments."

In addition to eliminating manual entry, the QuickScan™ QD2430 2D imager also allows library patrons to check out materials faster and easier than ever before. Patrons, who use mobile applications like Key Ring to store their library cards, can now use their smartphones for library checkout. The QuickScan™ QD2430 2D imager reads the patron's mobile device screen to obtain the patron's library card information. Then, the bar codes on materials to be checked out are scanned and added to the patron's account. The process is quick, simple and accurate and customer satisfaction is greatly enhanced.

Customer: Loudoun County Public Library
Industry/Sub-Industry: Services /Library
Application: Library Card Registration
Country: United States of America
Datalogic Product: QuickScan QD2430
Datalogic Partner: BayScan Technologies

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