



New Technologies, New Opportunities - Special Report

Installers and other stakeholders from the installation sector gathered in Daventry on Thursday of last week (May 13th) to network, visit the exhibits provided by the event sponsors (listed below) and to hear an absorbing series of presentations from a varied line up of speakers at the 2010 FCS Comms Installer event .

The event was ably chaired by **Mel Brown of Executive Installations** who introduced the theme of the day – the need for installers to respond to changes in the types of technology and devices being installed in vehicles and the opportunities to access new business for those installers who have the appropriate skill-sets. Several of the event speakers provided examples of the increasing technical sophistication of the equipment and systems now being fitted into vehicles of all types and specifically identified the need for client organisations to be able to identify installers equipped to carry out this type of installation.

Steve Ashworth of Halfords was the lucky winner of the new Blackberry Bold 9700 and Bluetooth headset in the prize draw sponsored by RIM.

Below is a brief snapshot of the presentations provided by each of the event speakers:

*****Peter Heredge** and **Brian Butler** of the **National Police Improvement Agency** provided an overview of the work of the NPIA highlighting the technical sophistication, diversity and complexity of the equipment installed into police and other emergency service vehicles. Peter highlighted the approach of the police in developing a “single vehicle architecture” approach to their fleets. Delegates were advised that a decision which will effectively require that only FITAS accredited installers will be allowed to work on these fleets is imminent.

*****Claire Penfold**, European Customer Operations manager of **Fleetmatics** explained how a commitment to quality has helped Fleetmatics to win new business and how the company has grown as a result of this. Claire focused on Fleetmatics’ decision to use only FITAS accredited installers has helped to demonstrate how Fleetmatics guarantee the provision of good workmanship, proven knowledge and practical ability to provide a quality, safe install

*****Jeff Scott** representing **lfitstuff.com** spoke passionately about the need to enforce standards and to ensure that all installs are safe, secure and sustainable. Jeff graphically illustrated how cut price installs are damaging the industry and are not compatible with the safe, secure and sustainable approach. Jeff also highlighted the value for installers of participating in the lfitstuff community.

*****Stewart Whyte** of **ACFO and Fleet Audits** spoke about the current pressures on fleet operators, the increasing adoption of tracking solutions to optimize efficiency and the threat to the after fit sector posed by ever rising OE specs. Stewart highlighted the example of a large public sector fleet where telematics will be a major part of the replacement process. This offers a significant opportunity for installers but only for those who can demonstrate their bona fides via FITAS as this type of operator must manage risk and due diligence responsibilities.

*****Neal Skelton** of **ITS UK** presented on the future of Intelligent Transport Systems and the work of ITS UK. Neal described the growth in road traffic and how Intelligent Transport Systems will be needed to manage this ever increasing volume. The new technology will also provide better levels of safety and greater efficiency in use of a finite resource using, for example, active monitoring and real time information to drivers and traffic managers.

*****Matt Walker** of **New Forest Communications** provided a fascinating glimpse at some of the new and future technologies which are being introduced into vehicle tracking. Matt explained how the growing sophistication of these technologies will demand a higher level of skill and knowledge in areas such as RF theory and on the ground operation and suggested that those who can demonstrate such skill will be well placed to benefit from the new opportunities which are arising.

*****Tim Cull** of **Telecom Policy Services** provided an update on the ongoing review of FCS1362 which was launched in April. Tim explained the proposed changes in scope relating to new types of equipment and a broader range of vehicles and outlined some of the new approaches to making the "Installers Bible" an even more valuable tool by providing links to more detailed specific guidance. Tim advised that the workgroups set up at the April plenary will report back to the second meeting in June and invited attendees to get involved.

*****Michael Eagle** General Manager of **FCS** gave a brief update on the FITAS programme focusing on growing interest in the accreditation scheme evidenced by increasing numbers of both members and patrons. Michael also outlined plans for extending the training available to members, specifically for a blue light module and for "petro-chem" certification.

*****John Thomson** of **Panorama Antennas** described the importance of adherence to up to date regulations in the critical petrochemical area and the very high cost of failure. John provided an update on plans to work with the Energy Institute to update the current guidelines and to develop a training module which will enable installers to demonstrate their compliance via a certification based on this.