



In Hand Guides

Audio guides for the tourist life style sector.

The Book of Kells, Kilkenny Castle, Sydney Tower... just some of the tourist attractions that have adopted this versatile audio technology.



“The TEC Centre team are open, friendly, available to meet at short notice - access and the ability to move at short notice is of great help to a start-up.”

Trevor Winckworth
Founder and Managing Director

The Need

The TEC Centre's team of researchers in Embedded Systems provided Trevor with advice on possible technical approaches. In Hand Guides' initial requirement was to develop a prototype audio device with head set and volume controls, which could demonstrate basic functionality to prospective customers.

In 2009 In Hand Guides advanced the concept and sought to combine their existing Smart Audio solution with an e-ticketing functionality.

The Solution

TEC worked on a roadmap of R&D projects with the company. Within three months of signing the contract TEC had the basic prototype optimised and ready for demonstration. This involved forming a project team with expertise in RFID and wireless technologies. All aspects of design and development/validation took place in house.

To address the specification for integrating an e-ticketing functionality into the guide, TEC needed to equip the device with RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology.

The project resulted in the development of a prototype that could have a topping up facility to allow access to designated sites and areas.

Challenges

The technical integration of multiple different technology platforms required precision planning and management. Creating a user-friendly device was an imperative, despite complexity of usage and system operation across multiple sites and for a variety of purposes.

Critical Success Factors

The project was funded by the Enterprise Ireland Innovation Voucher scheme. The objective of the Innovation Voucher initiative is to build links between Ireland's public knowledge providers and small businesses. Field trials were carried out to test the prototype's capabilities in a number of tourist sites.

Benefits of the Engagement

Having successfully developed a prototype from a technical concept, TEC provided In Hand Guides with the opportunity to create a ready for market device manufactured in China.

TEC and In Hand Guides established an excellent working relationship over the course of the two development stages. This laid the foundations for on-going discussions regarding the next phase of innovation.

“We are delighted to have developed a sustained partnership with In Hand Guides on developing smart tourist solutions. This partnership has shown that it's possible to build initiatives with Innovation Vouchers that can have a practical impact on communities.”

Dr Kieran Delaney
R&D Manager NIMBUS Centre

