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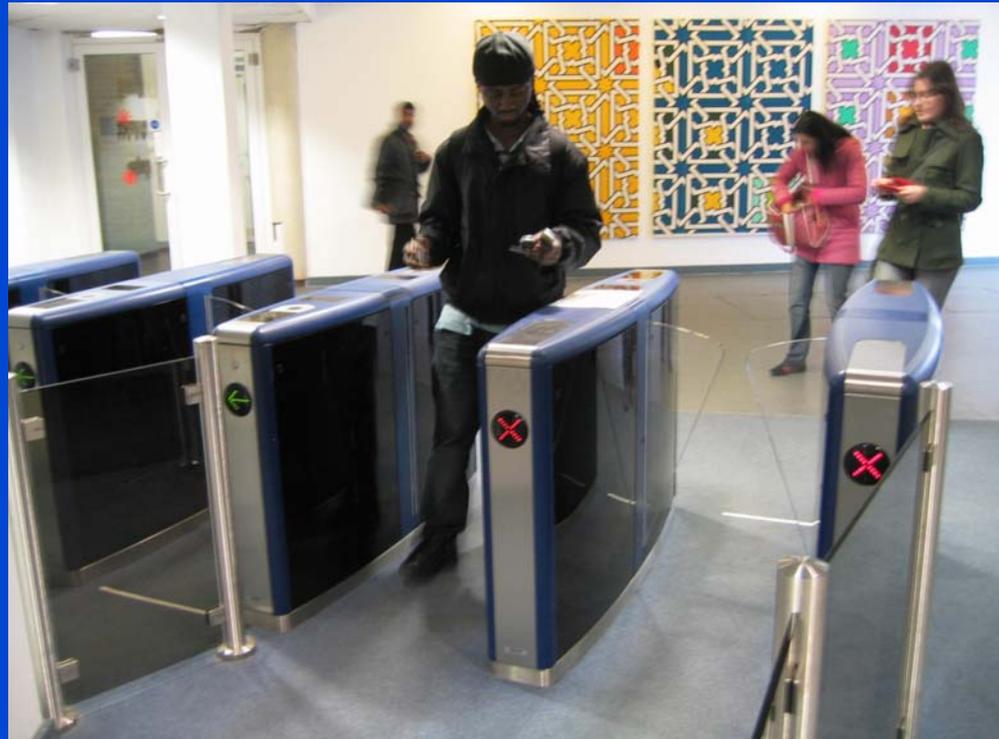
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Chris Sarchet: Excited about the development opportunities of Smart Card technology in the University



SMART CARDS REGISTER WITH UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

Faced with an ageing barcode-based registration and card production system with a desire to harness the power of new e-administration technology, the University of Bedfordshire decided to take a fresh look at how they register students and manage access.

A process review working group had reviewed admission and registration processes and set out a number of clear objectives, one of which was to introduce a 'smart card'. A Working Group was then established by Chris Sarchet, the Head of central Co-ordination and Support department within the Registry, and a timetable to implement the system was established.

Three critical aspects were identified by the working group: the new system had to be implemented by September, in time for the new registration year; it had to be fully supported and offer opportunities for further development with new support services including web access for students.

The old barcode based card production system was outdated and no longer supported, so the timeline to introduce a new system was critical. The university sent out tenders for a replacement system and contacted SB Electronic Systems to see if they wanted to apply. In late July, on the hottest day of the year, SB Electronic Systems' Kevin Sontag presented a Mifare proximity Smart card solution to the working group – but the heat was on in more ways than one due to a rapidly approaching registration deadline.

"Getting this system implemented on time was a major consideration for us and the confidence we had in SB Electronic Systems getting this done in time played a crucial part in us awarding them the contract," said Chris Sarchet.

The Smart card was initially specified to provide electronic student attendance in the University and access control solutions to the library using the proximity read function of the card while retaining the barcodes to work with legacy systems. However, the card offered enormous potential to develop new features including full access control, student audit, cashless facilities, monitoring of examination attendance and assistance with assessment handling.

Smart Card was specified to provide access control to the University library

TELEPEN

Smart Card Case Study

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Six Securit 5500 card management terminals were installed to handle registrations

The University has now issued more than 25,000 Smart Cards to staff and students

SB Electronic Systems chose Mifare as the card platform for the University. They knew that Mifare offered the ideal combination of security for applications that could include cashless vending; the flexibility to run multiple solutions from one card independently; price; and a strong market presence to maximise the University's choice of supplier for future requirements and applications.

An initial purchase of 15,000 cards was made, a back-end Securit 5500 card management system installed and six registration work stations complete with cameras and card printers were set up for registration. Working right up to the deadline, the system was being tested during the weekend prior to registrations beginning the following Monday. The system also had to integrate with Information Services Team systems including the SITS student database which holds the source student data and library services.

"Getting everything up and running within our timescale was extremely challenging," said Chris. "Fortunately, we had one-to-one support and excellent communication from SB Electronic Systems and managed to implement the system and started registering students on time and without issues."

Since the September implementation, the university has issued more than 25,000 smart cards to staff and students. Now the university is engaging with the Computing Department to pilot the next stages of development.

"We want to use the smart card technology to remove some of the onerous, boring administration processes," said Chris.

'Getting everything up and running within our timescale was extremely challenging'



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