

Fort Hood creates unprecedented accountability for its IT assets



Tracking technology – the old-fashioned way

The nation's largest U.S. Army post, Fort Hood, tasked a G2 ITS support contractor (property manager for installation and fixed property) with maintaining accountability for property assigned to him. This property included approximately 1,000 IT assets, such as servers, computers, network switches and more. These items reside in eight buildings around the base and three locations off-base in Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; and White Sands, New Mexico. Each year, aging equipment must be eliminated and new gear deployed, creating a constantly changing pool of assets.

"There is a continuous need for information related to our IT assets," said Terry French, a contractor who serves as property manager for the base's IT equipment. "The U.S. government demands accountability for the property assigned to us."

The base must keep track of each asset type, number and location. These records become critical several times each year during audits performed by IT managers and outside inspectors.

In the past, French relied on a manual system for asset tracking. When new items were received from the PBO (Property Book Office), he wrote down a list of their serial numbers and model numbers. This information then would be manually entered into a customized Microsoft Access database that he created. Often, these hand-written lists were difficult to read, resulting in numerous data-entry errors.

When the need for field audits arose, French would spend hours – flashlight in hand – locating specific pieces of equipment. French often had to move assets around to view the serial and model numbers used to track the items. This data was then recorded using pen and paper and compared to the Access database. Unfortunately, French sometimes had difficulty reading his own handwriting, which added aggravation to the process.



CASE STUDY AT A GLANCE...

▶ **INDUSTRY**

Federal government – military

▶ **ORGANIZATION PROFILE**

Located in Central Texas, Fort Hood is the largest U.S. Army post in the United States. It is also the nation's only two-division post.

▶ **SITUATION**

In a setting where accountability is key, an IT property manager at Fort Hood spent countless hours trying to track and account for more than 1,000 IT assets. Based on pen, paper and a Microsoft Access database, the process was error-prone and cumbersome. When reports were required, the frustration level increased further.

▶ **RESULTS**

With Wasp MobileAsset, the property manager dramatically decreased time spent tracking equipment and performing audits, while also improving the accuracy of information. In auditing time alone, Wasp MobileAsset saved the equivalent of \$30,000 per year, easily achieving payback on the investment in less than one month.

▶ **PRODUCTS USED**

- Wasp MobileAsset Enterprise
- Wasp WPA206 Mobile device
- Wasp WPL305 Barcode printer

“This was a time-consuming and cumbersome process,” French said. “Plus, the Access database was simply not designed to provide effective reports quickly at the time they were requested. I got tired of the wasted time and the errors that I struggled with each week.”

Getting it right – and simple



Fort Hood began searching for a better method to more effectively manage its IT assets. French liked the functionality that Wasp MobileAsset provided and was pleasantly surprised to learn it was within his budget.

Wasp MobileAsset gives organizations the ability to automate manual processes, saving time and eliminating data-entry errors. The MobileAsset solution allows customers to track and manage valuable company assets, conduct audits, and instantly access managerial reports.

Using MobileAsset, French simplified and improved his entire process for IT asset management, from initial acquisition and receiving to tracking, auditing, reporting and disposing of assets.

IT assets typically bear barcode tags applied by the manufacturer, including the item's serial number and model number. When new equipment is deployed, French scans each of these tags with a Wasp barcode scanner. The serial number and model number for the asset is automatically transferred into the MobileAsset software. Using MobileAsset, French then generates a unique barcode assigned to that particular device. He uses a Wasp barcode printer to create an asset tag, which is affixed to the asset in an easy-to-find location.

“This process is an easy, slick and foolproof method for recording an asset's serial number and model number using barcodes,” French said. “In the past, when I received new equipment, it took up to an hour to manually record all of the information. Now, that time has been reduced to less than 15 minutes.”

Similarly, MobileAsset made it easier for French to dispose of aging assets. As part of this process, he must account for the value of the item.

“In the past, this was virtually impossible,” French said “I didn't really know which assets should be eliminated, since there was no accurate accounting of these items. What's more, I didn't know when they were purchased, how much they were worth at the time of purchase, or how much they were worth now.”



“ This process is an easy, slick and foolproof method for recording an asset's serial number and model number using barcodes ”

Terry French
Property Manager

This process was further complicated by a government regulation stipulating that assets without a complete record could not be disposed of.

Now, using MobileAsset, ITS managers can easily generate reports that indicate which assets are over a certain age. These items can be located immediately, matched to the database, and disposed of quickly and easily.

Taking the “aaahhh” out of audits

ITS managers at Fort Hood are subject to three types of information requests from the U.S. government:

- field audits, where all assets must be physically inspected and their identifying numbers compared to a master list
- cyclical inventory audits, where an outside auditor must be physically escorted to 10 percent of randomly chosen IT assets
- informational reports on the number and type of specific items being used

Prior to using MobileAsset, ITS managers struggled to access the information needed to meet government requests. Now, the information is readily available.

- For field audits, French prints a list of all IT assets by location. When visiting each building, he simply scans the barcode on each asset. The data then can be automatically compared to the MobileAsset database to highlight any variances. This has reduced the time required for a field audit from three days to less than half a day.
- For cyclical inventory audits, French uses MobileAsset to run a report of the 10 percent of assets that must be physically inspected by the outside auditor. This report shows where each asset is located, and French uses this information to plan an efficient route for the inspection. What used to take a day or two now requires less than half a day. “Plus, the auditors are much happier with us, since they complete their task much faster and more efficiently.”
- When the government requests printed reports, French can generate them in minutes, rather than the hours previously required to create reports using an Access database.

“We have better information than ever before, plus we are saving tens of thousands of dollars in wasted time and effort,” French said. “I estimate that we save the equivalent of \$30,000 in time, just on the reduced field auditing alone. I really don’t know how any government property manager could operate without something like MobileAsset. It has simplified my life.”

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Terry French
Property Manager