

Goldsmiths College studies barcode applications

The use of barcode scanning technology has exploded in recent years – partly because it can be used in so many diverse applications. Goldsmiths College in London has recently embarked on two new projects, both of which take advantage of the versatility afforded by scanning hardware and software.



Goldsmiths is an autonomous part of the University of London, and is committed to the traditions, values and standards of the University. The College has a unique historical base in its South London community and a strong international reputation. As one of the UK's leading creative universities, it has a distinctive interdisciplinary mix of arts, humanities, social and behavioural sciences and education. ▶

Goldsmiths
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Case Study

The Psychology Department was established in the mid-1960s, and is committed to excellence in both teaching and research. The Department recently embarked on two new barcode scanning projects. The first was a system that can be used to carry out an inventory of computers. The second involves the use of barcodes on questionnaires. The Psychology Department was looking for a system that would be both very reliable and also portable.

Maurice Douglas, the Department's Chief Technician, explains: "A colleague recommended an independent consultancy, Spirit Data Capture. Spirit looked at our needs and they in turn recommended Bartender Pro barcode labeling software, a Datamax E4203 direct thermal printer, and two IMAGETEAM™ 3800LX barcode scanners."

Bartender Pro provides a highly sophisticated but simple way of producing high quality, customised barcode labels. The Datamax E4203 bar code printer is a compact, entry level thermal printer which is ideal for a wide range of label and tag printing applications - including a variety of barcode formats.

The IT3800LX is a long range version of Hand Held Products' popular IT3800 barcode scanner. It is an extremely versatile, high performance unit - it has one of the best reading performances available on poor quality labels, and has also gained an enviable reputation for its high levels of reliability.

The Psychology Department's first project involves an inventory of the several hundred computers it holds. One of the IT3800LX scanners is currently being used to scan barcode labels on the machines. The labels were produced by the BarTender software and printed on a HP5L and HP2100 printer.

Maurice continues: "We carry out an annual inventory, and the solution provided by Spirit enables us to perform this more efficiently. We connect the scanner to a laptop; run an access database which contains the equipment details; scan each machine; and then act upon the data received."



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Psychology Department Chief Technician

The second project involves the labelling of questionnaires produced by the Psychology Department. The department wants to ensure that individual details (such as names and addresses) are not used directly on the form, but are contained within the barcode. This project is still being developed, and the IT3800LX scanner may also be used other applications, such as scoring small samples.

Maurice concludes: "The system is still under development, although part of it has been running since February, and has been performing well. However, I don't expect both projects to be fully operational until about April next year. By then, we should be seeing further increases in efficiency due to the introduction of the new system."