



Customer: Intertek Group

Website: www.intertek.com

Customer Size: 35,000+

Country or Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Professional services—Data services

Partner: TAAP

Website: www.ontaap.com

Customer Profile

London-based Intertek provides quality and safety services for various industries in more than 100 countries worldwide. It tests, inspects, and certifies products for its diverse customer base.

Software and Services

- Windows Azure
- Windows 8
- Windows 7
- Windows RT
- Technologies
 - Microsoft Silverlight

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Intertek Uses Cloud-Based Mobile Solution to Improve Inspection Process

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James Canham, Technical Inspection Services Regional Business Unit Manager, Intertek

Intertek Group specialises in inspecting and testing industrial products. It wanted a real-time e-reporting system to replace its paper-based processes. TAAP built a cloud-based solution on Windows Azure designed for 15,000 engineers for use on tablet devices. Technical specialists now spend less time converting inspection data into written reports, which can be edited in Microsoft Word, offering clients easy access to reports.

Business Needs

Intertek Group provides quality and safety solutions for numerous industries worldwide. The company—founded in 1885 in the United Kingdom (UK)—tests, inspects, and certifies products for its customers and employs more than 35,000 people. Intertek, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange, operates in five divisions: industry and assurance, commodities, consumer goods, commercial and electrical, and chemicals and pharmaceuticals. In 2012, it had a turnover of £2 billion (US\$3 billion).

Intertek supports the manufacture of energy-generation and distribution equipment with testing and certification

solutions. The organisation required an overhaul of its user-configurable reporting system because the largely manual, paper-based process for creating reports from each inspection was time consuming and complex. The solution was to be rolled out to 15,000 users across 88 countries.

James Canham, Technical Inspection Services Regional Business Unit Manager, Intertek, says: “We wanted an application that would help us to create client reports electronically using Microsoft Word on tablets and laptops. We needed a solution that would allow our inspectors to create their inspection reports using minimal key strokes, but still produce a narrative report quickly.



"We need to deliver completed inspection reports to customers in Microsoft Word. It was paramount to our business to give inspectors the ability to edit their inspection reports manually in Microsoft Word. This being the case, it was an obvious choice to use Windows-based technology."

Intertek had several other requirements. Canham says: "The solution needed to work offline, integrate with an existing job management system, and produce high-quality branded reports displaying complex structured data in a straightforward style."

Solution

Mobile solutions expert TAAP specialises in software systems for field service organisations requiring mobile devices to transfer information in real time. TAAP developed an e-reporting software solution using the Microsoft Silverlight browser plug-in to allow Intertek the flexibility of using both Windows 7 and Windows 8 devices. The second phase of development will align the solution towards Windows RT, a variant of the Windows 8 operating system, and the Microsoft Surface tablet.

Gordon Smillie, Managing Director, TAAP, says: "The solution had to deal with hundreds of inspection forms, often with complex workflow requirements. As the inspection forms are now electronic as opposed to paper-based, the process ensures all data is captured and immediately transferred to a report format that can be edited in Microsoft Word. It allows instant access to report information displayed according to client guidelines, so it's professionally presented without being time consuming to create."

Intertek saves all completed reports— together with any photographic evidence of

the inspection—in a centralised portal hosted in the cloud on Windows Azure. This ensures secure access to documents through an Internet connection so that Intertek employees and their customers can retrieve inspection data easily in near real time. TAAP carried out training sessions for Intertek trainers, which took place in Prague, in the Czech Republic.

Canham says: "TAAP suggested using Windows Azure due to its flexibility and simplicity—it fitted our requirements for large quantities of big data. We worked with a small but highly competent team from TAAP. All of its staff were highly qualified in their fields. This came across in the positive, professional way they conducted their business. TAAP proved to be a trusted and reliable mobile solutions provider. Conducting workshops to brainstorm ideas was invaluable to the success of the project—many new and creative ideas came out of these sessions."

Benefits

The TAAP application gives Intertek inspectors forms that allow them to edit their reports in Microsoft Word while working on mobile devices or laptops running Windows 7 or Windows 8. All completed reports are then saved within a secure portal using Windows Azure technology and Microsoft data centres worldwide. Intertek and its customers can now access the inspection findings in near real time instead of waiting for paper-based reports.

- **Instant professional reports are accessible from a centralised portal.** Canham says: "Creating instant, detailed technical reports in Microsoft Word reduces the time it takes the inspector to fill in all the generic data. Inspectors

can focus on ensuring the technical detail is completed to a high standard that exceeds our client requirements."

- **TAAP application caters for majority of observations.** Canham says: "The TAAP application caters for around 85 per cent of the detailed observations that are made on the inspection. However, the inspector is free to add details that the application doesn't currently include. We can expand the level of detail in the application as our staff use it."
- **Microsoft mobile technology provides a robust, secure platform.** Canham says: "Windows 8 and Windows RT provide a secure platform for the TAAP e-reporting application using tablet technology. The application is developed with touch-screen capabilities in mind."
- **Windows Azure scales easily to meet peaks in demand.** Canham says: "The ability to scale up as our user requirements increase is the most important feature of Windows Azure for us. It is a highly secure and cost effective way for us to back up our storage of inspection reports."