

SDMobile

A White Paper on the Laptop Meter Reading System

Introduction:

Significant Digits Incorporated (SDI) is a software engineering company that focuses primarily on the utility industry providing software tools and embedded systems for route management, meter reading and utility billing. The vision of SDI is to become the premier software engineering systems provider for metered utilities industry through a total commitment to customer service and product excellence.

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SDI utilizes the latest Microsoft.NET environment in all their software development.

SDI works hard to stay ahead of the technology curve.

Historically, SDI was incorporated in 1992 when work was begun on the first SDReader Route Management System. The initial implementation was completed in 1993 with SDI's first customer. It was the first Route Management handheld meter reading system offered as a complete Microsoft Windows based tool. Development tools have since evolved and SDI with them. Today, SDI utilizes the latest Microsoft.NET environment to develop their utility management, meter reading and billing systems. SDI is staffed by competent and capable software engineers with a wealth of experience that reaches back to the 1970's. Through this experience and a strict determination for customer satisfaction, SDI's client base climbed to 400 in 2007 with customers spanning the United States, Europe and the Middle East.

Significant Digits Incorporated does not work on its own however. SDI has partnered with the top meter equipment and electronic equipment providers to offer the customer the highest quality equipment and software tools. Also SDI is constantly updating and increasing the scope of their products to ensure that they stay on the forefront of the technology curve. Not only does SDI constantly increase the scope of their current offerings, they also develop new technologies to increase the productivity of its users.

Significant Digits strives to win your business through superior, cutting edge products and retain your business through excellent customer service.

In summary, SDI is realizing their vision to become the premier software and hardware provider for municipalities and utilities through their commitment of providing powerful software products and excellent customer service. SDI prides themselves in being innovators in the field of utility management and consistently staying ahead of the technology curve by constantly thinking forward. The commitment to excellence in product development and customer support pursued by SDI can be summed up by a single fact. Their first customer remains a customer.

SDMobile is designed to pick up readings from a host of different AMR vendors.

Overview:

SDMobile is the meter reading tool SDI designed for the laptop utilizing Microsoft Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Vista or Windows 7. SDMobile attaches to one or more AMR receivers that stream meter readings they collect from their respective transmitters. The tool has the ability to pick up over 40 signals per second from a host of different AMR vendors.

SDMobile displays route data in grids segregated according to meters read, meters not read and all meters. Uniquely, SDMobile also supports visual read entry for those cases an AMR read is not available. In fact, SDI included all the functionality of the handheld application such as read entry, messaging, notes, searching etc.

The most exciting feature of SDMobile is the implementation of meter points on a real time map of the loaded route. This map is updated as meter readings are gathered providing a visual representation of the progress on the route being read. The mapping features include searching for particular meter information, the removal of points when read, the highlighted point for problem meter equipment, the ability to navigate, etc.

SDMobile can display a map of the meter route displaying all the meter points.

Solution Details:

The following is a basic description of the SDMobile processes.

- SDMobile receives route data from SDReader6 via network transfer or a USB memory device
- Route data is attached in the SDMobile tool for reading
- The AMR receiver(s) are connected and tested for functionality. The configuration parameters are preserved for future runs
- The Start AMR is executed to begin the read/update process
- As meters are read, the map and grids are updated real time providing multiple means of progress feedback
- For those meters where an AMR read is not possible, the user can stop the AMR and manually enter the reads
- At any time, the user can view the progress of what has been read, what has not been read or a collection of both
- The user can also view detail customer information and perform handheld application functions such as searching, attaching field notes, viewing messages and locating unread meters
- All processes in the read functions can be started, stopped, traversed as required by the user
- At completion of the reading process, the route data is detached and reads are transferred back to SDReader6 via network transfer or a USB memory device

Business Benefits:

There are many business benefits associated with the acquisition of SDMobile. Primary, SDMobile is part of the SDI Suite of tools which includes a billing package aimed at mid to small utilities, route management tools and advanced meter reading solutions. While SDI does produce its own billing package, the SDReader system can be used with any utility billing system. Moreover, no change is required in the billing system's AMR interface when switching to the SDReader system. The SDMobile tool also runs on any off the shelf laptop, which can be purchased for much less than a handheld meter reading computer.

SDMobile is able to gather many reads a second expediting the meter reading process.

One of the greatest features of SDMobile is its ability to gather over 40 reads per second. Coupled with this feature is SDMobile's ability to read from multiple vender AMR devices simultaneously. This vender open strategy is unique to SDMobile. In addition, the flexibility to gather radio reads as well as enter visual reads when AMR reading is not available yields SDMobile as the all inclusive AMR tool. This not only shortens the time that the meter readers need to be in the field, it eliminates the need to re-read routes with problem meters.

As a prime benefit, SDI offers SDMobile for a below competitive price. The software is intuitive and easy to use. Half a day for setup and half a day for training is all that is typically needed to fully utilize this product.

As always, SDI's personable and knowledgeable customer service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Summary:

Significant Digits Incorporated has been providing advanced software and hardware technologies to the utility management community since 1993. The staff of expert software engineers is constantly developing and re-engineering ways to better serve their customers. By utilizing the latest advancements in hardware technology and software development practices, they remain on the cutting edge of utility management innovation. In addition, Significant Digits Incorporated offers around the clock customer service that is knowledgeable and personable.

SDMobile was created in the latest Microsoft .NET environment which ensures the latest technology remains the latest technology. SDMobile is used to collect radio transmitted meter readings. The user can gather all reads without leaving the vehicle. In the instance that a radio read is not available, the reader can manually enter the read. SDMobile shows unread meter accounts, accounts that have been read as well as every account in the database at the reader's discretion. Mapping is a huge part of SDMobile as well. The meter points are displayed on a map of the route that is updated as the meter reads are taken in. The reader is able to see a visual display of the percentage of the route that has been read as well.

SDMobile is a cost effective way to read meter routes for three reasons: The cost of acquisition is competitive, the time saved by doing drive by reading is significant, and the lower expense of laptops as compared to handheld computers. SDMobile and the SDReader suite provides flexible solutions to deal with today's meter reading needs and is expandable to tomorrows needs as well. This, in combination with SDI's excellent customer service, makes SDMobile the logical solution to drive by AMR.