



Videalert digital video platform delivers clean air zone compliance



Tim Daniels,
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According to current estimates, pollution from toxic gases such as nitrogen dioxide from traffic on our roads causes the premature deaths of 40,000-50,000 people each year. This is a massive issue for governments around the world. Whilst London, Birmingham, Derby, Leeds, Nottingham and Southampton have been given the powers to begin tackling this issue, hundreds of other towns and cities across the UK continue to be in breach of their EU emission targets.

Defra's proposed introduction of Clean Air Zones will target city areas where air quality problems are most serious to reduce the impact on people's health and create cleaner and healthier environments. The aim of the zones is to reduce pollution in city centres and encourage the replacement of old, polluting vehicles with modern, cleaner vehicles. The most polluting vehicles, including older buses, taxis, coaches and lorries, will be discouraged from entering these designated air quality hotspots.

Councils are already planning for the introduction of these zones, which will of course need to be cost effectively enforced. As one of

the UK's leading suppliers of traffic enforcement and management solutions, Videalert, has added Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and Low Emission Zone (LEZ) enforcement to the range of moving traffic contraventions supported by its DfT Manufacturer Certified hosted platform.

Videalert's hosted platform automates the management and enforcement of CAZ and LEZ contraventions. It provides real-time identification of vehicles including make, model, colour, gross weight, engine type, Euro rating and CO² emission band. Using this information, the system automatically determines whether an offence has been committed and/or whether the correct tariff has been paid for entry into the restricted zone. To minimise bandwidth requirements, these checks are carried out prior to evidence files being sent to the back office system for issuing PCNs.

The system can also be used in advance of CAZs and LEZs being established to identify the types of "high" pollutant vehicles entering these zones for determining potential charging rates/bands and the levels of possible contraventions in any target locations. This real-time intelligence enables councils to

better formulate their Clean Air Plans in line with achieving the optimum impact for improving air quality within these zones.

Videalert's hosted solution is unique as it does not require any hardware or software to be installed on customer premises. This makes it significantly easier for councils to rapidly deploy the latest digital CCTV enforcement systems without needing to procure and deploy any equipment within their IT infrastructures or install software on local PCs for evidence pack review. It can be delivered as a fully managed service, including the planning, supply, installation, commissioning and ongoing maintenance of all necessary on-street equipment with the latest digital cameras and associated communications connectivity.

Enforcing these zones further extends the capability of the Digital Video Platform which is at the heart of Videalert's hosted service. This intelligent platform supports multiple civil traffic enforcement, traffic management, crime prevention and community safety applications simultaneously using the same infrastructure, enabling councils to deliver more with less. ♦

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Experts join forces and urge urban authorities to capitalise on proven tools

“Decisive action to address the harmful levels of air pollution and toxic fumes in our cities does not need to be a leap of faith.” This was the message from Mandy Watson of Imperial Civil Enforcement Solutions and Tim Daniels of Videalert during a special joint presentation at the Smart Cities Transport Masterclass event held in London on 6th June 2017.

Highlighting the benefits of proven and integrated technologies to achieve new smart city objectives, Watson and Daniels urged urban authorities to drive the behavioural changes that will improve the quality of air in inner city areas.

“Harmful emissions are the curse of modern city living and are high on the agenda of practically every urban authority,” says Watson. “Directly affecting the quality of life and connectivity within our cities, air pollution is also a topic that lies at the very heart of smart city thinking. But, there really is no excuse for deferring any action to address the problem when practical, realistic and proven tools are already available to deliver immediate and effective improvements.”

In an important new collaboration, Imperial and Videalert have joined forces to deliver a comprehensive clean air enforcement solution harnessing the respective technologies and expertise of both companies. Significantly, the new end-to-end solution is fully integrated to avoid any risks of compatibility or configuration issues.

The new approach is based on the use of Imperial’s virtual permit solution for vehicles entering designated clean air zones, which features an automated tiered pricing tariff to reflect different vehicle types and

emission bands. Permit enforcement is provided by Videalert’s ANPR camera technology and dedicated digital video review platform, which also gather invaluable real-time intelligence for the hosting authority. All verified contraventions are then automatically uploaded to Imperial’s back office processing system.

“This is an example of two specialist service providers joining forces to provide a simple yet cutting edge smart city solution,” says Videalert’s Tim Daniels.

“Significantly, however, the innovative approach is founded on well proven and approved technologies so there are no risks or unknowns – we are just working together to extend the capabilities of existing technologies to deliver significant new outcomes.

“Everyone agrees that decisive action is needed to address the invisible shroud of harmful pollution and toxic fumes that cause so many premature deaths and blight the lives of everyone living and working in our cities. There is no magic wand that will extract the pollutants from the city air, so the answer has to focus on behavioural change by discouraging vehicles with the highest emissions from entering designated areas of the city. That’s where our new joint approach can make a very real and immediate difference – ensuring compliance with emission policies to deliver significant improvements to air quality.”

The presentation given by Mandy Watson and Tim Daniels at the Smart Cities Transport Masterclass at The Century Club in London provided confirmation of the new collaboration between Imperial and Videalert. It also demonstrated the versatility and reliability of the new end-to-end enforcement solution for emission permits and highlighted the close co-operation between the two companies in permit management and enforcement work for the London Borough of Barnet and other local authorities around the country.

The new solution features Imperial’s PermitSmart system. This provides unlimited tiered pricing options, simplified administration and full self-service functionality. The system uses virtual permits and benefits from a seamless interface with Imperial’s 3sixty back office notice processing software.

The enforcement system comprises Videalert’s latest digital ANPR cameras and the company’s dedicated digital video review platform to provide an automated solution for managing and enforcing contraventions within Clean Air Zones and Low Emission Zones. The system provides real-time identification of vehicles including make, model, colour, gross weight, engine type, Euro rating and CO² emission band. Using this information, it automatically determines whether an offence has been committed and/or whether the correct tariff has been paid for entry into the restricted zone. When a contravention has been identified and verified, full evidence packs are then uploaded to Imperial’s back office processing system for issue of the appropriate Penalty Charge Notice and subsequent progression to payment recovery. ♦

