Cyprus Government Accelerates Visitor Checks with Fast, Accurate Scanning of Digital COVID Certificates

SUMMARY

Customer
Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, Cyprus

Partner
Datatech, Zebra Premier Solution Partner

Industry
Hospitality

Challenge
Achieve fast, accurate and secure validation of COVID-19 passes at transit hubs and in busy places.

Benefits / Outcomes
- Reduced queues
- Reliable and secure COVID-19 pass validation
- Enhanced visitor experience
- Enhanced experience for enforcement officers
- A mobile solution built for the long term

Solution
- Customised SafePass, compliant with the EU DCC
- Zebra TC26 Mobile Computer
- Enterprise Mobility Development Kit
- Zebra Mobility DNA™ including StageNow and Enterprise Home Screen

Rugged Zebra Mobile Devices Empower Officers to Reduce Queues

Cyprus is one of the world's leading tourist destinations. It typically attracts four million people annually to experience its beautiful weather, stunning beaches, great food and rich history. While visitor numbers dropped during the pandemic, once travel started to open up, large numbers began to visit again.

When people visited during the time of travel restrictions, they were required to show proof of a recent COVID-19 vaccination. Details were checked at airports and ports against the European Union's Digital COVID Certificate (EU DCC). And, in line with the SafePass scheme in Cyprus, people could also be asked to show their certificate in busy public places such as supermarkets, restaurants and bars.

Cyprus deployed the EU DCC, and the associated mobile app, to validate passes. Smartphones were used by police officers and officials to read QR codes. The scanning was managed via the devices' cameras, which was a time-consuming process. Each scan took time to set up, with the phone needing to be carefully positioned to capture codes. There were also a high number of failed or incorrect reads. As a result, large queues built up. In addition, the devices were susceptible to breaking down as they're not designed to be used constantly, day in, day out. Batteries were also draining quickly.

To ease the pressure on its teams and improve the visitor experience, the government of Cyprus looked to improve the pass verification process.

A Dedicated Scanning Solution in a Consumer-Style Mobile Solution
Zebra Premier Solution Partner, Datatech is a well-known Cypriot company. It specialises in data collection and mobile technology and was approached by the project team, including the University of Cyprus and the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy to audit the technology. Immediately seeing the issues caused by smartphones, Datatech advised that a business-class mobile device should be used. It recommended Zebra Technologies' mobile solutions for Android™.

The project team selected the Zebra TC26 mobile computer. It looks like a smartphone, works like a smartphone and is priced similarly to a smartphone, but comparisons end there. It's built to be durable, with a long battery life and a range of features that set it apart as a tool for enterprise users, including an integrated and powerful scanner.

Datatech has worked with Zebra for many years. And, because it's familiar with the Zebra Enterprise Mobility Development Kit, which is designed to make fully using the data captured in applications easier, it quickly customised the SafePass app to help ensure seamless data collection using the TC26.

Given the sensitive nature of the data, Datatech also enhanced security. Zebra Mobility DNA™ is a powerful suite of software, tools and apps, which eases the deployment, management and optimisation of Zebra's devices. Datatech used Enterprise Home Screen, a feature of Mobility DNA, to lock down the device and only allow access to the SafePass app. Also, Datatech created a VPN, which used the cellular network to securely manage the two-way data transfer with the EU DCC.

Datatech also used StageNow, from Mobility DNA, to accelerate the staging of 450 devices. A barcode was created with the correct apps and settings. Each TC26 scanned the code with the settings automatically uploaded to each device.

Accelerated Deployment, Adoption and Improvements

With its knowledge of mobile apps, data collection and Zebra's device portfolio, along with the use of StageNow, Datatech had the solution ready in only three weeks. Improvements were immediate.
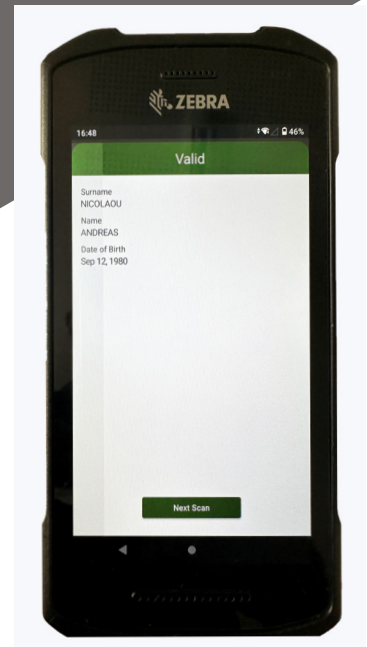
The integrated scanner on the TC26 is fast and accurate. It also captures codes that may be faint, damaged, scratched or otherwise compromised. As soon as the devices were deployed, queues moved much faster. This helped ensure a smoother transit for visitors and created a more favourable first impression as people arrived in the country.

Due to the familiarity of the Android operating system, virtually no training was needed, with users simply picking up the devices and using them. Indeed, feedback from officials using the devices was positive. The dedicated scanner, with scan buttons on both sides of the device for left or right-handed operation, made life much easier. Also, the bright screen of the TC26 mobile computer meant it could be used in direct sunlight and, with the changes made using the Enterprise Home Screen, a single battery charge was lasting for days.

The simplicity theme continues with the management of the devices. SOTI(R) MobiControl™ was deployed by Datatech to make it easy to upload software changes and security patches and to remotely monitor device health. With the TC26 mobile computer designed to work for years in the field, the Cyprus government has the proven, stable enterprise-grade mobile solution it needs to seamlessly manage any future travel restrictions.

"When people come into our country, the experience needs to be welcoming and smooth. With the mobile solution from Datatech and Zebra, we can securely and accurately process a large number of people quickly and easily. We're delighted with the solution, which, being robust and reliable, has the potential, if we need it, to be used for many, many years."

Mrs Kyriaki Pantziarou, Head of the office of the Minister - Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy.

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