



NJUG CASE STUDY

CASE STUDY 47: X-plo're Web Portal

Winner of the 2009 NJUG Quality Award

The National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) is the UK industry association representing utilities on street works issues. The 39 companies¹ we represent work to deliver gas, electricity, water and telecommunications to both individual consumers and UK plc.

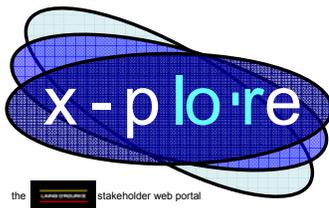
NJUG members need to continue to drive forward further improvements. We have therefore developed the NJUG Vision for World Class Street Works, which revolves around six main principles:

1. Safety is the number one priority
2. Utilities deliver consistent high quality
3. Utilities work together and in partnership with local authorities and contractors to minimise disruption
4. Utilities keep the public fully informed on all aspects of works
5. Utilities maximise use of sustainable methods and materials
6. Damage to underground assets is avoided

This case study is an example of NJUG delivering on these principles and turning the vision into reality.

Overview:

Laing O'Rourke, a leading utility contractor, is committed to delivering a high quality service to utility clients, which alongside safety, customer service and protecting the environment, forms the core of the company's approach to street works. A leading example of this is their X-plo're Web Portal, which gives stakeholders – including Highways Authorities – remote access to 'real time' progress information and photographs on Laing O'Rourke's works management system (WMS).

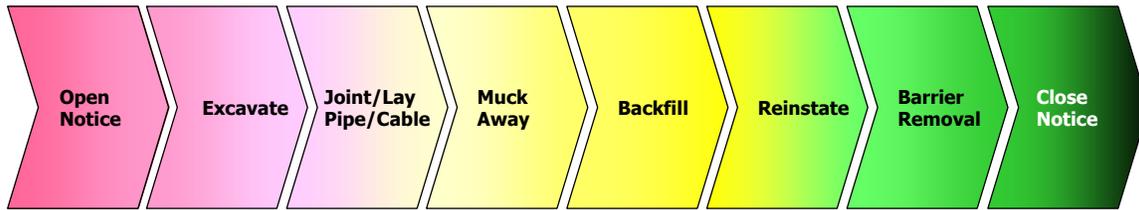


Case Study:

The WMS runs on an Oracle database and is managed in the mobile environment by Vodafone connectivity. Full training is given to all employees – site and office based, directly-employed, client or supplier – on the use of the system. For instance, in 2008/2009 nearly 1,700 training days were held.

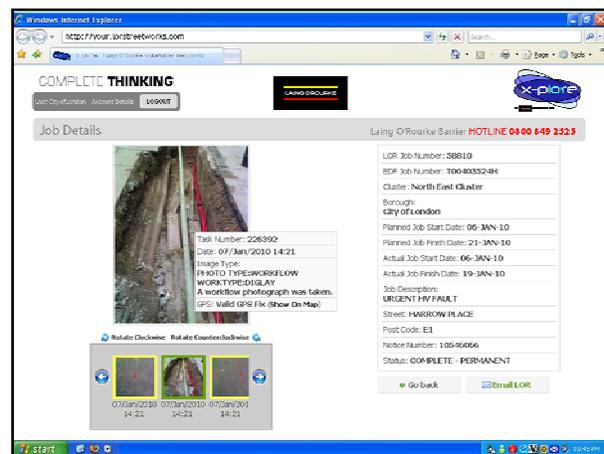
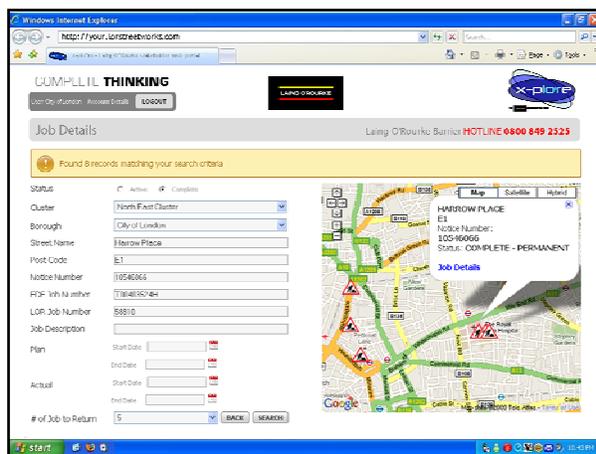
¹ NJUG's current members are Energy Networks Association (representing electricity and gas), Water UK (representing all water and wastewater companies), National Grid, Openreach, and Virgin Media. Our associate members are Clancy Docwra, Skanska Utilities, Balfour Beatty, Morrison Utility Services, Morgan Est, Nacap, PJ Keary, First Intervention, Carillion, Enterprise, Laing O'Rourke, Amec and SQS. Including members through trade associations, NJUG represents 39 utility companies, and 13 utility contractors.

The WMS requires a minimum of two photographs of every site visit (obtained using Personal Digital Assistants, or 'PDAs'), promoting compliance and providing evidence at the start and finish of each stage of activity, as detailed in the workflow diagram below. This sequence of event records document and time the progress of every excavation, which is then used to support legislative street works requirements.



This gives at least twelve photographs of each job, starting with the arrival image (recording the surface type and condition before work starts), to the clearance of barriers after work is completed, helping to ensure Laing O'Rourke comply with statutory noticing and permitting requirements. The pictures are sent electronically to the WMS and instantly tagged against the job number. The innovation of making this full and unadulterated record immediately available to Highway Authorities to view via X-plo're is a major departure from traditional relationships and has taken levels of trust to new heights.

Following six-week trials with the street works departments of Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, and Islington in April 2009, X-plo're is now available across all London Authorities where Laing O'Rourke are active. The only user IT requirements are an outward-facing IP address, an Internet connection and a standard web browser. For access governance, a user name is requested and a password issued. Laing O'Rourke's National Street Works Manager then visits each user to check connectivity and train them in using the portal.



The opening X-plo're screen allows jobs to be searched by Authority, location, notice number or status, or simply picked from a map of the borough. The photographs are available for three months after notice closure, after which they are archived but still available upon request. Job screens display photographs in a familiar 'eBay' page style, with scrollable chronological picture feeds below the main view.

Although initially introduced in London for EDF Energy, new and existing clients such as E.ON, Severn Trent Water, Thames Water and Welsh Water are all examining use of X-plo're as part of their own corporate transparency with Highway Authorities. It is now widely seen as a valuable tool in demonstrating added value to water and power asset replacement and rehabilitation programmes by sharing evidence of both works progress and street works for reference.

Steve Bender, Street Works Co-ordinator, City of London Corporation stated:

"The City of London Corporation was recently given access to Laing O'Rourke's web portal and our...impressions have been very favourable. Whilst this is a clear demonstration of individual innovation, Laing O'Rourke is to be applauded for granting access to local authorities. The system will...assist greatly in enhancing Laing O'Rourke's and their utility partner's reputations for high quality street works".