



Wireless management for installations

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In the field service market it is often requested to read data from equipment. Or change settings using a mobile device. A team of service engineers with state-of-the-art equipment uses Android and iOS smartphones and tablets to consult installation manuals and take records of working hours, travel and the use of spare parts.

Unfortunately the equipment to be serviced often has a legacy RS232 connector which requires special cables to connect a mobile device to this equipment. It might be the case that even this is not possible and the service engineer has to revert back to his laptop to get the job done.

Inmote recently created a demonstrator on the iPad where a RS232 cable connection is replaced by a WiFi adapter from Roving Networks. The WiFi adapter works on 2 AAA batteries. These are readily available at every petrol station and supermarket. A variant of the WiFi adapter is available which draws its current from the RS232 connection. However, in that case the RS232 connection must be able to supply a sufficient voltage and current level to power the WiFi adapter.

We have opted for WiFi as iOS and Bluetooth are a difficult combination. If one wants to configure equipment using an iPhone or iPad using Bluetooth, then this solution needs to be certified by Apple via the MFi program. The solution will then be considered as an official Apple accessory, but this certainly is a costly route to follow. Using WiFi you can easily start with iOS and also use other smartphones and tablets which work with the Android operating system.

You can opt for out-of-the-box products like RN-370 and RN-340M for your solution, but Roving Networks also offers WiFi- and Bluetooth modules which can be easily integrated into own custom electronics or cables. In such a custom cable one can integrate a microcontroller. This gives the possibility to create other solution where CAN, RS485 or other protocols are converted into WiFi. Inmote gladly develops the required embedded software for you. For the design of electronics Inmote works with freelancers, the Dutch distributor for Roving Networks and DataSphere Wireless GmbH.

Of course other thinkable applications are possible using Roving Networks technology such as remotely read sensor data and manage machinery (M2M via WiFi).

Therefore Inmote's motto is: Get rid of cables and extra laptops! Migrate your field service solution and maintenance applications to state-of-the-art smartphones and tablets. Does this message appeal to your organisation? Get in touch with Inmote, make an appointment and convince yourself.

Note: Roving Networks was acquired by microcontroller giant Microchip in april 2012. This acquisition ensures the long term availability of Roving Networks products.

