

# Fresh Thinking

for Meter Reading Management and Deployment.



Meter data management  
for utilities



**DATACOL**

*an Electra Group Company*

[www.datacolgroup.com](http://www.datacolgroup.com)

## Capability across electricity, gas and water

### TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS:

Meter reading management and deployment systems

### FIELD SERVICES:

Field services for manual and automated meter reading for electricity, water and gas

### CONSULTING:

Process consulting for meter data collection



## A Better Cash Register

Managing utilities like electricity, water and gas is a tough, demanding business. Increasingly open and competitive markets, rapid advances in technology and increasing pressures to reduce consumption have utilities looking for ways to work smarter.

At the core is collecting metering data - a moment of truth with a customer for any utility. As a utility company's 'cash register', the speed, accuracy and quality of meter reading has an immense impact on your ability to satisfy customers and build a profitable business.

DataCol is at the forefront of helping Australian and New Zealand utilities collect and manage metering data more effectively. Rather than relying on expensive and inflexible proprietary technology we apply fresh thinking, open systems and industry experience to provide solutions that make the collection of metering data smoother.

## Meter Reading Management and Deployment Systems

DataCol's not just a software company. Our heritage is as New Zealand's largest and most successful provider of meter reading services across the electricity, gas and water sectors. Crucial to this success has been the technology tools we have developed, including SevenX.

### SevenX: improving the efficiency of metering operations

Tired of being locked into tired, expensive and inflexible meter data collection solutions? Need a local vendor with a fresh approach and open technology that gives you a platform to improve your meter reading operations?

SevenX consists of server software that manages field force logistics and collects meter data from handheld units (HHU) in the field via manual or automated reads. Based on open technology, SevenX allows our customers to use commodity-priced handheld computers rather than expensive and inflexible propriety hardware.

**SevenX runs on standard handheld computers/PDAs running Windows Mobile. Clients purchase their own handheld hardware if preferred.**

### SevenX improves metering operations through:

- A streamlined 'meter to cash' process
- Timely, clearer views of meter reading operations to monitor performance and identifies process improvements
- Improved accuracy and validation of meter data. DataCol has achieved 98.5% reading attainment and 99.9% reading timeliness using SevenX for its water reading contracts
- Improvements in field force productivity and health and safety
- Significant reductions in call centre traffic with consequent cost reductions, as utilities increased the timeliness and accuracy of billing and meter-reading frequency
- Improved business efficiency, greater savings, and the ability to focus energy on growing businesses rather than managing logistics and complexity
- Greater ROI on technology investment
- A technology platform that enables other field force automation initiatives



*"Our business is committed to providing excellent customer service, and in DataCol, we've found a partner who is equally focussed on delivering a 'best in class' service to the people of Manukau."*

Raveen Jaduram, CEO, Manukau Water

## DataFlow: a seamless transition to smart metering

Worried about the logistics of deploying smart meters? Need a local vendor with proven technology to achieve efficient deployment which meets customer expectations?

While utilities are constantly focussed on improving the efficiency and lowering the cost of meter data collection today, most are also firmly fixed on the move to smart metering. Whether it is happening now, or in the next few years, most utilities are contemplating rolling out forms of AMR or AMI.

DataCol has developed a software solution called DataFlow to help utilities manage the logistics of this roll out. Built from experience based on a 35,000 meter deployment in the Canterbury region of New Zealand, DataFlow ensures a well-planned, carefully monitored deployment of new technology.

DataFlow is also used by field forces to manage metering services, manual reconnections and disconnections, and faults dispatch.

## Field Services

DataCol offers a full range of contract meter reading services for water, power and gas utilities in New Zealand. These include round scheduling, conducting normal scheduled manual meter reads, AMR reads, special reads, key management and management reporting.

Utilities choose DataCol for field services because of an outstanding service commitment that makes meter data collection easier for them:

- Lowering the cost of their data collection with our economies of scale
- Providing a single point of service for nationwide data collection
- Automatically returning data to their billing systems
- Improving management reporting

Completing over 9 million reads annually across New Zealand, DataCol works with New Zealand's largest electricity, gas and water utilities. Our services are provided as a complete turnkey service through to simply providing meter reading personnel.

ISO 9001:2008 accredited, DataCol can collect data from web-based reads, AMR meter reading system reads and manual reads. DataCol's system automatically receives these reads, separates and collates the data for the appropriate utilities and automatically forwards the data in the correct file format to the separate utilities. Our industry-compliant database maintains and verifies all data, logs changes, provides audit trails and stores the raw data.

DataCol has also developed an expertise for the retro fitting and installation of AMR equipment for water meters, and the deployment of AMI meters for electricity.

## Process Consulting

With over 10 years of experience in operating a meter reading field force, DataCol has built up strong industry knowledge and proven methodology across electricity, gas and water.

DataCol's process consulting team works with utilities and their service providers to analyse meter reading performance and identify initiatives for improvement. We can help project manage changes, and specify the introduction of new technology.

**DATA COL**  
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**Microsoft**  
GOLD CERTIFIED  
Partner



## About Datacol

DataCol's direct industry experience and knowledge sets it apart from other providers, particularly hardware or software vendors. Established in 1999, DataCol has grown to over 200 employees and contractors and gained widespread recognition for its service commitment and levels of innovation.

A fully owned subsidiary of New Zealand lines company Electra, DataCol has offices throughout New Zealand and in Australia. The combined Electra Group currently employs about 160 staff. Group turnover is around \$64 million with total assets of \$169 million.

Electricity and gas customers include:

- University of Auckland
- Bosco
- Contact Energy
- Energy Online
- Genesis Energy
- Kiwi Income Property Trust
- OnGas
- Powershop
- TrustPower
- Mercury Energy
- Meridian Energy
- Pulse Utilities



Water customers include:

- Manukau Water
- Metrowater
- Watercare Services
- Waimakariri District Council

