

SevenX Gas

A Fresh Choice in Meter
Reading Management Systems

Tired of being locked into tired, expensive and inflexible meter data collection solutions?

Is it time for fresh thinking from a local vendor with open technology that allows you to do much more?

For any gas utility, reading meters is the moment of truth with a customer. As a utility company's 'cash register', the speed, accuracy and quality of meter reading has an immense impact on their ability to satisfy customers and build a profitable business.

As Australian consumers have been given greater choice, more and more are opting for gas as a key source of energy. This is driving greater efficiency in the sector, and ultimately will see a shift towards a smart gas grid future that includes initiatives like integrated smart metering and household displays that encompass gas, electricity and other utilities, providing usage and real-time price information.

With SevenX Gas, DataCol enables you to improve the efficiency of your existing meter reading operations while preparing for the eventual transition to smarter gas metering, and you can't afford to rely on old, inflexible, proprietary technology to do it.

DataCol offers a fresh choice with SevenX Gas. A locally-based vendor with broad industry experience, providing technology that is open, flexible and gives good return on investment. SevenX Gas can help improve the efficiency and lower the cost of your existing meter data collection.

Why SevenX?

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

SevenX Gas equips meter readers with rugged, commercially available handheld computers which return readings in real-time. The SevenX server application manages the collection, analysis and reporting of the meter data, retaining a complete record of historical reading information.

The key benefits SevenX Gas users experience include:

Staff and/or contractor productivity gains

- Increase the time-on-route of readers by hours per day by virtually eliminating the need for them to visit a depot or central office
- Use this additional time to get cyclic readers to undertake other tasks such as special readings
- Assign non-cyclic work to cyclic readers wirelessly based on where they are currently working, reducing travelling times and costs
- Supervisors can manage a larger meter reading area and a higher population of readers
- Spend less time assigning and managing routes, and checking reader progress by phone
- Spend more time on customer service improvements, issue resolution and analysing performance information
- Ability to conduct customer onsite surveys

Decision-making speed and quality enhanced

- Analysis of historical data within SevenX Gas provides for better identification of issues and suggested service improvements to utility clients
- Improve data quality by conducting internal validation testing before returning reading data for billing
- Easily undertake analysis by readers, routes and customers to identify and tackle opportunities for improving service levels

DATA COL
an *Electra* Group Company

Management control strengthened

- Gain a more complete, real-time view of meter reading operations
- Grow meter data operations without significant staff increases

A platform for change

- Greater flexibility and lower costs of using standard PDA hardware
- Ability to introduce other field force initiatives on same equipment

Service efficiency and quality improved

- Reader's progress is monitored in real-time, ensuring work is done to plan and to contractual timeframes
- Corrective action on routes that are behind schedule can be taken before they become a real problem. Supervisors can reallocate unread meters to other readers in real-time and wirelessly; no need for readers to return to the depot, no late rounds
- Improved safety for meter readers as their locations are always known

Manage it all on SevenX

The SevenX Gas solution consists of an application running on commercially available, non-proprietary, ruggedised, IP67 compliant handheld computers communicating with a back office management system over cellular (e.g. GPRS, CDMA, 3G) networks. It also integrates data from other transfer modes such as the web, IVR and AMR. SevenX provides a single interface to the utility billing system (e.g. Gentrack, SAP, Agility) for timely, accurate and consistent billing.

SevenX Gas enables the management of multiple retailers/utility providers so readers can service multiple clients on the same route. It has the flexibility to handle both cyclic (scheduled) and special readings across multiple geographies.

Key features

- Billing/CRM system integration
- Can link to AMR systems
- Workflow management: manage workforce across multiple regions, real-time tracking of field force
- Scheduling and route management: automated route creation and assignments to field force
- Processing: automated transmission from HHUs, data validation
- HHUs: choice of commercially available, non-proprietary PDAs. Ruggedised to the IP67 standard. Multiple transmission options
- Reporting: real-time reporting to call centre, operations staff within utility customers and to meter reading contractors. Suite of meter reading and operational performance reports
- Performance tracking: monitor field staff performance and equipment in the field

SevenX Gas can be delivered as an in-house application or provided as a fully-hosted solution. Flexible pricing models are available to suit the customer's business model.

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.