

**INDUSTRY APPLICATIONS****PROCESSING**

# Data terminals track time, attendance, and costs

*Magnetic stripe badges work with data terminals and software to cut the time to generate status reports from 2 days to 15 minutes.*

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**Keeping track of time and labor allocation used to be one administrative headache.**

More than 900 employees work three shifts, 24 hours a day, in the processing laboratory of Nashua Photo, Parkersburg, West Virginia. Keeping track of time and labor allocation used to be one big administrative headache, recalls MIS manager Steve Nulter.

Now, like the latest analgesic, a system of mag-stripe ID cards, thirty data collection terminals, and software to control and monitor the process, has cleared the headache—and saved the mail order photo finishing firm considerable money along the way.

The system operates in three separate areas. First, all perimeter doors are connected to data terminals. To enter the facility, employees pass their badges through a terminal's reader. The terminal logs in the employee name and the location where he or she entered.

In the second area, the terminals control access to sensitive rooms—such as the money, banking, and silver recovery areas. Access to the areas is determined by both person and shift.

In the third, and most intensive, application, employees log in and out as they perform jobs throughout the facility. Each employee has a default job code that the terminal displays at the time of log in. If the code matches the job the employee is about to perform, nothing else needs to be done. But about 30% of the time, an employee will finish a task, log out, and then be assigned another job.

The employee then logs in again and enters the new job code, and the system tracks this new task. "We can track up to 100 time



**Data terminals read magnetic stripe badges to track time and labor for Nashua Photo.**

slices per employee per day, which is more than we ever need," notes Nulter.

The company saves money in three ways. First, the administrative costs of the old system—two payroll clerks keying in data 24 hours a day—have been eliminated. "Those individuals can now do other tasks," says Nulter.

He also points out that employees no longer have to fill in time sheets with start times and end times. "With twelve hundred people, that time really adds up," Nulter points out.

Also, management now gets accurate, instant reports detailing costs by job code. "We used to have to wait two days for these reports. Now, we get more accurate information in only fifteen minutes," Nulter exclaims.

Based on the success in Parkersburg, the company now plans similar installations in the U.K. and Canada.

*Data terminals: Linx*