

# ■ Easitill

## An Intial Presentation for Prospective Customers



With so many EPoS Systems on the market we are often asked

**“What is different about Easitill?”**

This booklet attempts to highlight the key points as comprehensively but concisely as possible.

***For further info go to [www.easitill.com](http://www.easitill.com) or Tel. 01604 881881***

# Easitill

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## 1.1 The Easitill Background and History

In 1987, with the introduction of low cost IBM-compatible Personal Computers, we moved into general business computing and became involved in Electronic Point of Sale (EPoS) systems as a result.

From 1988 through 1990 we learnt about EPoS as we distributed third party EPoS systems locally. The systems were of two types. All used a personal computer (PC) for the so-called 'Back Office', but the tills were either pure PC based or conventional till look-a-likes that had bar code scanning attached. The latter had many negative points.

In 1991, we launched our own design, namely Easitill, a modular PC based EPoS system at the Garden and Leisure show (GLEE) at the NEC Birmingham where it received an immediately favourable response. We then began working on a National, as well as local, basis.

The Easitill system incorporated all the lessons from the early EPoS distribution activity, together with factory automation design and support experience back to 1968.

It has been continually updated and enhanced ever since and all customers receive regular software updates so that there is always maximum protection against both hardware and software obsolescence.

**The Lessons outlined below were learned by 1990 and form the solid basis of our Company, its Structure, Products and their Support today.**

The hardware and support had to come from a single integrated company, with it's own software development resources which it could readily optimise to all customers' needs.

Single vertical markets such as Garden Centres alone could not finance the long-term development of either the products or their support, but a broadly based market such as Leisure Retailing (or Specialist Retailing) could.

Locally based companies would never support adequate development and remote support functions but working totally nationally from a single central base increased costs and response times.

The hardware needed to be pure PC based, with modular EPoS hardware plugged into the normal PC connectors at the rear. The computer programs (software) which control the PC hardware had to be modular and fast, written in the fundamental computer language 'C' (now Visual C++ and C#), with the database technology independent of the operating systems such as DOS and Windows etc.

The back office function should always incorporate the till software as well for several good reasons and have a bar code scanner attached.

It was impossible to determine a systems suitability and project viability until basic "hands-on training" was completed and a database set up, hence the origins of our Stage 1 Start up option with which we have started all projects since 1991.

### 1.1.1 Easitill Today

***Our Mission is to assist small to medium sized retailers to apply Electronic Point Of Sale (EPOS), Web Sites, Mobile, and Mail Order Solutions in the most cost effective manner, to improve the profitability and quality of their business operations by the application of information technology.***

We have hundreds of EASITILL systems working from the South of England to Scotland, including the Isle of Man, supported both by our National Headquarters located near Northampton, at the junction of the M1, M6 and A14 roads and Regionally based personnel. These cover the South East, Central Southern, South West and Wales. The East Midlands, West Midlands and the North of England are covered from HQ. Scotland and the Isle of Man are covered by air from the nearby Luton and Birmingham Airports.

We cover the Leisure Retailing Market from Garden Centres, Pets and Aquatics through D.I.Y., Outdoor, Country and Equestrian Stores to the more active leisure pursuits such as Diving, Sailing, Windsurfing and Climbing. There are in addition a small number of other specialist retailers such as a University IT Dept, Hardware, Wine Warehouse, Baby, Children's and School clothes.

We have a well-established user base and revenues to match. This means that whilst we obviously continue to welcome new customers, we do not have to run around taking the wrong orders at the wrong product and support price, as a new entrant into the market is inevitably tempted to do with consequent risk of later failure.

We have a nice broad market and geographic spread of customers from small single Integrated Master Till units to Multi-till and Multi-site including Easi Web and from small £50k turnover customers up to others with turnovers of many millions of pounds. However no one customer or market sector is dominant, thus minimising the risks to us and in turn our overall customer base.

We are rarely the cheapest or the most expensive system in a new prospective customer survey of the very many EPoS systems now available, but we are always at or near the top in terms of the breadth and depth of our support and value for money. Increasingly we are able to offer even more support whilst at the same time even better value for money as the number of locally based personnel and the geographic coverage increases.

## 1.1.2 What's Different About Easitill?

We are one of the longest established companies in the market having been working exclusively on EPOS systems since 1988. We know exactly who our target market customers are and continually develop both company and product to meet their needs.

We now have many installations to each market sector meaning that we have in-depth application experience. The system includes specialist features such as generating various admission and other tickets and covers basic Café and Restaurants functions.

The Back Office function always includes a Till function and is known as the Integrated Master Till. This has many uses, including being used for initial evaluation, for start up data entry and for training. It provides an emergency backup system, which can be moved to the point of sale, in the event of a Till computer failure. It is used by the data entry operators to prove special price breaks, offers and "Kits" etc. without the need leave their seat to go to a Till. Finally it is often located in the sales area either for a single user application or where data entry at point of sales is a requirement, in which case it saves one computer station.

We offer a unique low-cost low-risk start-up option, using the Integrated Master Till, via the Stage 1 (or Educational) version costing a fraction of the total cost (excluding computer), which is always used to start projects, whether a single till or multi-till and even large multi-site orders. No customer is contractually committed beyond Stage 1 until they are satisfied as to the viability of the project and can cancel Stage 2 onwards without penalty. The initial payment for Stage 1 is always deducted from the total project cost so the overall cost remains the same.

We always supply full installation, application assistance, training and support but can supply with or without the computer hardware and networks, as the customer wishes.

We have a well-proven three day new customer Application and Training program, which normally consists of a days basic training including establishing the Product Group, Dept and Category structure, data entry assistance and training on day two (optional) and a full days training and support on the day the system goes live, i.e. the start up day.

In the event of a mechanical hardware failure of the receipt printer, we have a mode which allows the till to continue recording both sales and stock data, without printing receipts but recording transaction details and calculating change, thus preventing loss of stock control.

We aim to keep system operation as simple as possible and control the fundamental business elements of sales, profit margins, stock etc. without sophistication.

A high proportion of our new business is secured by referral and replacement of existing third party systems. This usually due to one or both of two main reasons, either the failure of the previous supplier to maintain sufficient product development and updates and / or, more often, simply due to poor after sales and on-going support.

We are Users and well as Suppliers, which gives us a unique position and insight. EASITILL runs EASITILL – even our General Manager and administration staff can provide basic telephone support to customers. About a third of our staff use EASITILL to run their own Retail businesses, often with their families.

We use the optimum combination of Regional and National support. In addition our part time Staff and Contractors function more like part-time firemen and are on standby to respond, often within minutes, to an urgent Regional need while at the same time keeping costs to a minimum.

HQ based support includes remote “dial-up” support together with a separate, direct, multi-channel telephone support systems without time-wasting recorded messages. A regular Newsletter provides Users with up to date information.

There is a tendency today to talk about Internet based systems and updates and support only via the Internet. This overlooks several basic points. Firstly Epos hardware failures often need quick on-site support and re-installation of networks and modems etc which cannot be done remotely. For example if the network, modem or remote software fails, then there is no alternative to going on site. Subcontracting hardware and software support to third parties works for high street operations with hundreds of shops but not for our typical customers as we learnt in the early years. Third party “hardware only” maintenance support works for simple hardware failures such as monitors, power supplies, and CD / Floppy Drives and here we use suppliers such as DELL who are able to provide economical next day service for pure hardware problems included in the purchase price of the unit . However, if there is any doubt about the nature of a problem, we achieve “Next Business Day” or sooner for all hardware and software problems in most situations. Some of our competitors supply software only and rely totally on third parties for hardware support. Where support is split between hardware and software suppliers, if the third party maintenance company goes in first and it is an operational or software problem of which the hardware technician has no knowledge, he will then call in the EPOS supplier for the following day. This inevitably can result in a **minimum** of two days before the problem is solved. With Easitill you have complete SINGLE SOURCE RESPONSIBILITY as we always act as prime contractor regardless of who is involved.

Easitill support operates 7 days a week and 365 days a year. For example, one Christmas we had a Till computer failure at 11 am on Monday, the “official” Bank Holiday. We responded within 5 hours with an on-site replacement and re-installation, including a 4 hour car drive. It would have been 3 hours, but unfortunately two regional personnel were suffering from ‘Flu.

Service work is notoriously cyclic which is why, as well as our local “firemen”, referred to elsewhere, we use HQ customer support to cover the regions in the event of overload etc. Finally we use our development people for extra field support backup. They simply stop developing for a day or so, do the field calls and then return to development. In a similar way they provide an economical technical helpline.

### **1.1.3 Easitill - Easy to Learn, Apply and Use.**

Nearly every EPoS supplier claims their system is easy to use and so how do we substantiate our claims to be EASY TO LEARN, APPLY AND USE.

We let the prospective customer drive the Till, End of Day, Till Daily Reports etc at the demonstration to prove the point. (It is very easy for any sales person to make a product look easy when driving it them selves, but a quantum leap more difficult to do so when working through a new user.)

We have to date trained thousands of operators in ten to twenty minutes for the basic till system.

We have now replaced many other EPoS systems and in most cases the users have reported Easitill as substantially much easier to use and with lower labour operating costs after the conversion. The times to carry out similar operations on Till and Master (Back office) are substantially lower to the extent that in one case we used only three tills to replace four and in another we put in three tills when the turnover was £500k and did not add another until turnover reached £3 Million.

The three level Group, Dept and Category classification system forms the back bone of the system from finding products or entering department sales on the till, through sales reporting to re-ordering etc. Once this simple concept is set up in the first few hours of Day One of a new installation, by a combination of the users staff and the Easitill new business application specialists, there is no looking back.

#### ***EASY TO USE – TILL***

Minimum key strokes - one key payment for cash and credit card – any menu driven Touch Screen type payment system will always be slower.

Easitill uses the sequence:- numeric value - then function key to enter & action data as distinct from:- function key - numeric value – enter key

On screen prompts and keyboard labels are always present.

Toggle keys or overwrite data to easily correct errors.

The vast majority of the population now have experience of the standard computer keyboard and it's functions, which we use, and hence programmable keyboards or touch screen layouts have extended learning times for new operators.

As well as normal receipts the till can produce various tickets.

#### ***EASY TO USE – MASTER***

The top-level menus have labels that directly relate to business operations such as TILL, END OF DAY, PRODUCTS, SALES, LISTS, CUSTOMERS, SUPPLIERS, ORDERS, and SHELF REFILL.

Below the top-level labels we try to use only one level of menu before entry into the relevant operating area with either tabs or dialog boxes leading directly to the relevant action.

For example PRODUCTS leads to Product records which then has Multiple Tabs giving access to Sales Data, Special Offers, Kits, Stock Control, multiple Suppliers, Labels, Internet control, etc all without leaving the product record screen which itself has all the common key data permanently on display.

**Direct control of Easitill Web from Easitill – enter and upload new products from Easitill database to Internet in seconds**

### ***SALES REPORTING***

Our first third party systems in 1988, produced sales and stock reports as a series of individual product lines but with the typical product range being 6,000 to 12,000 lines this gave 100 to 200 sheets of paper. To analyse these was quite a daunting prospect on a Monday morning, if not impossible. The solution found in 1990 and well proven since then, was to summarise by Group the sales quantity, gross value, net value, costs, profit and margin data, typically on one A4 sheet of paper, for senior management purposes. The top level Group report can then be expanded downwards through a dept summary to individual product lines as before, either for week, month, and year to date in any year or any random period. Data can also be produced for any supplier or any store in multi-store operations.

In a similar top down fashion the relevant sales information over a random period or a number of weeks, months and years can be displayed to aid analysis, particularly of seasonal operations. The same quantity information is displayed alongside proposed orders.

### ***EASY TO USE - ORDERING***

From the very basic operations of receiving of goods without formal orders and manual ordering of stock from product records, to manual and automatic ordering based on stock levels, Easitill has the widest range of functions associated with ordering, receiving and shelf refilling stock. Other functions allow “Just in time” ordering, based on sales to be combined with stock levels and also to show all other products from a supplier with zero quantity, thus making a blank order sheet which can be filled in manually and faxed or entered into the system. Immediate past year, month and weeks sales history is shown when ordering.

Dual seasonal settings of stock levels.

Easy editing of stock re-order levels from order screen.

Mixed unit and case ordering with multiple barcodes and suppliers per product.

## 1.1.4 Easitill Training

A well proven training plan delivering maximum results at minimum cost in the shortest possible time.

### **Pre-sales training - The initial demonstration provides the first part of our training.**

- The Easitill “hands on” demonstration intentionally and rigidly follows the proper set training sequences so that it provides 2-3 hours free pre-training and familiarisation.
- The Group and Dept Training Manual with Group examples is provided in advance to enable everyone concerned at the user end to at least draft out the Groups if not Departments and Categories as well.

***Our actual training cycle takes 2-3 days - well proven hundreds of times.***

### **Training Day 1 - An introduction to the Easitill System**

- Till training – for data entry operator this is intended to ensure that the data entry operator enters data in the optimum way for both Till and overall system use.
- Back Office training - begin with Entering Supplier details - this teaches the basic concepts of Insert - Edit - Save and Cancel on the *simplest* database in the system so as not to confuse.
- Finalise Groups and some Departments / Categories and enter these into the system. This fully introduces another basic concept.
- How to enter a product.
- How to produce product Labels (if required)
- Use of Templates -to speed up product entry.
- Data import from customers’ own product spreadsheets or supplier files.

### **Training Day 2 - Further assistance with data entry and data import**

### **Training Day 3 - This is “Go Live” day**

*On the day that the system first “Goes Live” a member of our Customer Support Team is on site **all day** to give maximum “hand holding”, confidence building, support for all operators.*

- Consolidate Till training for all operators.  
To optimise the use of time, in between providing assistance at the Till we carry out the final in–depth training on the use of the Master (back office)
- End of day procedures
- End of day processing
- Sales reports etc.

### **On – Going Training**

Training continues with telephone support, PC Anywhere support and with area support visits. Easitill also provides **Training Courses** tailored to customers’ needs at our H.Q.

## 1.1.5 Easitill Support

*From the day you first think of an Easitill Epos System our Staff are there to support you on a continuous basis.*

**Pre- Start up:** we discuss how **you** want to apply the system to your business and help you to set up the Database accordingly. All the experience we have gained in Epos since 1988 is at your disposal.

We can help to speed up the process of Data entry by using Industry standard Databases qualified by using our Handheld Terminal to determine exactly what **you** stock.

**Going 'Live':** A member of the **Easitill** Support Staff will be there with you and your Staff to help you through any last minute queries, or unexpected problems.

**Telephone support** – two separate, direct, multi-channel telephone support systems without time-wasting recorded messages.

Easitill Main Telephone Number: 01604 881881

Easitill Operators Helpline Tel: 01604 88 20 30  
(for help in operating the system)

*We are on Duty Seven days a week, 364 days a year.  
We believe our support is Second to None.*

**Remote Dial-up** – The direct link from you to us is used for both operator training and technical diagnostics.

**Newsletter:** A regular Newsletter provides our users with up to date information.

**Continuous support:** You receive twice yearly site visits with Software updates. When the new features are added to the main Easitill System and have been fully tested, you will receive them. Our Customer Support staff man the Helplines. They know you, your staff and your site, personally.

**Emergencies:** Seven days a week with weekend standby for On-site calls – normal response time for on-site emergency calls is less than three to five hours.

**And finally:** We are the authors of the **Easitill** computer programmes (the Software) so you deal directly with the source; this aids Knowledge and Communication.

## Appendix A - Product Summary

- **Easitill EPoS Solutions**

Retail EpoS - Mobile EPoS - *Mail Order* (Sales Order Processing) - *EFTPoS* (Chip & Pin)

From Single Integrated Master / Till through Multi User & Multi Till to Multi Site (Centralised, Local Store or Mixed Central & Local Control)

Point of Sale  
Master (Back Office)  
Warehousing – Automatic Shelf Refill  
Purchasing (Manual, Just – in – Time, Automatic)  
Price, Margin & Stock Control  
Customer Loyalty and Marketing.

**Easy to Learn, Easy to Use and Affordable**

- ***Easitill Web:***

The Easitill Web Products can be used in three upward compatible forms.

**Type 1** Is a basic Web Site, without products to simply project a marketing image or background etc.

**Type 2** E-Advertising with products and offers added but without the shopping basket

**Type 3** E-Commerce with the full shopping basket.

Link the graphics of your existing web site to Easitill Web  
**or** let us provide a new web site  
**or** assist you and your existing web design team to make the link.

**CONVERT FROM EASITILL EPOS TO EASITILL WEB IN JUST ONE DAY!**

Designed to let you or your team do as much or as little as you want to, giving you maximum control of your e-commerce business and minimising costs.

### **Reduce costs and errors:-**

- One common database for all Product and Customer information for both retail and e-commerce.
- Easi control of which products go to the Internet site and at what prices.
- Linking the photographs and comment fields to each product record at source.

**Save time and money by integrating EPoS and E-Commerce**