

Fortecho Solutions Artwork Protection at The National Gallery, London



Case Study

Wavetrend Partner

Fortecho Solutions has been developing world-class RFID Software from its headquarters in London, UK since 1996. The company delivers turnkey solutions for some of the world's largest organisations.

The technology team at Fortecho Solutions has developed the award-winning Fortecho suite of products to track, protect and manage critical art assets in real-time. Asset tracking systems bolster efficiency, substantially reduce costs and manpower, and yield new information about business processes.

Business Challenge

The National Gallery required a system that would, within a limited budget, improve the security of its exhibits and its staff. Its implementation should have no impact on the public's viewing experience and minimal physical impact on a listed building. The alarm information needed to be real-time, to be active while visitors were in the building and to be capable of producing an automated audit trail.

The project needed to be approved by diverse groups with differing agendas – security, curators, collection managers, exhibition organisers and conservators. A degree of granularity was required to protect individual works of art rather than simply securing a room or perimeter.

Solution

To address this unique challenge, Fortecho Solutions used Wavetrend active RFID Tags, incorporating a dual-mode motion-sensing feature to detect either vibration or tilt. These would transmit a signal every 15 seconds for a minimum period of seven years, thus reducing the human cost involved in swapping Tags on expensive artworks.

The first part of the contract entailed installing the system to monitor the museum's reserve collection. This has now been extended to works of art on display in the main galleries, and issuing invigilators with Wavetrend panic alarm key fob Tags to enhance their personal protection.

Through concealed receivers the Wavetrend Tags 'check in' to 'Fortecho' software which alerts when a Tag goes missing from the audit within seconds. The same software warns if the receiver network is in any way compromised. In the event of an alarm, screens display the location of the artwork or invigilator at risk and CCTV is automatically displayed and recorded for visual verification and evidence.

The system requires minimal day to day management and alarm thresholds can be set for individual works of art.

ROI

- Enhanced security works of art and invigilators
- Improved integration of security systems
- Instant precise location information
- Electronic historical log of all alarms
- Potential to reduce expensive, manned security.

Customer Comments

"The powerful Fortecho software combined with Wavetrend's active RFID Tags has provided another important layer in the security array of the National Gallery. Contrary to popular belief, major works of art do not hang forever in the same place in the same galleries. Because of this a mobile, flexible and non-intrusive approach to object alarms is essential. Fortecho delivers this and to date, I have seen nothing that matches the functionality and performance."

- Jon Campbell
Head of Visitor Services and Security, The National Gallery

