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Case Study: ESERV-10 in Retail Action

## **The S Group Saves Money by Switching to Viola's Industrial-Grade ESERV-10 Serial-to-Ethernet Converters**

*The Sokos department stores, a part of the S Group, faced a set of reliability issues in their installed base of serial-to-Ethernet converters. This endangered a mission-critical business process and further led to increased maintenance costs.*

**Turku and Salo, Finland. (June 15, 2006) - Viola Systems**, a leader in industrial-grade wireless M2M connectivity solutions, and **Nordic ID**, a leader in handheld AutoID and data capture instruments for the retail sector and beyond, have today jointly announced a customer success story that is a rewarding result of a long-term and efficient collaboration between Viola Systems, Nordic ID and the S Group.

**The S Group** is a major group of retail and service businesses in Finland. In 2004 the group had net revenues around 8 billion euros, 1371 outlets, and over 26 000 employees. The S Group includes 20 Sokos department stores and seven Emotion stores, each of which deploy a unique wireless data collection system called Nordic ID RF600.

**Nordic ID** is a leader in handheld AutoID and data capture instruments for the retail sector and beyond. Today several of the largest European wholesale retailers have thousands of Nordic ID handheld instruments in daily use.

### **Re-inventing the wheel?**

Over the past few years serial-to-Ethernet converters have become increasingly important part of the wireless data collection system. "Since 2001 we had been testing several serial-to-Ethernet converters from leading brands in connection with our own products," says **Esa Kymäläinen**, Area Manager at Nordic ID.

"Unfortunately we experienced lots of reliability and interoperability issues with the tested serial-to-Ethernet converters. Our business partners even asked us whether we could engineer a reliable serial-to-Ethernet converter but we were not too keen on re-inventing the wheel," Nordic ID's Kymäläinen continues.

### **Nordic ID meets Viola**

Nordic ID and Viola got to know each other through a common customer. A collaboration to ensure Viola's ESERV-10 optimal fit with Nordic ID's systems began. In early 2004 Nordic ID found out that the Sokos department stores were remarkably dissatisfied with Viola's competitor's serial-to-Ethernet converters they had been using as a part in Nordic ID's wireless data collection system.

## **Sokos had a big problem**

"We had lots of problems. The competitor products often went down when electric surges occurred. In general they didn't withstand well any sudden changes in the power supply," **Marko Mört**, System Analyst at the S Group responsible for the chain management of the Sokos chain, remembers sadly.

"Furthermore, the competitor products often jammed; they actually responded to pinging but didn't pass on any messages to either direction, which is really their primary function – to convert," adds S Group's Mört.

## **A successful pilot**

Nordic ID quickly introduced Viola's ESERV-10 product to the Sokos department stores. A pilot project was executed first in two selected department stores. The pilot project went as planned after which the competitor products were replaced in every Sokos department store. To be soon followed by all the Emotion stores.

## **"It's a Swiss clock"**

"The ESERV-10 works like a Swiss clock. It always works and has clearly been designed with robustness and simplicity in mind," System Analyst Mört laughs.

## **Flexibility**

Viola and Nordic ID wanted to walk the extra mile to make the S Group truly satisfied. The ESERV-10s that the S Group uses are delivered through Nordic ID and they come with a preconfigured, customer-specific firmware.

This improves interoperability further and makes deployment faster, even fun.

## **Maintenance-free**

Some competitors sell their serial-to-Ethernet converters 20-30 euros cheaper but it is the total cost of ownership that companies should look for.

"Unlike various competing products we have used so far, the ESERV-10 has proven to be maintenance-free. It never fails. In addition, we have minimized the installation effort from around 15 minutes down to 1 minute per device.," System Analyst Mört sums up.

## **Towards a de facto standard**

"Due to very positive experiences, the ESERV-10 is now becoming a de facto standard within the S Group. Actually, the next roll outs are already on their way," System Analyst Mört concludes relieved.

## **Device manufacturer benefits**

The relationship between Viola and Nordic ID has evolved into a long-term partnership that benefits both companies. Each new delivery of Nordic ID RF600 practically includes also an ESERV-10.

"Centralized manageability of our system, a feature highly valued by typical retail customers, has taken one step ahead, thanks to Viola," Nordic ID's Kymäläinen says.

For adding serial-to-IP connectivity to your product base and thus greatly increasing the life cycle of your products, the ESERV-10 is a robust and cost-effective solution.

"It is by far the best converter I have ever used. It is a cost-effective product that beats the competition in its field reliability and ease of use," S Group's System Analyst Mört concludes.

**About Nordic ID**

Nordic ID is a leader in handheld AutoID and data capture instruments for the retail sector and beyond. Today several of the largest European wholesale retailers have thousands of Nordic ID handheld instruments in daily use. For more, please visit at [www.nordicid.com](http://www.nordicid.com).

**About Viola M2M Solution™**

Unlike many competitors who sell boxes, Viola delivers a total secure end-to-end connectivity solution that seamlessly integrates remote devices and sites to centralized management systems such as SCADA or HP OpenView. No changes to existing systems are needed. Viola M2M Solution™ is an install-and-forget-it, hassle-free approach. In addition, Viola M2M Solution™ is operator-independent; it allows customers to implement two-way data communications in a similar manner all around the world.

**About Viola Systems**

Viola is specialized in advanced, industrial-grade wireless M2M (machine-to-machine) connectivity solutions that seamlessly link remote devices and sites together. Reliable remote access to device information leads to increased productivity and enables new maintenance business. Viola's solutions are used in a wide variety of applications from substations and distribution transformers in the electricity networks to base stations in the telecommunications networks to the transfer of video feed from remote surveillance cameras. Viola's solutions are sold through a global network of sales partners. Viola's customers include ABB, RFI – a division of the Italian State Railways, Vattenfall, Freescale Semiconductor, EBV Elektronik, Digita, and the Finnish Road Administration. Viola's headquarters are located in Turku, Finland. For more information, please visit [www.violasystems.com](http://www.violasystems.com).

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