Our Challenge

“In 2006, responsibility for parking enforcement in Northern Ireland was transferred to TransportNI, as the national road authority, from the police service. At the time we knew we had our work cut out. Parking enforcement had understandably been a low priority for the police during the Troubles, so a lot of drivers didn’t pay much attention to parking rules.

We had to help drivers understand that parking enforcement is about keeping traffic moving through our towns and cities. And we had to find a software solution to help us manage enforcement end to end: from processing parking tickets through to the handheld devices used by traffic attendants on patrol.”

Our Solution

“We narrowed the field of potential software providers down to four or five, then went to see their solutions in action. The Xerox team really knew their stuff, and the Xerox parking enforcement solution was streets ahead of the rest. It did everything we needed at the time, with scope for expansion built in. It was powerful enough to cover a country of more than 1.8 million people. And it gave us the security and reliability of a managed, hosted service.

We signed a four-year contract in 2006; three contract extensions later, the Xerox solution is helping us do more than ever before.”

Our Results

“We’re reducing parking offences and keeping traffic flowing. More people, including drivers from the Republic of Ireland, are paying their parking tickets. We’re tackling the problem of cars using bus lanes around Belfast. And we’re helping councils manage their car parks better. Every new thing we’ve asked of the Xerox enforcement solution, it’s delivered. There’s never been any need to test the market for an alternative.”

In the most recent five years of its ten-year use of the software, TransportNI has seen:

- >20% drop in parking tickets issued annually: from 140,000 down to 110,000
- 78% of parking tickets paid, exceeding the goal of 72%
- 60% of parking tickets issued to cross-border drivers paid, up from 20%
A context like no other
When Northern Ireland decriminalised parking enforcement in 2006, responsibility passed from the Police Service for Northern Ireland to the country’s road authority, TransportNI.

Sounds like a simple enough handover. In fact, it was anything but.

During the Northern Ireland conflict (the Troubles), the police understandably didn’t prioritise the enforcement of parking rules. By 2006, the Troubles had been over for a decade, and Northern Ireland was a changed country. In particular, inward investment was creating a boom in urban development and putting a lot more cars on the road.

“When we took over parking enforcement, we inherited some real challenges,” recalls Seán McConnell, TransportNI’s Parking Enforcement Manager. “More vehicles, busier urban areas, and a community with little experience of parking enforcement.”

1. Change minds about what really matters
Focusing on parking enforcement as a way to keep traffic flowing, TransportNI set out to reduce the number of illegally parked cars blocking the roads in towns and cities.

First steps: update parking signs and make sure yellow lines were clearly marked. Then run a communications programme to educate drivers about why this was so important. Finally, get drivers used to the new regime by issuing warning notices rather than parking tickets for the first few weeks.

This approach proved effective - and an ongoing commitment to communication has continued to deliver year-on-year improvements. In the past five years the number of parking tickets issued each year has gone down from around 140,000 to 110,000. And around 78% of drivers now pay their parking fines, up from 75% five years ago.

2. Reach out to do better
A lot of people from the Republic of Ireland pop across the border to shop. But only around 20% of cross-border drivers who parked illegally in Northern Ireland used to pay their parking tickets. Collecting their fines was difficult as TransportNI couldn’t access these drivers’ data.

That all changed when McConnell and his team reached a ground-breaking agreement with the driving authorities in the South to share driver details. The Xerox solution was updated to accept driver and vehicle data from the Republic of Ireland, including the different number plate format.

“Xerox was instrumental in helping us reach the agreement,” explains McConnell. “They showed the authorities in the Republic that sensitive driver data wouldn’t be at risk during transfer to the Xerox enforcement solution. Now, around 60% of cross-border drivers pay their parking fines. That’s exceptionally high for cross-border debt recovery.”

3. Keep going with car parks and bus lanes
Handling data about cross-border drivers and vehicles is just one of the many ways in which the Xerox enforcement solution has evolved to support TransportNI over the years.

When responsibility for off-street parking enforcement was later devolved to Northern Ireland’s 11 local authorities, they turned to TransportNI to manage it for them. Xerox modified the enforcement solution to issue a different type of parking ticket, and to redirect payments to individual councils. They also designed new reports, to provide information ranging from number of tickets issued and income received, to the performance of individual car parks.

More recently, TransportNI has implemented bus lane enforcement around Belfast. Again Xerox got to work, this time updating the solution to import video from the bus-lane monitoring system, and to generate bus-lane penalty charge notices. When a driver goes online to pay or challenge a notice, they can watch the relevant video clip.

“Video means there’s rarely any argument about paying,” says McConnell. “Bus-lane enforcement has changed the dynamics of debt recovery — we expect it to go as high as 80%. As with everything else we’ve achieved, the Xerox enforcement solution is playing a key role.”