



manufacturer and stockist of wire and strip

## CASE STUDY

Webster and Horsfall, a 297-year-old Birmingham company at the forefront of wire manufacturing, has transformed its stock taking with a new stock management system from mobile computer solutions provider Portech Systems.

Responsible for the first ever transatlantic cable and based in the city of Birmingham, Webster and Horsfall combines its wealth of experience with state of the art modern technology to manufacture and supply the highest quality wire products for a diverse range of applications such as shipping, mining, oil drilling, orthodontics and green energy.

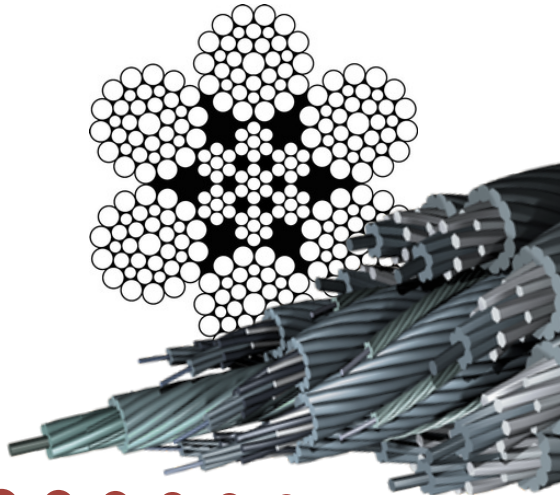
While manufacturing will remain at the core of its business model, the company has started a new venture into the distribution of steel wire and wire rope. With over 5,000 items of stock and a new diversification strategy underway, Webster and Horsfall recognised that accuracy of stock was of increasing importance, and needed to transform its stock take to improve visibility of products for sales teams.

Portech's dedicated mobile solutions team developed a bespoke and flexible software for data collection that supported Webster and Horsfall's custom business practices and used specific terms relevant to its industry. To speed up the development process, Portech complemented the new software with some tried and trusted communications modules that its team had developed over the years.

The software was loaded onto durable, ruggedised mobile computers with integrated barcode scanners from Unitech.

Portech specified and recommended the devices, which allowed both touch screen and keypad operation. Portech also provided durable labels and tags attached to the wires.

The new system was piloted before being rolled out. As expected there was some initial resistance, however Portech trained employees to demonstrate ease-of-use. Once the staff realised that data collection would no longer be an arduous task, and information was fed into the back-office system immediately, they embraced the system.





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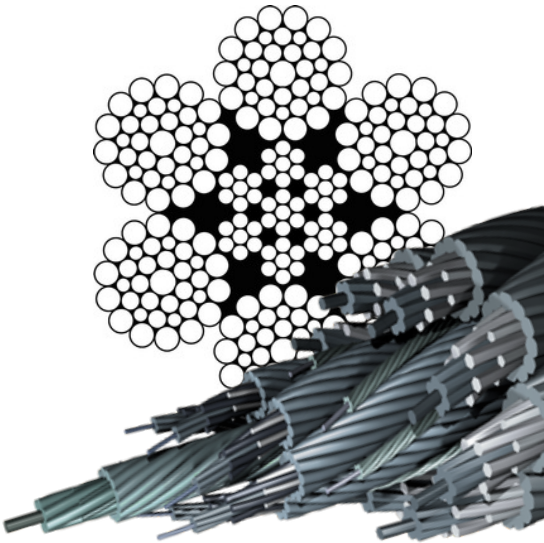
**Robert Horsfall**, Director at Webster and Horsfall commented:  
"We selected Portech as it is an agile family run business, just like ours. The team is friendly and personable, and very knowledgeable. The offer of a bespoke and flexible solution was something that we had not believed was possible, but with Portech's specialist help we have transformed our stocking processes, which are now accurate, quick and smooth."

The new system is saving Webster and Horsfall both time and money. Whereas previously, the whole site shut down for five days during stock take, now the work has been reduced to two working days, and the success of the new system has enabled Webster and Horsfall to conduct quarterly counts, and a new system is also being put in place for perpetual counts.

Sales teams at the manufacturer also have increased visibility and can track products easily to respond to urgent calls. Webster and Horsfall is therefore able to offer its customers a better service as can turn around orders on a faster basis. For example, if a crane goes down on port or construction site, the manufacturer can now locate and ship products quicker than before, helping to keep customers happy and improve its reputation as a trusted supplier.

The system has been so successful that Webster and Horsfall is now working with Portech to conduct perpetual stock takes, with a new version of the software being developed for the hand scanners that automatically checks physical and system stock.

Rather than quarterly stocktaking, sample checks will be made every week, and this new system should be in place by the end of 2017, with employees currently relabelling all bins with bar codes.



**PORTECH**  
enterprise mobile solutions

Portech Systems Ltd  
Webster & Horsfall Building  
The Fordrough  
Birmingham  
B25 8DW  
United Kingdom

 [www.portech.co.uk](http://www.portech.co.uk)  
 [info@portech.co.uk](mailto:info@portech.co.uk)  
 0121 624 2626