

# Lets talk IoT with Raymond Kay

It's a few months now since Raymond Kay joined the team as Director of IoT. Together with fellow specialists Joanna Cracknell and Chris Damon, there is a lot going on in terms of IoT development at Bamboo.

There is a definite air of excitement too and smiles all round, as the team have recently launched their first true end to end product; a lone worker solution called Alertcom.

So, we thought we'd catch up with Ray and find out more.

## First things first Ray, what exactly is Alertcom?

Alertcom is a leading, award-winning solution for lone worker protection that also helps organisations fulfil their duty of care (more on that point later).

The real value in Alertcom though is it's a complete end to end solution, connecting lone workers, their employers and an incident control centre. It's all perfectly joined up.

There are two devices available – a lanyard, which can carry an ID badge, or a handheld device, that can clip to a belt. Both enable users to send an SOS alarm to a control room manned 24/7 by trained professional responders, who can then process and escalate as necessary. They also offer two-way communication, so responders can listen in to any activity once an alarm is triggered.

The employer then has access to an online portal providing real time visibility and reporting for users and usage, helping them protect their teams and demonstrate their duty of care. They can even receive an alert if a device isn't being used when it should be.

It really is a very comprehensive and clever product.

## How does it work?

This is a perfect example of a practical application of IoT, with devices containing a multi-network SIM for resilient connectivity.

And it's this connectivity that enables the use of both voice and data communication as well as a track on demand feature, which means the device can be followed via GPS.

Alertcom offers plenty of functionality; it's far more than just an emergency alarm. It's a well thought through solution with plenty of proactive features. For example, a user can record and leave a message before entering a property or premises.



If that message isn't then cancelled when it should be, the control centre can listen in and escalate to the employer or the emergency services if required.

The devices themselves are pretty smart too - they can recognise if they are in a horizontal position or haven't moved for a while, triggering an alert to highlight a potential 'user down' situation.

## Why are solutions like this so important?

There are an estimated 7m workers in the UK that are considered lone workers and these could range from housing officers and community nurses or carers to engineers and estate agents, and many more in between. Health and Safety legislation requires UK employers to prove they have done their utmost to protect them.

But the workplace and the way we work is changing, as employers and employees are embracing flexible and remote working schemes, so we can expect this number to rise.

The accountability and governance of boards and business owners hasn't changed though - Health and Safety, mental health and well-being and operational resilience become ever more important, as does the reliance on data, leading to more organisations having to investigate and implement processes and protection to ensure they are compliant.

Whether you are a charity, local authority or a Board of statutory directors, you need to be able to demonstrate your duty of care, that you have undertaken necessary precautions. This solution is all about mitigating risk – for the employee and the employer. It enables organisations to provide the best protection for their worker and the maximum value for their investment.

## So why would I choose Alertcom over another solution?

There are lots of solutions out there, but they may be modular or just cover one element of protection. Alertcom is a well-designed, completely joined up service with resilient connectivity underpinned by stringent operating practices and extensive accreditation.

The devices are designed for purpose, the portal allows multiple levels of authorisation and the control centre team are highly trained, with direct access to blue light services. The lanyard is not an obvious alarm or tracker, making it ideal for potentially sensitive situations. And smart functionality means users don't have to remember to activate an app on a mobile phone for example every time they are attending a job or appointment. Unlike a mobile phone that is locked to one carrier, the multi-network SIM ensures that as long as there is a mobile signal, users stay connected, whilst the airtime element of the solution means you don't have to worry about a user with an app on a prepay phone for example potentially running out of credit at a crucial moment.

Another benefit is the ease and speed in which the solution can be onboarded.

When a user is given a device, they simply register it online and receive an invitation to ring the control centre, where a member of the team will talk them through using the service. This process ensures they are swiftly up and running and it notifies their manager or administrator that they have completed their training and are good to go.

As there is no long-term contract or commitment, this is a great option for organisations that only need occasional use too. We can provide a small number of pool devices (or a single device) which an individual can take out as required; the administrator simply needs to log on to the portal and allocate a device for the time it is in use.

### **Best of breed partnerships are always key and IoT is no different. Who is behind this product and what is your relationship?**

Alertcom was developed and is operated by AVR Group, who provide cutting edge security solutions centred around vulnerable people and property. They have over 40 years' experience of working in partnership with corporate organisations, the police and Government, so they've earned their stripes!

Their proven Alertcom solution is cost effective and BS8484 compliant (hence links to the police and emergency services) - and there are an ever-growing number of users already relying on the service.

This really is a best of breed supplier with a fantastic product, so I am delighted we are now working in partnership with Alertcom.

### **And finally, what else are you and the team working on at the moment; is there anything you can share with us?**

Bamboo already has established direct multi network agreements in place for M2M connectivity, but this is just one element of IoT – representing about 30% or so of the full story.

The other 70% is made of end to end solutions, products and services; that's what will really drive a host of benefits for our customers and partners and it's our primary focus.

I am genuinely excited about a couple of solutions we are currently looking at but unfortunately, I can't tell you any more just yet, other than watch this space, as we will have more news to share shortly.

### **Thank you Ray – we look forward to another IoT team update soon.**

And if you would like to find out more about Alertcom or organise a trial so you can see for yourself, then we'd love to hear from you. Talk to the team on **0800 804 4040** or email [iot@bamboo.tech](mailto:iot@bamboo.tech).

