

## Trends in technology – design for restaurants and bar

On a recent visit to Europe, Mogens Hansen from Uniwell POS Australia found during discussions with fellow point of sale providers that some customers who had gone down the PC path were now moving back to the traditional “branded” point of sale manufactures when they next looked at replacing their point of sale system. They said the main reasons driving this trend was the need to get back to reliability and customer service. He was told that it was OK to blame the system a few years ago when technology was new, but that customers are now becoming less tolerant of being told “sorry, but the system is down” or “we have a bit of a problem with the computer” when they are waiting for their bill. New technology is great when it’s not intrusive but for most people the whole dining experience is about good food, wine and good service and they are really not interested what POS system technology the restaurant is using.

While restaurateurs are still keen to embrace new technology, many are now using their past experiences with pc’s when evaluating new systems. When they first moved to the pc solution they had very little experience with computers and believed that in the new information age the pc would be the end all of solutions. It was when they started to see messages like “Fatal Exception Error” on the computer screen when they had a restaurant full of customers and wanted to print a bill, that they found out this was not always the case.

At the time of writing Microsoft is about to release the now overdue Service Pack 2 for it’s latest Windows XP operating system. As the name implies this is the second update or “bug fix” since the software was launched. For the majority of restaurateurs using a new pc based system, XP is the software that is initially loaded on their pc before the “end user” software that they use for sales and reporting. No matter how good the end user software is, the reliability of the software is only as good as the XP platform it runs on and as mentioned before, XP is still waiting for it’s second service pack.

What makes the “Branded” point of sale system different from the PC solution?

The XP software package and pc that the restaurant software usually runs on, has been designed to accommodate every use that a pc can be put to. Running word processors, spread sheets, browsing the internet, sending email and playing all the latest games to name a few.

Branded point of sale solutions have been designed over many years specifically for retail and hospitality markets.

These days a system like the DX890 touch screen terminal from Uniwell may have the appearance of a touch screen PC and have a computer processor as it’s nucleus but the accompanying technology and software has been specifically developed for hospitality over the past 20 years. These systems have not been designed to run word process ors and spreadsheets or games over the Internet, they have been designed specifically to run in restaurants and bars and the reliability of the technology usually reflects this.