Can Info-Point be used outdoors?

Yes, it often is. It can even be solar-powered.

For outdoor use it needs some additional shelter from the direct impact of weather, especially driving rain, sun, and sea spray, but Info-Point is built to cope with being located in damp, dirty, and outdoor environments.

The units have air vents that incorporate dust and insect filters. The internal components are industrial-grade hardware of the kind used for major public installations, and the internal power protection means that they can be safely powered by various means.

We can provide outdoor antennas and extension leads that enable the Info-Point unit and its antenna to be located several metres apart.

Does Info-Point record visitor statistics?

Yes.

There is a built-in analytics package that enables you to see not only totals, but to select time periods and have them graphed by day of week, time of day and other criteria. You can use these to provide regular reports. You can also download the raw log files for import into a spreadsheet or database.

For customers with multiple remote sites, we can offer an add-on service to download the raw data remotely using commercial satellite or mobile phone services, so that it can be graphed and downloaded across the internet.

How much does it cost?

Our 'Products' page lists our products and options with the current prices, plus it provides a downloadble price list and budget calculator. Once you have made an enquiry and we have quoted, the price is guaranteed for six months.

What is the Wi-Fi range of Info-Point?

Info-Point will cover up to a 150 metre radius with a standard antenna and this can be increased by a special antenna to 250 metres.

If there are objects or walls in the way, then the signal will travel less far, depending on the type and thickness of the material they are made of. It is impossible to predict the effect of walls, which is why we reccomend testing. As a guide, wood and glass have very little effect, as does 'stud' walling; dry brick and stone reduces the signal but a single Info-Point can generally cover a large house or church; heavy damp masonry such as the stone and earth found in medieval walls attenuates the signal severely; steel cladding will reflect the signal, so it will not pass through, but the signal will be made stronger inside a steel-clad or ferro-concrete building.

Can I use QR codes and NFC tags with Info-Point?

Yes, both are compatible with Info-Point.

A QR Code (Quick Response Code) or NFC tag (Near Field Communications) is simply a representation of alphanumeric characters. The QR code or the NFC tag should contain the Info-Point URL of the page you want the user to be sent to (eg. http://www.ip.lan/mycontent/castle_intro). This is a good technique for showing content that is specific to the exact spot the user is standing on, or the object they are looking at.

QR codes are easy to include in display panels and printed literature. They are a standardised black-on-white '2D bar code' format that can be read by any smartphone with a QR Code reader app. There are many free online QR Code generators. You simply type in the URL you want encoding and it produces an image that you copy and paste.

Programmable NFC tags, in which you just touch your phone to the tag, in the same way as some travel and payment cards, can be placed on or behind objects. You need a device to programme the tag with the URL of the page that you want to direct your user to. This can be done with some smartphones and an app.

The default home page for Info-Point is:

http://www.ip.lan

The image on this page is a QR Code for this URL.

You can copy and paste the url of specific pages or specific media files if you want your users to see a page or a media file when they are at a specific location.

We recommend adding a short URL in plain text for those who may not have QR code and NFC technology. Info-Point's built-in Content Management System enables you to define and fix the URLs to be what you want. We recommend that you use this feature so that the URL does not change even if you completely change the content. It also means that you can, with care, create the tags and the content independently of each other.

Does Info-Point support Beacons?

Yes....but. There are two main types of beacons on the market, which work differently.

The type known as Google 'Eddystone' Beacons will work directly and natively with Info-Point. The reason is that these beacons broadcast a URL which can direct a smartphone to access specific content on Info-Point. The user will only need a beacon-enabled phone with a generic beacon app.

The other type are Apple 'iBeacons'. These only broadcast an ID number and so the user will always need a dedicated app that you have created in order to 'map' each beacon ID to an action. This site-specific app can then use Info-Point as its content source.

Beacons are an exciting but still emerging technology, and not universally available or understood. It is a good idea to provide the user with an alternative means of simple navigation to the same content.

How is an Info-Point powered?

Info-Point is capable of several power options:

- Battery - a pocket-size battery can run it all day for events and outreach
- Solar power - it can be entirely self-contained and unattended for remote outoor sites
- Vehicle or vessel - for tours and trips
- Mains - a mains adapter is supplied

It can be left permanently on, or switched on and off at the beginning and end of each day. The system auto-recovers from power failures and glitches.

Technical details:

- DC Voltage 12V to 24V DC
- DC power consumption Master unit 6W, Slave unit 2W
- AC voltage 110-240V (mains adapter supplied)
- AC Power consumption 25W at 240V (similar to low-energy light bulb)

Can I extend the usable range?

Yes. You have three options:

Option One - Downloadable Content
Make your content downloadable at some point that all visitors pass through. Just about all devices will download and display pdf documents, or maps as images, so these are the best way to present maps and trails for use outside the Wi-Fi coverage area.

Option Two - Hot Spots
You can use multiple independent Master units to create 'hot spots'. The user only has to connect to the first Info-Point they encounter. Their device will automatically re-connect at each hot spot. This technique is best for big open spaces, such as parks and gardens, with specific 'highlight' locations. Each Info-Point can contain the same information; so that everything is available everywhere, or different information; so that visitors have to be at a specific location to see specific content.

Option Three - Wireless Access Points
Info-Point 'Slave' units can extend a seamless Wi-Fi network from your Master unit. Outdoors, Slave

units can be up to 1Km apart. Slave units also increase the visitor capacity for high traffic areas. This technology is the best solution for complex spaces such as underground rooms or multiple buildings in a open air museum.

Can I use Info-Point with an app?

Yes. There are two main approaches:

You can put web apps on Info-Point, to be accessed via the user's browser. This overcomes the device-specific restrictions, download and install requirements, and ongoing maintenance costs of native apps (those built specifically for iPhone or Android).

You can also use Info-Point as a data-store and high bandwidth server to do the 'heavy lifting' needed by large files that are not practical to incorporate into a native app. Your app can look for and automatically connect to an Info-Point unit and stream or download the necessary content. This can be invisible, or implemented simultaneously alongside the normal browser-based use of Info-Point.

How can I make touch-screen kiosks?

We can supply low-cost tablets set up to be permanently connected to your Info-Point, that you can fix to a wall or plinth so that they are available as walk-up kiosks. See also the FAQ on 'What about those without smartphones?'

Do I need Info-Point if I already have Wi-Fi?

Many heritage sites served by broadband and Wi-Fi still use Info-Point units for their visitor experience.

Here are the six main reasons:

1. Reliable fast bandwidth - direct connection to the master web server means that it is very fast, consistent, and reliable, so can support interactive games and Augmented Reality. Bandwidth also cannot be 'hogged' by visitors downloading and streaming other stuff.
2. No ongoing charges - there can be no data charges, for owner or visitor, no matter how much the system is used, and there is complete freedom from vendor lock-in.
3. Child protection - school groups can be left to safely explore and research using Info-Point as the children can't access the public internet.
4. Cyber security inbound - nearly all computer hacks are instigated remotely across the internet, which is not possible with Info-Point, which has been verified by professional penetration tests.
5. Cyber security outbound - criminal misuse of the web is simply not possible. This avoids legal obligations in providing public Wi-Fi that many are unaware of.
6. Encouraging visits - only people visiting the location, and paying for entry if required, can access the Info-Point, whereas content published on the internet can be seen by all.

In the absence of broadband, a 4G phone signal can in theory enable visitors to access the public internet, but this is rarely appropriate for visitor information for the following reasons:. To be accessible to all visitors requires that all the phone service providers have a good signal presence. Away from city centres that enjoy high-quality signal coverage, even a signal that will happily carry

phone calls is often not good enough for streaming data such as an audio commentary or video tour. Also, the visitor will be using their own data plan so may be charged heavily - especially overseas visitors that are 'roaming'.

What about those without smartphones?

Less than 20% of the population don't use a smartphone, and this number is rapidly shrinking, but you can provide them with low-cost loan or rental tablets that are set up purely for Info-Point use. We can provide these or you can source your own.

Another possibility is to ask your community to donate their old smartphones as their contracts renew. A phone does not need a SIM card to access Info-Point - only a Wi-Fi capability.

See also the FAQ on 'How can I make touch-screen kiosks?'

How much will Info-Point hold?

Info-Point can hold thousands of short videos and tens of thousands of pages of text and images. Capacity is unlikely ever to be a problem.

For the technical - the standard server disk is 120Gb.

Note: The maximum individual file size you can upload is 125Mb. Most smartphones can't handle files this big, so you may anyway want to compress or optimise them before uploading. We recommend that larger files such as video are compressed to about 40 Mb.

How do I upload content?

Uploading and editing content yourself is very simple, and is done through your browser. It is a simple as uploading to social media.

The built-in Content Management System will format and display your content according to pre-structured layouts, so you don't need any web authoring skills. We have a series of 'how to' videos on the Support section of our web site that explain how to do this. Included in the standard support package option is configuration of your Info-Point to your needs, and copying your branding, so that your Info-Point arrives ready to use.

We don't provide content development services. We will provide free technical support to any contractors that you engage. We advise you to use contractors that are members of a professional body, such as the UK Association of Heritage Interpreters (AHI).

For building more advanced interactives, your web developers have the freedom to run virtual servers on Info-Point in order to host any specialist apps or environments that you wish. We encourage this and provide free technical advice and support.

Can I update content centrally on-line?

No. Info-Point will never connect to the Internet. We can automate the upload of frequently changing

content so that it is an efficient process to update many units, but you have to be within Wi-Fi range of a unit to update it.

How can I be sure Info-Point will work for me?

We will normally provide a demonstration and test visit at your site, during which we can advise on where to position your unit for maximum coverage. We also have a wide range of reference customers who had similar requirements that we can put you in touch with.

What is the size and weight of an Info-Point unit?

Standard units (Master or Slave):

Height 220 mm, Width 290 mm, Depth 92 mm (includes ventilation stand-offs and mounting brackets). Add 140mm to height to allow for standard antenna, 400mm for high-power antenna.

The unit can be mounted 'portrait' rather than 'landscape', and the aerial bent 90 degrees in which case the 'height' from the normal base to the antenna elbow is 260mm. For fixing the unit comes with adjustable mounting feet and screws.

Antenna can also be remote mounted using an extension cable.

Weight Master unit 1.8 Kg

Weight Slave unit 1.2 Kg

Recessed panel for label: Width 229 mm, Height 171 mm

Is there a warranty?

Yes. Info-Point comes with a no-quibble 5-year warranty suitable for grant bodies such as Heritage Lottery Fund.

Can I get competitive quotes?

We are the original equipment manufacturers of Info-Point and specialise in this product, which we supply direct and through heritage suppliers. The prices are publicly listed and not negotiable. If your funding requires tenders, most professional design, AV, and interpretation suppliers can quote for a package of services, to include the Info-Point equipment that you specify. We will fully support your chosen contractors at no cost.

In seeking tenders, be aware that there are a number of much cheaper products promoted on the web that seem similar to Info-Point but are not. They are based on 'educational' hardware, such as the Raspberry Pi, that was designed for schoolchildren to learn about computing. We tested such hardware when developing Info-Point, but found that it does not have enough power to support a reasonable number of visitors, or have the reliability for continuous long-term use that is essential for capital equipment intended to be used for a decade or more. Our engineering goal is that you should never have to replace the equipment due to breakdowns.

Info-Point is a specialised product based on a rugged industrial-grade web server plus professional Wi-Fi and power protection components. Our systems are modular and have spare capacity that we can use for special features and for future upgrading. Since 2013 we have been supplying units up and down the country for all types of applications, indoor and outdoor. While digital technology has a poor record in the heritage sector for not delivering on its promises, we have a solid track record of success, with many customer and professional heritage interpreters providing testimonials.

What media does Info-Point support?

Anything that can go on the web can go on an Info-Point as it is standard web technology

Images - jpg, jpeg, png, gif

Documents - pdf
This format is the standard for downloadable documents

Audio - mp3, mp4a, wav, oga, f4a, aac, wma, weba
For maximum user device compatibility we recommend MP3

Video - mp4, m4v, flv, f4v, webm, webv, ogg, ogv, 3g2, 3gpp, mov, swf
For maximum user device compatibility we can provide detailed technical advice on the format and settings to use

Could it be vandalised or stolen?

Unlike systems that use consumer electronics, Info-Point units have little intrinsic value and so are not an attractive target for thieves.

More importantly, the public does not need to be able to touch or even to see the units, which can be hidden out of sight and out of reach, and can even be locked in a cupboard or positioned behind a wall or window to prevent access.

Is radio interference possible?

Possible, but almost unknown. We can also test for it during a site visit.

Your Info-Point will not generate any interference. By law Wi-Fi has to follow international standards and specifications, so no two Wi-Fi installations should interfere with each other.

If there are many Wi-Fi signals in a very small area, they will be forced to share capacity, which may cause some slowing of performance depending on how busy each one is. Strong nearby Wi-Fi signals that are poorly configured could also potentially cause slowing, but should not cause either system to fail.

Other devices such as cordless phones and microwave ovens operate at similar frequencies to Wi-Fi and if these malfunction then they can theoretically be a cause of interference, but again this is extremely rare. Site radios and PMR work on entirely different frequency bands and are not any problem.

Does Info-Point support multiple languages?

Yes. When the language module is enabled, each individual user can switch between the provided languages at will. This switches not only your content, including media files, but also the navigation etc. There are even 'smart' options for when you only have some of your content in a particular language (eg. text, but not a video) or you have content that is not language specific, such as an address or URL.

What about fire risk?

Any electrically-powered device will always carry some level of risk that the electrical energy could lead to a fire. With Info-Point the risk is extremely low as the system is solid state electronics, consumes very little power, and so generates very little heat. The greatest potential risk is within the power supply. For that reason we use good quality CE-approved components, and protected Power Supply Units.

As a precaution, many customers simply switch off the Info-Point while their property is closed. We can provide an 'intrinsically safe' low-energy power supply option, in which any mains power components can be sited remotely from sensitive areas.

At what stage should I order my Info-Point?

Our standard delivery promise is two weeks, although it is often faster.

If your project start is six months or more away then it is probably best to wait, as the technology and features tend to improve over time. We can send a fixed price quotation that is valid for your project timescale.

It makes sense to get your Info-Point as soon as you are ready to start planning and producing your content, giving you time to discover ways to use it, and to upload and test content as you go, rather than rush it at the end of the project. If you are to site your unit outdoors, the included mains adapter gives you the option to prepare it indoors beforehand.

Can the visitor download my content?

Yes - or no if you wish. This is an option that you can change. Note though that some smartphones prevent their users from downloading rich media and apps other than from their official on-line stores. Almost all devices will download images and pdf documents.

Can I match the name and appearance to my brand?

Yes. The Wi-Fi can be set to your chosen name. You can change the logo, layout styles, and colours to fit with your brand. We can also do this for you as part of your support package.

Are there licensing or health and safety requirements?

No. Info-Point uses the standard licence-exempt Wi-Fi spectrum. The power of Wi-Fi is limited by law, so there are no restrictions on human proximity.

Can I change the navigation structure?

Yes.

We provide a default main menu, which will be sufficient for many users, but you you have complete control to whatever extent you wish over the look and feel of the user experience. If you know what you want to do, we can pre-structure additional navigation menus for you as part of your support package. When adding new pages of content you simply check a box and the system creates a new menu item for that page.

See our training videos and our support page for more information and guidance.

Source URL: https://www.info-point.eu/faqs.html