



# Northern Electric Prepayment System

## Problem

Since deregulation of the utilities companies, it is now possible for any company to supply gas and electricity into households. Pre deregulation, coin meters were the way in which companies would ensure prepayment. However, deregulation brought with it the introduction of card operated prepayment meters. The data from the prepayment cards is collated at paypoint, sent to a central location and then forwarded onto all the individual utilities companies. These complexities ultimately lead to discrepancies in the system and payments forwarded to the wrong companies. Northern Electric's system was insufficient to handle the prepayments and readings and did not fully integrate with the legacy systems.

## Solution

The solution was to commission a brand new system that would fully manage the prepayment process including:

- Cash transactions
- Meter readings
- Unmatched readings and transactions
- Customer updates
- Automatic sending of electronic communications
- Integration with internal customer databases And billing systems
- Automatic faxing of jobs
- Front end to view and enter data

The system was developed as a multi-tiered architecture capable of running up to 400 users at any given time. Once the system was live, Wolf Consultancy was also responsible for the support.

## Savings

Once the implementation of the system was completed, the management of unmatched transactions was made significantly easier. By using various statistics gathered by the system, it was possible to identify thousands of customers and transactions that didn't belong to Northern Electric, as well as those that did and were not been received. The system therefore saved thousands of pounds by identifying key accounts that were not been accounted for.



**Fig. 1: Card operated prepayment system**

## Wolf Consultancy

St Marys Enterprise  
Centre Oystershell Lane  
Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 5QS  
Tel: +44 (0) 191 2330770  
Fax: +44 (0) 191 2612109 Email:  
[info@wolf-consultancy.co.uk](mailto:info@wolf-consultancy.co.uk)