



8TH GLOBAL LEAKAGE SUMMIT 2016

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With over 20 years experience in the Water Industry, and a background in both mechanical engineering and database applications, Jeremy was previously responsible for leakage management at SESW.

1. Jeremy, you have had several key roles at SESW – Leakage Manager and Innovation Manager, and, until recently, you were Chair of the Water UK Metering Group. Does your current role, as Innovation Manager, draw on your experience of leakage management and customer metering technologies to help develop a ‘holistic’ approach to SESW network operations? How does your role impact on the interface between network management and the customer?

Absolutely. We are working at present to bring together the network data that we use for leakage and combine that with the customer metering data in order to provide a far better experience for our customers. But we are not only looking to work with those two data sets, but also to bring together a multitude of data in order to help us better manage the water network. The holistic approach to data has been transformational in smart phones, where the combination of different data sets and sensors gives an exceptional customer experience (e.g. mapping, GPS & traffic problems). We are working towards providing that same level of experience not just for our customers but for our staff as well.

2. At the Global Leakage Summit you will be joining a ‘Heads of Innovation’ panel to debate the significance of innovation in today’s water industry. Do you see innovation as being the main driver to improving a water company’s efficiency

in leakage management and operational efficiency? What innovative technologies will help network operators to improve data analytics – to understand and use the wealth of data now being collected from sensors throughout the network?

Innovation is clearly important in leakage management and operational efficiency; however the danger is that everyone focuses on the breakthrough or disruptive innovations. If you look at the industry over the last 20 years, a lot of the innovation has been small incremental changes that have simply increased our efficiency at detecting leakage. For example, the enhanced ability to correlate lower volume leaks or the increased reliability with which we can retrieve data from loggers.

But one of the potential breakthrough innovations is undoubtedly the cloud. Although many people still think of the cloud purely in storage terms, it is the greatly increased processing that it provides which will make it a game changer in the industry. I firmly believe that in the future, the cloud will enable us to carry out highly complex analysis within minutes, enabling our staff to respond in near real time to a leak breaking out.

3. With the increasing installation of smart meters and AMI, your presentation at the Summit will focus on how water companies handle and utilise the large volume of customer data being collected – and you will address the understandable concern over data security and privacy. But can a water company also make use of the large volume of data being collected to help the customer understand, manage and modify their water use?

Customer interaction will be key, not least because the data belongs to the consumer and if we fail to provide them with useful insights, they will have little incentive to share this data with us. One of the difficulties is how to ensure that customer remain engaged in the long term, and we are investigating options that would allow us to change the data return rate dependent upon customer’s situation.

4. The upcoming market reforms in 2017 – giving customers a choice of retail water services – will divide services between wholesalers and retailers. How will this impact on the way companies address leakage management and customer demand management?

One of the key customer concerns is receiving a large bill which they didn’t expect. Market reform will incentivise us to innovate new solutions that allow us to cost effectively monitor leakage and customer demand. The new Internet of Things is offering some promising solutions which hopefully will assist us with this.

5. You have spoken previously about a ‘multi-layered’ approach to ensuring resilience. What would be your advice to delegates on how to maintain asset and operational resilience and sustainability?

Again, the key to this is data. One question I ask when talking about this is “How often does your Amazon parcel go to the wrong place?”. Probably more than you realise! The difference is that Amazon has an excellent monitoring solution that ensures that they are aware of any problems and can correct them before their customers know about them. That is where we need to get to as an industry. Rather than relying upon our customers telling us there is an issue, we need to be able to detect and repair bursts and leaks before our customers are affected. We are close to this with our leakage management. We need to get to the same level with our Network Management

6. What key learnings do you hope to take away from the Summit?

I’m particularly interested in the work being done on background losses as this will help drive innovative metering programmes.

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