

IBM Waterworld @OzWater16

#Envision

One of the challenges of meeting random clients at an industry event is engaging with them in a productive & meaningful way. IBM had a significant stand at the OzWater conference this year in Melbourne, Australia, but not too much of visual appeal to grab clients' interest. The team seized the opportunity to showcase the role of the Watson Internet of Things Platform, Bluemix, Maximo and PMQ along with easily integrated sensors to provide an end-to-end solution that enhanced water providers' business, helped improve water quality and help assure water sustainability.

To fit it into the available budget, other aspects of the stand were trimmed back and the dollars applied to acquiring sensors and having the model built & shipped to the exhibition. Multiple people from different areas of IBM were coaxed into assisting with the integrations needed to put the complete picture together. To provide a complete story we needed to plug together sensors, device processors, networks, the IoT Platform, Node Red, Maximo and more! Sensors included flow meters (configured as smart meters), more flow meters (to help detect leaks) and pH sensors to illustrate continuous water quality measurement.

In addition to the physical model, a dashboard was constructed on BlueMix which showed in real-time the state of the model – the water flowing through the main line sensors, the water being used by domestic consumers and the impact of “pollution events” (caused by adding vinegar to the water supply!) It also showed the real-time Work Orders being automatically raised in Maximo as “pollution events” and “leaks” were detected in the model.



The aims of the model were to attract interest to the IBM stand, provide a visual point of engagement with the clients that they could easily relate to, to illustrate the value delivered when a range of components were integrated to provide an end-to-end solution, and IBM's role in the whole story. It also showed how easily deployed the new generation of IoT devices were, how simply they could be linked to a powerful Watson IoT Platform, and how they could enhance the value of an existing Asset Management System, such as Maximo, which is already widely deployed in the water sector in Australia. It also allowed us to discuss how IBM's Cognitive IoT technologies will make it possible to understand what's really happening in the world of water more effectively.

Delegates were initially surprised to find IBM at the OzWater Conference. However, the crowds attracted to the stand by the model were left in no doubt that IBM could bring a significant contribution to the efficient management of an increasingly scarce resource, and they left completely understanding why we were there!

As a side note, quite a number of interesting conversations were had with other exhibitors who provided either instrumentation or instrumented equipment (pumps etc.) and hopefully we will convince some of them to include the ability to integrate to the IBM Watson IoT Platform.

