

## Getting started with PACER

There are two aspects to using PACER for event management, the PACER software itself and its associated hardware.

### PACER software

- you will need the appropriate 'permission' to gain access to the PACER software hosted on the LDWA's website. Contact your Group's IT person or the LDWA's Internet Officer, Adam Dawson at [internet@ldwa.org.uk](mailto:internet@ldwa.org.uk) to arrange this.
- an email response granting you access will contain full details of the login procedure. For convenience you should bookmark the given URL.
- once you have access the best way to learn how to use PACER is to create yourself an 'event', add some routes, checkpoints and participants and explore. Provided you remain within your own event you're OK but unless you have express permission please STAY AWAY from other events in the PACER list. These events belong to others in your group.
- the PACER page has a very comprehensive downloadable User Guide to help you.

### PACER hardware

**General** (typical costs for comparison purpose are shown below)

The first question is to decide whether you are going to use RFID or barcodes. PACER can handle either (including a mix) with equal ease. The main considerations are:-

- RFID card readers tend to be cheaper than barcode readers
- RFID card readers can only be used with laptop computers (they need to be powered)
- Barcode readers can be stand-alone. They come in 2 types
  - USB - which, like RFID scanners, require connection to a laptop for their power
  - Bluetooth card readers - although more expensive are much more versatile since they have their own internal battery and can be remotely connected (via bluetooth) to most devices including Laptops, Tablets and Smartphones (including Android and iOS)
- if wifi is not available at a venue then a mobile wifi / cellular dongle or personal hotspot will be required. Ensure you get an unlocked device in which you can insert a data SIM from your chosen provider
- if you are using tablets/smartphones to record participants then you have the option of using the device's internal SIM - exploiting the flexibility of taking the bluetooth barcode route

### At HQ

- a wifi or cellular signal is virtually essential at event HQ. Without it you will lose all the benefits of event management - although you can still use it, pre-event, to print participants' labels and lists.
- a laptop, with internet (wifi or cellular) connection and printer, from which to update participant details (eg name spelling, route selection change etc) and from which to 'manage' the event once it has started
- for a bigger event, say 100+, a separate computer and printer setup for certificate printing. For a minimal setup the 'management' machine could be used for certs but experience shows this is not advised.
- pre-labelled RFID/plastic/tally cards for issuing to participants
- a means of registering and creating labels for on-the-day entrants if these are allowed. One simple way is to generate additional cards at pre-entry with 'blank' labels (give them all a nice short name like : ). On the day, manually handwrite the name on the cards, updating card details on PACER later.
- laptop/smartphone/tablet with internet connection to time out participants as they leave - this same device can be used to time them back in. A start and finish time is the minimum required in order to print certificates from PACER

## At Checkpoints

- if wifi or cellular is available at a checkpoint then:
  - a laptop/smartphone/tablet with appropriate card reader to record participants' passage through the CP using PACER's checkpoint screens
- if wifi or cellular is not available then:
  - a windows PC recording into PACER's offline spreadsheet for later upload to PACER (this spreadsheet is available for download on the PACER access screen)
- in either case you are strongly advised to keep a paper record of numbers and times
- if the CP is outside then you need to protect your hardware from the weather and ensure your hardware has sufficient power for the duration (more difficult with laptops)

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## Summary

- decide whether you intend to use RFID or barcode scanning - the choice of hardware largely follows from this
  - bluetooth barcode readers are more expensive than RFID scanners but very much more flexible - go for a waterproof one if you are outside
- At HQ
  - wifi/cellular connection to the internet is required
  - 'management' laptop & printer + separate machine with printer for certs (advisory only)
- At CP's
  - scanner & recording machine
    - if wifi/cellular available use online PACER
    - if not use offline PACER & upload later
  - paper backup or local electronic (eg Scan to Spreadsheet) just in case!

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## Typical hardware costs for comparison only - prices reflect those available in Nov 2016

RFID 125Khz card reader - RFID/barcode use - £10 (Amazon)

RFID 125khz cards - RFID/barcode use - £20 per 100 (Aliexpress)

Plastic 'credit card' sized cards - barcode use only - £9 per 100 (eBay)

Bluetooth 1D Barcode reader - indoor use - £30 ESYNIC (Amazon)

Bluetooth 1D Barcode reader (waterproof) indoor/outdoor use - £57 NETUM (Amazon)

Huawei mobile wifi adaptor - unlocked and SIM free - £32 - (Amazon)

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