



*Merlin 360's Russell Conway checks the equipment before use*

In April 2005, the system was used to track students at a Special Needs and Art and Design event at a local tourist attraction. Over 200 students took part, plus teaching staff and classroom assistants.

The Rotherham Cluster Group Network, part of the Local Education Authority, regularly organises student and staff events annually across the borough. A major and important aspect of event management is ensuring the health and safety of students at the venue and, in particular, attendance. Usually, schools are asked to provide student lists prior to the event which are used 'on the day.'

The process of obtaining attendance lists and checking the attendance of students 'on the day' can often be very time consuming, frustrating and are often inaccurate - for example, student illness can often affect an attendance list.

Any system which could be used to facilitate and improve this would be welcome and accordingly, the **Merlin 360** system was put to its paces for the first time at the event.

The company worked tremendously hard to turn around the system in under 2 weeks. Working with an event management business who co-organised the event, the company visited the site on several occasions and set up the system ready for the first student arrivals.

Prior to the event schools were asked to provide attendance lists. These lists were used to 'programme' electronic tags.

On entry to the event, each student, with the help of the accompanying teacher, was provided with a lanyard containing the tag. When the student entered the main event workshop area, the tag was automatically

recognised by 2 antennae mounted at each side of the entrance. Student names were displayed on a PC monitor. The time when the student entered the main event arena was also noted.

On leaving the event, the students returned their lanyards which will be re-used at other events.

At the end of the event lists of students, by name and school, were produced which would be used for output evidence.

#### **Evaluation**

The use of the **Merlin 360** system was a resounding success. It was simple to use, extremely accurate and provided valuable data. There are also plans to run 'summer schools' focusing on the technology behind the Merlin 360 system.

We hope to take the concept further by using the system at two further student events in July 2005. The data produced at this event will be further refined to produce statistical data and to track students engaging in different workshops. In this way, we will be able to see which were the most popular workshops, which will inform future events.

#### **Additional uses of the Merlin 360 system in schools and colleges**

The **Merlin 360** system is a very versatile and user friendly way of monitoring students at an event. But it can be used much more widely, including:

- Tracking school equipment
- Door locking
- Tracking student attendance
- Visitor badges and tracking visitors across the school/college
- Electronic library management