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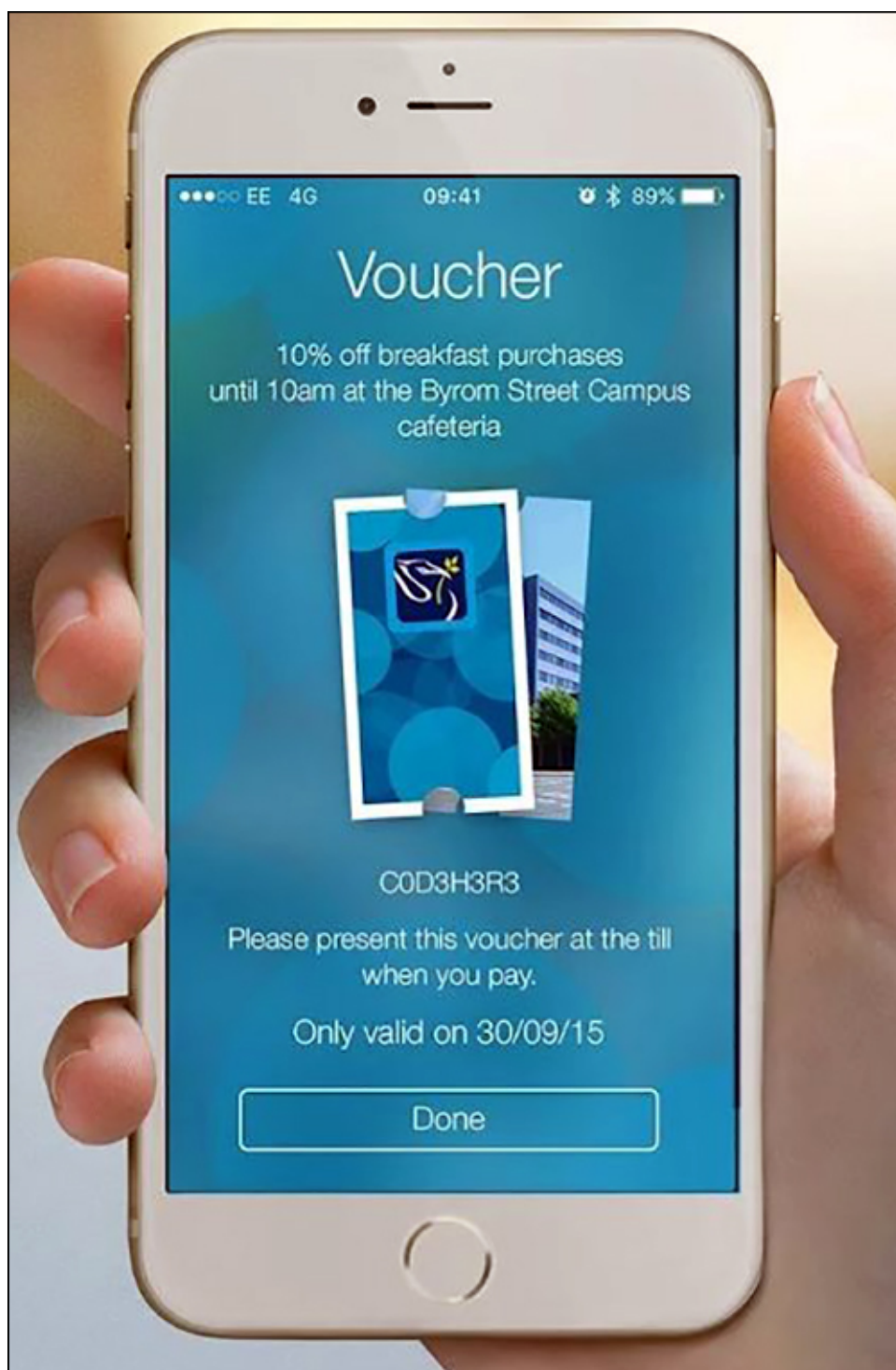
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University Caters to Students, Seeks Efficiencies, Through Beacons

Starting this September, Liverpool John Moores University will begin employing Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) beacons in conjunction with a smartphone app to help students access

discounts or coupons in stores or cafeterias, as well as for wayfinding and alerting. The technology is provided by Liverpool-based creative digital agency Mando.

The deployment follows a pilot that was held during the spring. During the pilot, students used the beacon-based system to receive discounts at a cafeteria that had recently been refurbished and was reopened for business.



When a student's phone comes within range of a beacon, the LJMYou app displays special offers for food or drink items, or other location-based information.

The school's goal, in undertaking the pilot, was to determine whether students could better engage with catering outlets if beacon technology were made available, and whether there was sufficient interest to warrant installing such technology for other retail purposes, according to Mandy Phillips, LJMU's head of corporate business change initiatives.

Phillips says the university would like to use the technology not only to drive retail engagement, but also to enable better management of food, by drawing customers in for specific foods or beverages that the cafeteria needs to sell before they must be discarded.

The pilot—which was conducted from Mar. 17 to June 24 of this year—consisted of four Estimote beacons installed inside and outside of one of the school's buildings, according to Gary Pretty, Mando's technical strategist. The four beacons, he says, were located in the foyer outside the cafeteria, outside the building and inside the cafeteria itself.

Students downloaded the LJMYou app (available for Android devices at the Google Play website and for iOS devices at the iTunes site) that Mando designed for the school. When a student's phone came within range of a beacon, it captured the ID number transmitted by that beacon. The app accessed the LJMU server, which delivered such content as special offers for food or drink items. The students could then present the app to cafeteria workers in order to redeem those specific offers.

The university reopened the beacon trial after it had concluded, during its University Open Day, later in the summer. It could do so again as needed, Phillips says, at any campus location. "It's easy enough to move the beacons and

switch the vouchers on or off as required,” she states.



LJMU's
Mandy
Phillips

Pilot participation was limited to a few hundred students. Although the system was installed within one of the largest buildings on campus, the pilot took place throughout a period of time that included Easter vacation, in order to take advantage of a slower traffic period. “We weren’t expecting huge numbers,” Phillips says. “We have a student body of just under 25,000, and approximately 600 students downloaded the app.”

The pilot proved that the solution works as the team had expected, Phillips reports, and the participation of app users showed that students have an interest in using the technology. “They loved the offers,” she says, “and it raised awareness of the newly refurbished catering outlet.”

The LJMU deployment is Mando’s first solution using beacon technology, Pretty says. “Although we’ve been investigating this technology for a while,” he notes, “we’ve been looking for the right project for a while, so that we could create some good results and momentum for the right client.”

Mando has been providing digital content for customers for nearly two decades, Pretty says, adding, “We have historically been about matching people and technology.” Once LJMU’s full beacon deployment becomes operational next month, he reports, Mando will provide content-management software to manage content for the LJMYou app, as well as the beacons themselves.

“We are currently working with LJMU to roll out the technology across the whole university campus,” Pretty states, “which will likely extend to hundreds of beacons and many retail outlets.”

What’s more, he adds, the beacons will be used for other use cases as well, such as indoor wayfinding.

“Mando is extremely focused on ensuring we don’t use tech [just] for the sake of it,” Pretty explains. “We investigated the issue that LJMU brought to us and recommended and implemented the best technology to suit this use case.”



Mando’s
Gary
Pretty

As its cafeterias continue to use the beacon-based app, the university expects to be able to reduce the amount of waste at each location. For instance, if the cafeteria becomes overstocked with muffins, it could offer a free muffin with every coffee purchase, thereby reducing the risk of inventory being wasted.

For wayfinding, LJMYou app users could input or select the location they are trying to reach—for instance, a meeting room or a lecture hall. The system could then identify where a particular user is standing, based on the beacon transmission that individual’s phone is currently receiving, and begin directing the user to his or her destination, similarly to how a GPS system works.

The beacon technology will also enable the LJMYou app to deliver messages regarding events on campus, based on a user’s location. In addition, the app will be able to provide

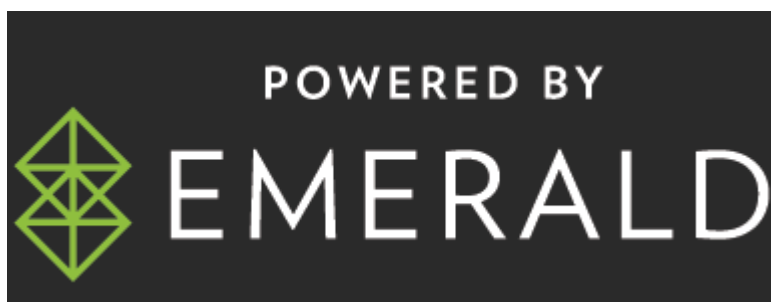
targeted messaging, such as alerting students about maintenance-work schedules and alternative routes as they move around campus.



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