Trenches Law

Driving wayleave success with award-winning automation: A three-step guide for telecoms operators

Foreword

What's a wayleave? It's a legal agreement that's critical to our industry.

And yet, these documents are so complicated and incredibly time-consuming.

When we live in a world where everything is dictated by the pace of technological advancement, why is the telecoms industry still battling with an outdated wayleave process?

There's no question that the impact of the pandemic has highlighted the need for high-speed broadband. However, with increasing demand for more full fibre connectivity, further wayleave challenges have arisen.

These written agreements – granted by landowners for telecoms providers to install equipment on private land – are often the reason for long project delays. And yet we still haven't found a workable solution.

That's until now.

Setting out on a quest to devise our own technology, our award-winning automation system now handles tens of thousands more wayleaves on a weekly basis. It does so by automating the investigation, creation, and distribution – all without additional human resources.

We took on this 600-hour digital transformation project because we recognised that 20-30% of properties in a typical full fibre build project require legal consents. And if the UK is to reach the ambitious nationwide gigabit-broadband target by 2030, telecoms operators need a solution that simplifies the wayleave process and doesn't stall their critical builds.
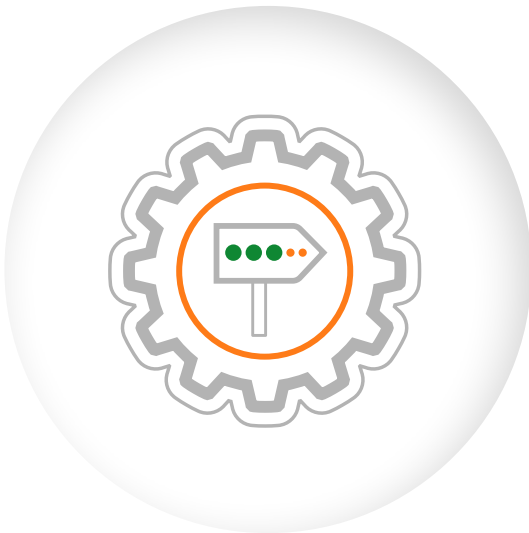
That's also the reason for creating this guide – to support our industry further and help you to better understand the advantages of automation when it comes to streamlining your next project.

Because when you're able to implement more efficiencies that benefit infrastructure, industry and the general public, the road to a gigabit-capable Britain becomes more of a reality.

Terry Daniell
Co-founder and
Operations Director

Wayleaves – where are we now?

Most connectivity projects can't progress without wayleave consent in place. For plans to move forward at pace, many factors are at play, and it takes an incredible amount of patience, expertise and collaboration to negotiate legal applications so that all parties are happy with the outcome.

That's why it's vital they're never overlooked. Because if they are, project costs and time can soon mount up.

For example, surveyor rates come to around £950 and traditional law firms' fees will often set you back over £1,500 per wayleave. Plus, add in the expense and resource issues that come with planning too, and you could soon be faced with a hefty bill.

When you're working at pace to meet ambitious full fibre targets, and you're trying to negotiate with several organisations – from local authorities and landowners to housing associations and managing agents – wayleave experts can prove to be pivotal. Why? Because they know *exactly* what it takes to roll-out complex builds at speed and avoid the critical pitfalls likely to arise.

However, even when you have your specialist to lean on, to try and do all this manually at speed would be an impossible task. That's where automation comes into its own and can prove to be a gamechanger…

Scan to find out more about our wayleave services

trencheslaw.co.uk/wayleave-services

Implementing technology to make you more agile

While the quest for efficiency is on every operator's agenda, the objective isn't to build quicker. Being more *efficient* in the telecoms industry means doing things smarter, improving visibility so you're across the entire project's progress and ensuring your team is acting with agility.

01

As we head into 'post-pandemic' territory, automated technology can optimise your operations – saving you time and money. It's able to help you achieve specific goals and complete tasks effectively, as well as reduce manual intervention, duplication and human error.

When you automate your wayleave process, a solution like ours sends a digital map of the network build phase, interrogates databases – such as the Land Registry – and identifies relevant wayleave stakeholders. That means you're armed with accurate data that helps you to better manage ongoing dialogue, access reports, issue statutory notices, and more.

Automation empowers you to run multiple actions at once without additional human resources. It manages the more 'mundane' tasks in the background so you can prioritise supplier relationships and ensure you have full visibility over your project to make sure it doesn't stall.

That's exactly why ambitious altnet Ogi has enlisted Trenches Law to help with their £200m project throughout South Wales.

Read how our automated wayleave solution has simplified and accelerated its network roll-out.

trencheslaw.co.uk/trenches-law-and-ogi-team-up-to-keep-welsh-premises-connected

Streamlining your processes to accelerate growth

While technology adoption has soared over recent years, some organisations still fear how much time and cost it'll take to install intuitive applications into their existing infrastructure.

02

However, if you're embarking on a project to improve speed, agility and efficiency, implementing automation doesn't mean you have to burst the bank or move mountains from day one.

There's merit in breaking down your project into actionable and achievable component parts. This was something Sir Dave Brailsford CBE, Head of the British Cycling Team, did when he took a long-suffering group from winning a solitary gold medal in 76 years, to seven at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. And he achieved it all again four years later in London.

While that might seem like a strange comparison, his success comes back to the same theory – focusing on marginal gains. Because when you do, even a 1% improvement can result in a significant performance increase.

It's about progression, not perfection.

And that's what automation can help you achieve when you explore how to streamline your wayleave process. Not only can you utilise it to ensure all your systems talk to one another, you'll also be making vast enhancements to your operations one step at a time.

And this will soon add up to vital time and cost savings.

Scan to read Terry Daniell's article on marginal gains

trencheslaw.co.uk/what-can-ctos-learn-from-the-gb-cycling-team

Tackling the digital divide

The amendments to the Electronic Communications Code – through the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill – show that the UK Government wants to legislate. This is a step in the right direction.

03

But there's still distance being created among homes and businesses on a national scale – something the pandemic has significantly highlighted as an issue we must tackle head-on.

We're talking about the digital divide.

Huge full fibre roll-outs from many of our active altnets are trying to reduce the gap to offer a much more level playing field. However, with the soaring cost of living, there's still a way to go to help our industry remove critical connectivity barriers.

We believe that to address the worrying widening of the digital divide, the relationship between landowners and operators must improve – and quickly. And a great place to start is by offering more wayleave education and stressing the importance of *how* these legal agreements can help to provide accessible and reliable connectivity for all.

With applications in place, those hard-to-reach areas would no longer feel so isolated – but again this progress can't be achieved if advancements are reliant on manually intensive processes only. We must provide our industry with a slicker way to simplify complex and time-consuming processes. Automation is critical here.

When empowered by automated technology, more operators can achieve their connectivity ambitions swiftly, legally and accurately – and on a wider scale – because they'll be able to bring build dates forward, release funds faster and ensure projects never stall.

Building a greener future for a net zero nation

According to OFGEM figures, the demand for electric vehicles (EV) is expected to rise by 24% within the next four to five years. If this happens, there will be 18 million eco-conscious vehicles on the road by 2030, as the UK progresses towards its 2050 nationwide net zero targets.

With numerous Government plans pushing a green agenda – not to mention the multi-millions that have already been invested into sustainable initiatives – the plight to protect our planet is *very* real.

But there are problems ahead that our industry professionals must all be aware of.

The reality is, we require 300,000 public chargers on a nationwide scale and our current total is around the 30,000-mark. Right now, the pace of wayleave agreements and the installation of EV charge points are both simply not happening fast enough, despite the efforts.

So, how can we all better prepare for an EV future?

For us, it comes back to the necessity of wayleaves – from the speed of agreements being negotiated and agreed, to simplifying the entire complex process. Without automation in place to make everything more efficient, we'll continue falling behind our net zero targets.

As a telecoms operator, you have an important part to play too because when you implement intuitive technology to enhance efficiencies, you can better plan and deliver your key projects and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Learning from the telecoms industry's experiences – both good and bad – is vital to getting to a better position in this EV journey, and quicker. Without automation enabling the wayleave process to run smoothly, we firmly believe that charger installations won't even get out of first gear.

> "Wayleaves are often an incredibly complex and time-consuming process, and there's no question that if the EV sector is to grow at the speed it needs to, these agreements must be in place. We have a collective responsibility to care for our environment and we're determined to utilise our knowledge to support landowners, housing associations, local authorities, EV providers and organisations with fleet vehicles to complete applications and drive towards a greener future."
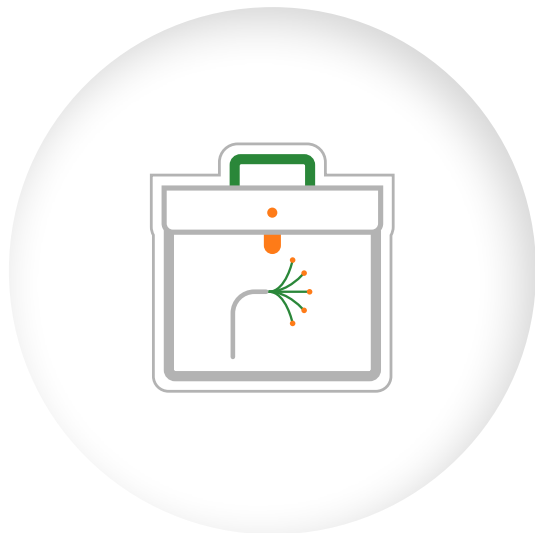
Sharon McDermott
Co-founder and Managing Director

Scan to read Geldard's guest blog

trencheslaw.co.uk/are-we-prepared-for-an-ev-future

In conclusion

For complex builds to accelerate at the pace we require to hit the UK Government's ambitious Project Gigabit targets, there's no doubt the wayleave process must be simplified to improve the progress of roll-outs – no matter how complex.

We're committed to helping the telecoms industry remove critical barriers and supporting businesses to 'level up' – that way we can, collectively, play a pivotal role in Britain's quest for a gigabit-capable future.

Get in touch

We're here to help you grow. So, why not tap into the knowledge of our straight-talking, commercially-savvy and technically experienced telecoms specialists?

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