



Beyond the Clipboard: How Paper Is Holding Maximo Back—and How to Replace It

INTERLOC SOLUTIONS BLOG

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For decades, the old-fashioned clipboard with pen and paper has been the unofficial "mobile interface" for IBM Maximo. It feels reliable, a callback to procedures we've used most of our lives. However, relying on pen and paper is effectively a "hidden tax" on your organization's productivity and asset health. Moving to a digital solution isn't just about going "paperless", it's about bridging the divide between how work is performed in the field and the business data leadership relies on to make decisions.

The 5 Hidden Hazards of Paper

1. The "Pencil Whip" Risk: Paper forms cannot validate data in real-time or provide proof of where/how they were completed. This often leads to "pencil whipping"—the act of signing off on inspections without performing the actual work. Without digital guardrails like mandatory fields or photo evidence captured at the time of inspection, safety and compliance become a guessing game.
2. Data Latency & Stale Decisions: If a technician records a critical reading at 9:00 AM but doesn't enter it into Maximo until they return to the office at 4:00 PM, your reliability engineers are making decisions based on stale data. In asset-intensive industries, that 7-hour delay can be the difference between a preventative action and an emergency shutdown.
3. The "Wrench Time" Tax: "Wrench time" is the SMRP-standard metric for measuring actual value-added work. Industry research from McKinsey and interviews with IBM Maximo customers show that digital solutions drive a 15% to 26% increase in workforce productivity - which translates to reclaiming up to 17 minutes of "wrench time" for every single work order.
4. The Security and Compliance Vacuum: Unlike digital systems, paper offers zero encryption, automatic backup, or detailed audit trail. Sensitive maintenance data is vulnerable to anyone with a key to a file cabinet or a stray clipboard left out in the open. Furthermore, paper makes it nearly impossible to establish a transparent "chain of custody" for regulatory audits as you simply cannot track who accessed, edited, or copied a record once it left the printer.

5. The High Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of Analog: Between the cost of printing, physical storage, and the administrative labor of manual transcription, paper-based systems often have a higher Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) than modern mobile solutions.

Common Mobile Mistakes that Impede Adoption

The Maximo ecosystem offers a wide variety of mobile solutions, each featuring different capabilities and tradeoffs. It can be tempting to simply select a tool just to "check the box" for mobility. However, merely having an app is not enough to overcome the comfort of paper. Based on over 15 years of helping customers implement Maximo mobility, we have identified the primary setbacks that prevent successful adoption:

- **Connectivity:** Many apps require constant Wi-Fi or cellular signals to function. In the real world - where technicians work in concrete-shielded facilities or remote fields - unreliable connectivity leads to "spinning wheels" and frozen screens that slow or even halt productivity.
- **Interface Instability:** A mobile application must provide accurate information reliably without crashing or taking a lengthy time to respond. Laggy or unresponsive user interfaces (UIs) are the fastest way to lose the trust of your field workforce.
- **Security Concerns:** If a solution uses middleware servers or unsecured interfaces, it may not comply with stringent business security requirements, creating new vulnerabilities instead of inheriting Maximo's protection.
- **The Customization Gap:** Your mobile tools must match your unique business requirements. If an app cannot mirror your custom Maximo business logic or novel workflows, technicians find it a hindrance rather than an asset.

When you realize that "checking the box" is not enough to drive operational ROI, it is time to evolve.

The Evolution: What Is the Mobile Informer UX Suite?

The Mobile Informer UX Suite is the next generation of Mobile Informer, rebuilt to make field work faster, simpler, and more reliable, shaped by over a decade of experience from field users, UX designers, and Maximo experts.

The result is a platform built on the four foundational pillars of Mobile Informer:

- **Offline-First:** Designed to function fully without connectivity without degrading the user experience, enabling uninterrupted work in remote or shielded environments. Whether it is a warehouse worker in areas where Wi-Fi does not reach, or an on-site technician in a secure location where data transmission is restricted, the UX Suite continues to operate reliably and synchronizes when connectivity is available and permitted.
- **Security:** Inherits Maximo's native security model, aligning with enterprise and regulatory requirements without introducing new attack surfaces. The UX Suite operates within your existing authentication and authorization frameworks, ensuring that data captured in the field is governed by the same controls, visibility, and compliance standards as data entered directly into Maximo.
- **Scalability:** Engineered to perform efficiently across large and complex data sets using a data strategy that emphasizes "mobile relevance" to minimize device footprint while

maintaining system context.

- **Customizability:** Delivers out-of-the-box functionality that can be tailored to match even the most unique business processes and workflows.

By consolidating field activities into a single, dependable interface, the UX Suite replaces stacks of paper with a high-performance mobile experience that technicians can trust and will want to use.

Final Thoughts

Paper persists not because it is effective, but because many mobile solutions fail to adapt to the workplace. When mobility aligns usability, reliability, security, and Maximo integrity, paper is no longer required to be the user's safety blanket.

Importantly, the Mobile Informer UX Suite is not simply a digital replacement for the clipboard. Instead, it is a strategic shift toward real-time execution, trusted data, and sustained workforce adoption, delivering real ROI and enabling your organization to return focus to the important work at hand.

[Request a demo](#) to see how the Mobile Informer UX Suite modernizes mobility across your Maximo environment.



About Interloc Solutions

Interloc Solutions brings over 20 years of experience helping asset-intensive organizations modernize and optimize their enterprise asset management environments. We specialize in IBM Maximo and Maximo Application Suite (MAS), supporting upgrades, implementations, and long-term platform strategy. Our secure Cloud Services deliver scalable, reliable hosting for mission-critical systems. With the Mobile Informer UX Suite, we redefine mobility through offline-first, user-focused experiences that drive adoption and productivity. Backed by expert consulting services, Interloc partners with clients to solve complex challenges and deliver lasting value.