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SOPA Anywhere!®

For a long time, our users have wished for the ability to perform BBS observations and record the data directly as it unfolds on the shop floor, rather than record them on paper for later data entry into SOPA. Several years ago, we released *SOPAmobile*®, which uses the browser on a cell phone or tablet to allow data entry. While we think the logic in *SOPAmobile* is essentially correct, it has not been widely adopted, although the companies that are using it seem happy with it. The problems are a) it is not a “real” cell app since it runs in the browser, and b) it requires an internet connection. Some companies really want SOPA data entry to look like the other apps on the users’ mobile devices. Other companies can’t use *SOPAmobile* because safety observations sometimes occur where there is no internet signal. Now, Dr. William Hutchison has invented an app that solves both those issues. Because it can be used even in places with no internet access, we call it *SOPA Anywhere!*

Advantages of SOPA Anywhere!

The main advantage to using a mobile app to enter data during the observation is to “cut out the middle man” and eliminate the need for transcription of a written form into “desktop SOPA.” Not only does this greatly reduce the need for an administrative assistant to enter many paper forms at the end of the month, it eliminates that as a potential source of error.

But *SOPA Anywhere!* has several other features that are particularly attractive.

- *SOPA Anywhere!* supports the post-observation conversation with the employee, so that you can glance down to see comments that you made along with Safe or Concern markings as you talk to the person who was observed. You can even modify your comments if you learn something from the employee that ought to be part of the observation record.

- You can do safety observations even when you are not in range of an internet connection. For instance, if you are in a “dead zone” within a large warehouse, or on a vessel at sea, you can still use the app to collect data. It will be stored on the device until you get a signal.
- When there is an internet signal (for example, you come out of the warehouse, or the vessel returns to port), SOPA Anywhere! automatically uploads any stored observation data to our server, and downloads the latest checklists and employee records to keep the app current.
- The app can use a WiFi signal or a commercial cell phone connection for internet access.
- The application will have a complete list of locations, checklists and employee roster for a site to choose from.
- Several different users can share a tablet, even if their location/checklist configurations are different from each other.
- The same app runs on iPads, Androids, and other devices. In each case, it adapts itself to the conventions for each operating system so that it looks like a “native app.”
- SOPA Anywhere! has a very intuitive user interface (UI) so that there is not a major learning curve to get started.
- If we make enhancements, the app can easily be updated without losing any data.

No matter where the action is and whether there is internet access, SOPA Anywhere! lets you record BBS observations where the employees do their jobs.

How Can We Get the *SOPA Anywhere!* App? “SOPA Gold”

SOPA Anywhere! is now in beta test but beginning in 2018, it will be available to any company that subscribes to the SOPA Gold service. SOPA Gold offers not only the *SOPA Anywhere!* tablet data entry app, but also the two scanning technologies described in *SOPA Observer #3*, and *Reports by Subscription* (the latter will be described in a future *SOPA Observer* newsletter). If you’re interested in upgrading to the new level of service, please talk to us or Mike Johnson at QSE to make arrangements.