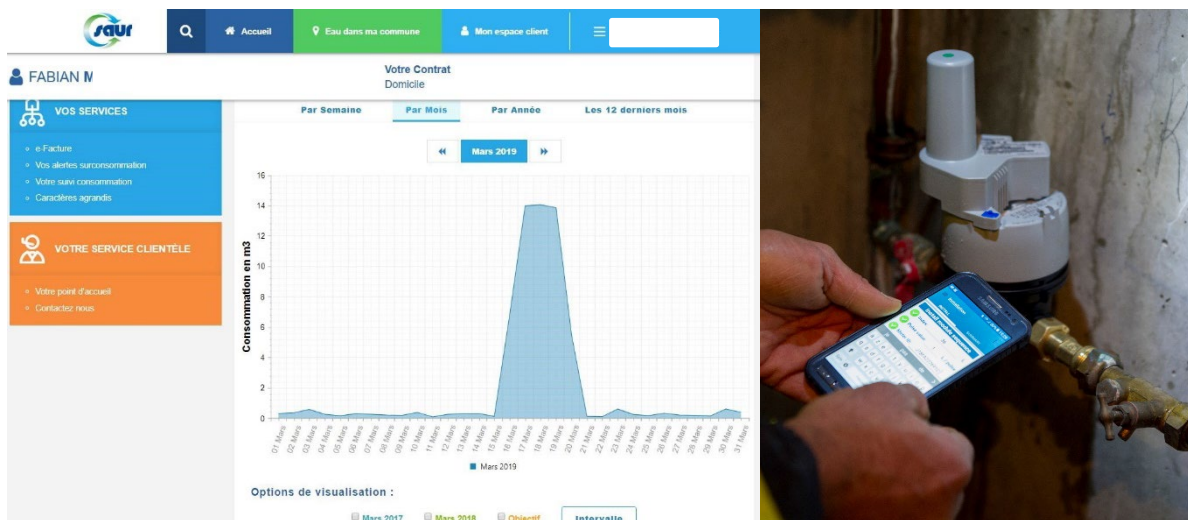


Issy-les-Moulineaux, 15 June 2020

Saur installs its 400,000th smart water meter in Châteauroux

Saur has installed its 400,000th smart meter in the urban community of Châteauroux, establishing the Group as a major force in this technology. Installing these meters allows the Group to provide the local authority and consumers with additional services, including excessive consumption alerts.



“In most cases, customer consumption of water services is measured by manually read meters”, explains Saur Smart Metering Manager Frédéric Brunner. “This meter reading and billing method still complies fully with current regulations, but it no longer meets consumer expectations. That’s because they need to use a service with common standards for measuring consumption, especially in terms of gas and electricity. They no longer want to be bothered with someone visiting their home to take a meter reading, and neither do they want to wait until they receive their six-monthly bills (one of which is estimated) to find out how much they’ve used. They want to monitor their consumption in real time”.

This assessment reflects the many advantages of smart meter reading that, once publicised, has proved extremely popular in the urban community of Châteauroux, where nearly 16,000 new meters have been installed in the last three years. The principle is simple: a radio frequency architecture makes it possible to read the meter automatically at least once a day, and transmit reading data to the Saur Operations Control Centre (OCC), where a dedicated expert monitors incoming data and analyses any unusual variations in consumption.



As soon as the contract was awarded in 2016, a specialist team of seven staff and a project manager was formed to change the installed base of meters within the urban community. *“That was a real adventure in itself”,* smiles Châteauroux Project Manager Sylvain Yvernault. *“And ultimately, the beginning of new and innovative services for consumers”.* By signing in to their customer accounts on the home computer or mobile device, residents can now track their meter readings on a daily basis, set their own consumption targets, and receive e-mail and SMS notifications of abnormal levels of consumption, which could indicate a leak inside or outside their home. This technology has really proved its worth during the Covid-19 lockdown, when this meter reading service and its associated interface maintained 24/7 service in real time.

Feedback by e-mail from a Châteauroux resident: *“Thanks to the Conso alert service, Saur contacted me to let me know that there might be a leak in my home. They’d noticed that my smart meter was reporting abnormally high consumption. So I called a plumber straight away, and he found a leak in my basement! So thank you for this excellent service. Without this alert, I’d have had a nasty shock when my next bill arrived!”*

Before smart meters, each household received one bill based on an actual manual reading and an estimated reading based on previous consumption. *“That system had many drawbacks, not least the fact that residents needed to be at home where the meter was installed indoors. Other issues included bills that didn’t properly align with the cycle of consumption or changes in the household, and the inability to detect leaks within the property at an early stage”,* continues Frédéric Brunner.

In addition to the consumer alert service, the ability to use daily consumption data also makes it possible to extend the range of services offered to personal and business customers, as well as the local authority itself, as a major user of drinking water supply services. The new services now being introduced will help consumers to manage their water consumption much more effectively.

Lastly, the remote meter reading service and architecture are fully interoperable. *“The language used by our radiofrequency modules complies fully with the AFNOR standard, which means that it has no features specific to particular operators or meter suppliers. Developing specific features enabled the previous supplier to make its system non-interoperable and hold the local authority to ransom, both technically and financially”.* In other words, Châteauroux has total independence from Saur, and can therefore continue to use the service even if it does not renew its contract with Saur.

Gil Avérous is Chairman of the Châteauroux Métropole authority: *“Vice-Chairman Didier Barachet and I set ourselves the challenge of updating the Châteauroux water supply contract, and simultaneously lowering prices significantly! After many months of discussion with potential suppliers interested in our plan, we finally opted for Saur, because its tender undeniably added value in terms of technology, while remaining very competitive in terms of price. I’m proud to have provided my fellow citizens with this new remote water meter reading service to simplify their lives”.*



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Saur Executive Chairman Patrick Blethon: *“This remote meter reading technology improves the technical operating conditions of delivering the service, at the same time as helping the local authority to optimise its costs and gain better control of its water service. It also helps to reassure consumers by giving them a clear view of their actual consumption.*

About Saur: *As a longstanding water services leader, SAUR serves local authorities and industrial companies in the successful implementation of development projects in water supply and treatment, environmental services (engineering, infrastructure services). SAUR worldwide presence: Saudi Arabia, Cyprus, Colombia, Scotland, Spain, Italia, Netherlands, Poland. 2019 key figures: EUR 1.5 billion Group net revenue, 7,000 local authorities contracted, 9,000 employees and 12 million consumers in France and worldwide.*

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