HOW EVEN IT-DUMMIES CAN WORK WITH OUR IOT SOLUTIONS
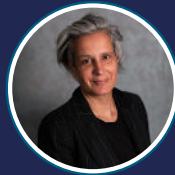
WHITEPAPER BY

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Asset Visibility. Made Simple.

In this whitepaper our Product Manager & Co-Foundrer Laurence Claeys shares how we at Sensolus implement IoT asset tracking that is so user-friendly that even an IT dummy gets it right away.

In my opinion, there are three things that contribute to this. I'll take you step by step, and I'll conclude each point with three key takeaways so that everyone - from a hyper-specialized IT guy to a logistics manager with no technical background - can get started with our solution.

Laurence Claeys – Product Manager & Co-Founder
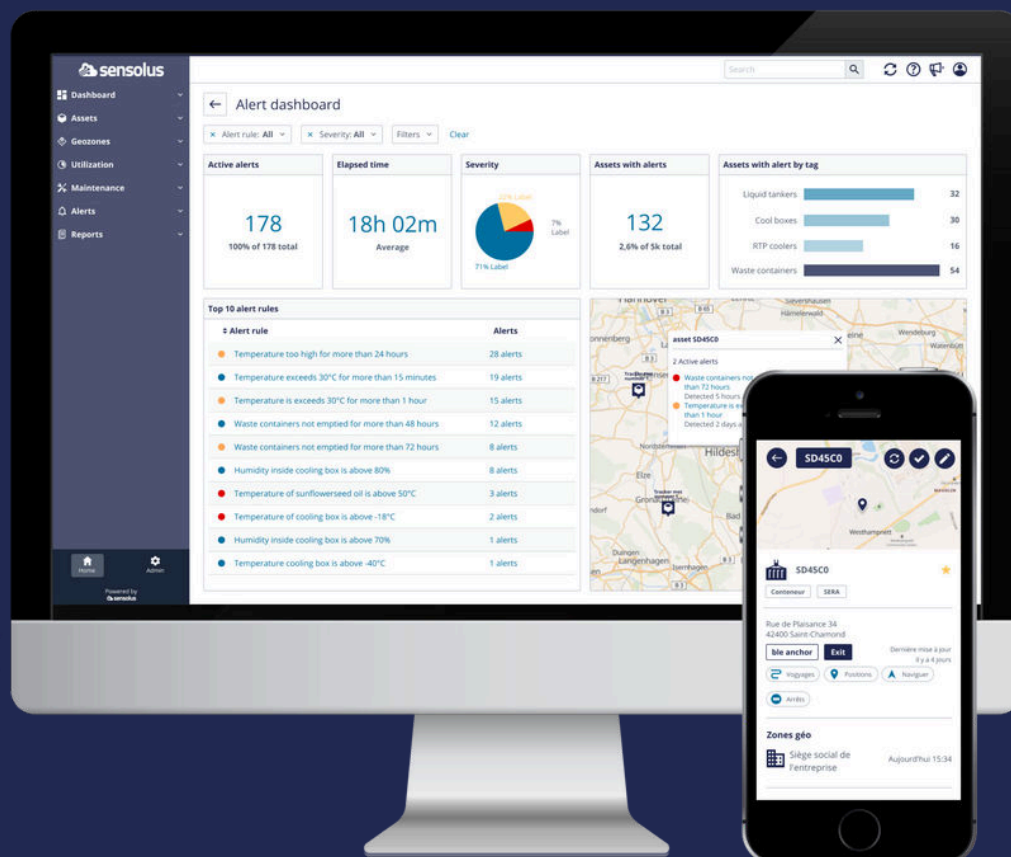
#1 As easy as a sticker

#2 Easy to navigate

#3 One stop shop

Introduction

The idea of IoT is simple: devices, sensors and other "smart" objects are connected to the Internet, allowing them to collect and exchange data. IoT helps companies live track and manage their assets (e.g., containers, trailers, construction materials, tools, transport trucks, trolleys…).

IoT is widely deployed in industries such as logistics, manufacturing, aviation, construction and the food industry. Yet there is one persistent misconception: many people think that IoT applications are complicated and expensive, and that you need a team of IT specialists to run it.

That doesn't have to be the case at all.

1. As easy as a sticker

When you think of "sticking something on," you often immediately think of a simple sticker on a box. That's how easy IoT asset tracking should be, we think. And believe me, we take the principle of 'as easy as a sticker' very literally.

1.1 Starting with the right configuration

At Sensolus, we first work with the customer to see exactly what they want to track and in what way. Do they want to monitor the entire trip of a trailer? Or only know the location at the times a container arrives or is emptied? Perhaps knowing the location only when the trolly is loaded is sufficient?

> **All you have to do is activate the tracker with a magnet and place it where you want it, like a sticker.**

Because Sensolus has been tracking different types of assets for more than 15 years, we can make a good estimation of the appropriate configuration of the tracker to keep track of the assets. Based on the type of asset and the specific needs of the customer, we configure the trackers. This means that our trackers already arrive with the right settings and parameters to you. Our advantage is that we already track more than 1 million assets, so we know very well how they behave. Before you know it, you will have your first assets 'online'.

All you have to do is activate the tracker with a magnet (yes, really!) and stick it where you want, like a sticker. The magnet activation is a small, but oh so important action, because it "wakes up" the tracker, so to speak, and connects it to our platform.

That. Is. It.

1.2 Remotely adjustable

A major advantage is that configurations are also remotely adjustable afterwards. Should you want to change your original settings – say you want to receive a certain status update more often, or if you want to change the interval of your measurement data – no one has to be on site to reconfigure the tracker.

We can adjust the configurations remotely, via the cloud. That's convenient because many companies have their assets scattered far and wide (inside and outside), and it is a hopeless task if you have to physically be at the trackers every time you need to adjust something.

Scan the QR code or <u>click here</u> to watch or listen to an episode of our channel 'Track&Talk' where we talk about how Sensolus tracks, diagnoses, and optimizes thousands of trackers.
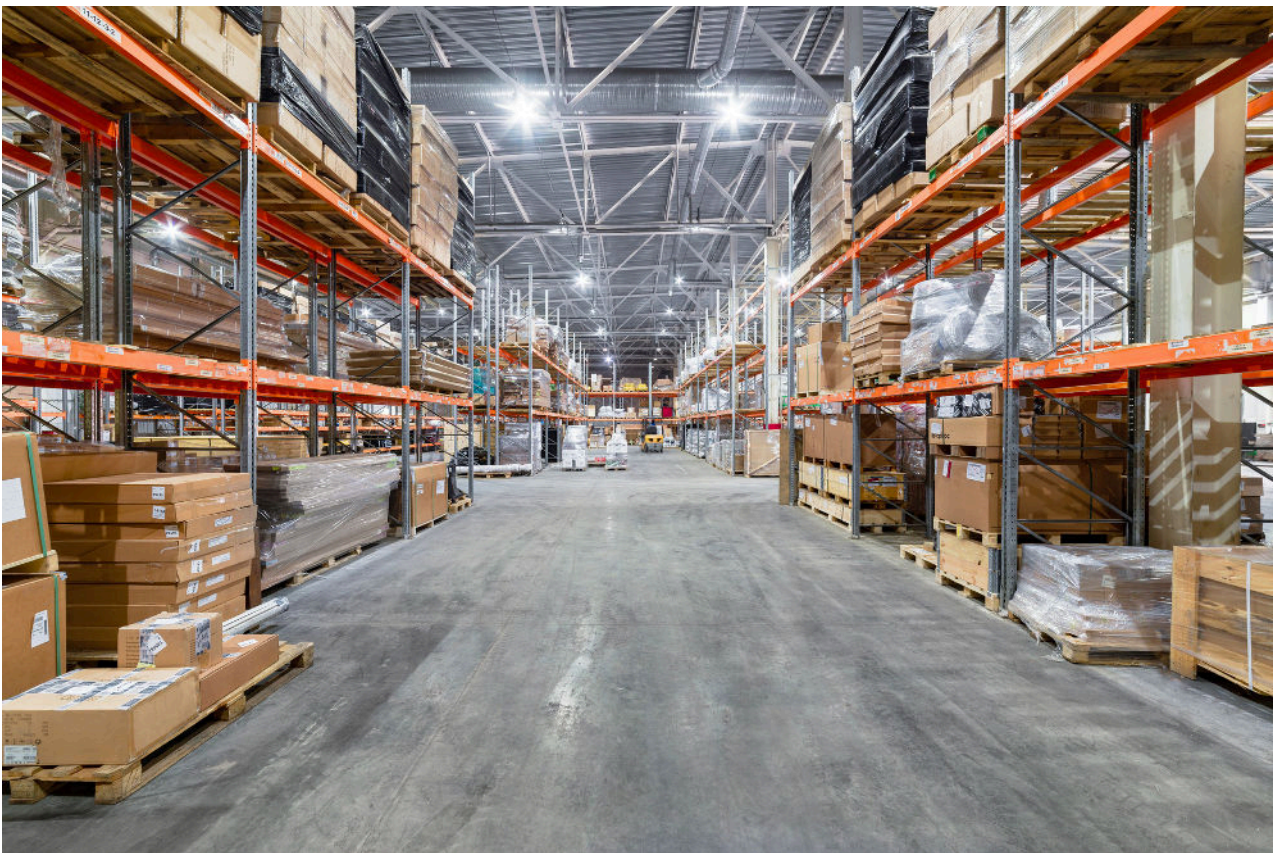
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1.3 The chickens didn't agree

However, reality can sometimes turn out to be a little less idyllic. For example, we once tracked chickens. Indeed, live chickens! In a research phase, we gave them a kind of backpack with a sensor to measure their movements and habitat. To our great surprise, these animals appeared to grow so fast that the backpack was not particularly comfortable. We tried to make it 'as easy as a sticker' but the chickens clearly had their own opinion on that.

> **This was a learning moment for us: not all assets are suitable for a simple tracker, and immature animals certainly aren't. One of our partners is still engaged in wildlife tracking, but we still focus mainly on assets without a will of their own, which do tolerate a tracker very well.**

Yet even with assets, reality sometimes remains recalcitrant. A company may be able to make minor modifications to the packaging or product so that the tracker does not come loose or get damaged – this could be a cutout in a box or a snap-on holder. Again, we strive to make it 'as easy as a sticker' but we aren't blind to reality. Asset tracking is not going to be one hundred percent plug-and-play everywhere in the world. Yet we hear from our clients that they are amazed at how easy our trackers are to use and that hardly any technical knowledge is required.

1.4 Retrofit for greater flexibility

Moreover, our solution is retrofitted, which means you don't have to make expensive interventions to integrate the hardware into your assets, such as drilling holes or installing cables. You stick our tracker on your items and the data is automatically sent to our cloud. The retrofit principle makes a world of difference. So you can basically track any existing object, from a trailer to a container, and even construction equipment.

3 Things to remember

1. Activate the tracker with a **magnet** and **mount easily**

2. Trackers are **preconfigured** and ready-to-use

3. Configuration **updates** can be done **remotely**

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2. From dashboard to mobile app: you don't have to be a pilot to navigate

Once you put the trackers to work, huge quantities of data, such as location points, status updates, and warnings, soon flow in. Without a clear way to interpret and use that information, it remains difficult to gain insights that you can translate into concrete actions to optimize your processes. I often ask our clients, "What good is a wealth of data if you can't see the forest for the trees?" That's why we paid great attention to a clear, user-friendly platform.

2.1 A clear and customized dashboard tailored to your needs

Sensolus presents the collected data in understandable visualizations. For example, you can see where all the assets are on a map in real time. Or you can get an automatic warning when a trailer is idle for more than x minutes, so you can intervene in time.

The nice thing is that you can also create your own dashboard. Then you decide which parameters are important to you and how they are visualized. Are you a logistics manager who wants to know where your five most critical assets are located at a glance? Then you choose that. Or are you a purchasing manager primarily interested in maintenance intervals and usage statistics? Then just set your dashboard to that. This way, you aren't drowned in information you don't need.

> **There is nothing more frustrating than a platform packed with bells and whistles that you don't use. Less is more! And those who do want more depth or functionalities can activate them with a single mouse click.**

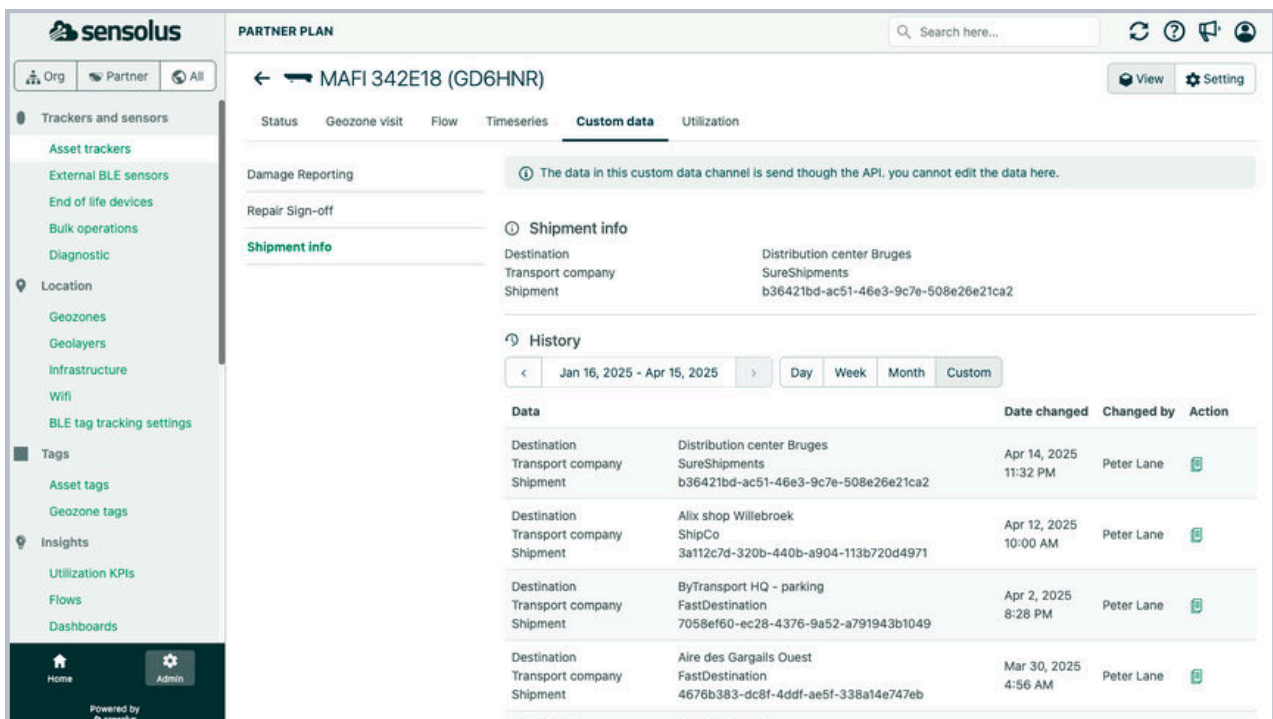## 2.2 Anytime, anywhere access with the mobile app

Another aspect of 'dummy-proof' is the accessible mobile app. We noticed that many of our customers operate 'in the field,' for example, warehouse workers, maintenance personnel or groundskeepers driving around an airport. They don't want to first walk up to a desk, boot up a computer and then log into the platform through an elaborate login process. No, they just want to check their smartphone, here and now, to see where that one dolly has gone. Or to quickly take a picture of a damaged asset and add it to the asset information. That's why we've molded our entire tracking environment into a convenient mobile app. It's the same visual style, just more compact and user-friendly for people who literally have their hands full.

2.3 Integration with existing systems (API)

Many times an IT manager, CIO or technical expert will ask, "Can the platform exchange data with our existing ERP system?" Yes indeed. From the beginning, we took into account the need for open standards and easy links. Via the API, we can transfer data directly to your own software environment or we can transfer information from ERP systems to the Sensolus platform.

That often comes in handy in sectors like aviation, where sometimes multiple parties are active in the same field. Or at logistics hubs, where they have an existing track-and-trace system and just want to feed that data into it from Sensolus. So you don't have to reinvent the wheel, and you only have one platform where you centralize all the information. This also lowers the threshold for your employees, because they can log in with their familiar company login and view the data directly in their own IT environment.

Scan the QR code or click here to watch or listen to an episode of our channel 'Track&Talk', our channel where we talk about how Sensolus makes asset data flow effortlessly, real customer cases, and smart data tools like Power BI.

3

Things to remember

1. **User-friendly customized dashboard**

2. **Always access with the mobile app**

3. **Easily integrate with other systems**

3. One-stop shop for many use cases

Another thing we call 'grandpa-proof' is removing as much complexity behind the scenes as possible. IoT asset tracking normally requires numerous puzzle pieces: a sensor, a battery, a SIM card, connectivity, configuration, platform support, etc. At Sensolus, we don't think you have to take care of all that yourself as a client. We offer a single integrated solution – from hardware to software, connectivity to battery management.

3.1 Batteries and SIM cards included

From the get-go, our trackers include an integrated battery and SIM card. That may sound logical, but believe me, there are still plenty of IoT solutions where you, the client, have to pony up for your own suitable SIM card that provides communication coverage in the right region. Or you first need to figure out which battery can provide long-term power under certain weather conditions.

> **We want clients to only have to think about what exactly they want to track, not how to implement the tracking.**

We want clients to only have to think about what exactly they want to track, not how to implement the tracking. Our job is to select the right technology and put it into a single package.

3.2 Indoor and outdoor asset tracker

Indoors or outdoors? We support multiple location technologies, so a tracker knows when to lean better on GPS, and when to switch to Wi-Fi location tracking or Bluetooth in indoor environments. In other words, you don't have to switch back and forth between different device variants, it just happens automatically.
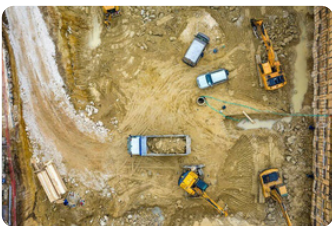
3.3 Long battery life and robustness

One of Sensolus's great strengths is that our trackers last a long time on their internal battery, even with heavy use. This is due in part to our optimized battery management. In addition, the trackers can withstand harsh conditions: temperature fluctuations, humidity, impacts, etc. This makes our technology deployable in sectors where 'laboratory conditions' don't exactly apply, such as large construction sites or on boats.

Some real-life examples to illustrate this:

Logistics & transport

A large brewery like AB InBev has countless trailers constantly on the road delivering orders. Thanks to our trackers, they get insights into exactly where a trailer is, and even how long the trailers are loading or unloading, and thus how long they are idling.
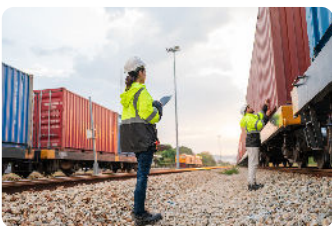

Construction

Suppose you run a construction company that has windows delivered to a job site. With asset tracking, you can immediately see when the cargo arrived and if nothing was left behind. This not only prevents lost materials, but also unnecessary delays. Plus, it's a sustainable approach: by monitoring your assets, you waste less.

Aviation

Ground support equipment (GSE) – such as baggage trolleys, aircraft stairs, and baggage belts – is indispensable at airports. In the past, staff sometimes literally had to go track these assets down on site somewhere themselves. With Sensolus, you can instantly see where the nearest airplane stairs are in the app. This saves time, fuel, and crew costs.

Repair and service

Some assets travel around the world for maintenance or repair. Thanks to the tracking system, different departments within a company know whether an asset has arrived at the service location, whether it has already been repaired, and if it's on its way back to its final destination. Thus, less material gets lost, which again saves costs and avoids delays.

3 Things to remember

1. **All-in-one solution:** from tracker to platform dashboards

2. **Blend of technologies** for tracking both indoor & outdoor

3. Many sectors, same **simplicity** and always **scalable**

Conclusion

At the same time, we realize that no actual system can operate without any instructions. Handling a robust magnet to activate the tracker, a small modification to a package to attach the tracker, or a dashboard that takes a while to learn how to set up… You can't completely eliminate it. And yes, even with our chicken experience, we have learned that 'as easy as a sticker' is sometimes just a little too optimistic.

Still, our mission is clear: we want every company – SME or multinational – to be able to start using IoT asset tracking right away, without having to bring in an army of IT people first. Is that ambitious? Absolutely. Is it feasible? We prove it to our clients every day.

That's the power of a "dummy-proof" approach. And everyone is reaping the benefits: the logistics manager who finally has visibility into all of their assets, the purchasing manager who can create reports at the touch of a button, the maintenance crew out in the field doing a quick update, and even the C-level executive in the boardroom who can use the dashboard to see where every critical part of the supply chain is worldwide. In short: IoT can be simple – as long as it is well-thought-out, designed to be user-friendly, and offers everything in one solution.

Hopefully, after reading this whitepaper, you'll have a clearer picture of how IoT asset tracking can be not only powerful, but surprisingly simple.

> Saying that your solution is "so simple that even a dummy can use it" sounds like a nice promise, but for us at Sensolus, it's at the heart of everything we do. From initial product designs to the way we support our clients, users always come first.

About Sensolus

Founded in 2013, Sensolus began with a simple yet ambitious goal: to **make IIoT technology easy and impactful** for businesses of all sizes. The founders combined their diverse expertise to create solutions that bridge the gap between complex technology and everyday business needs.

Today Sensolus is the European leader in asset visibility with **more than 1 million connected assets** in the world, **from giant containers to small boxes**. Together with a global certified partner network with 60+ partners Sensolus helps 500+ clients worldwide to make their assets visible.

About Laurence

Laurence Claeys is a co-founder and Product Manager at Sensolus, where she leads customer-focused innovation in asset tracking. She began her career at Alcatel-Lucent (now Nokia), working on ubiquitous computing, and later applied sensor technologies to track everything from livestock to industrial assets.

Laurence holds a Master's in Sociology and Gender Studies and a PhD in Communication Sciences. She also teaches in the Communication Sciences department at the Free University of Brussels.

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