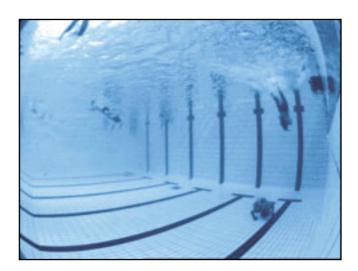# Seconds from death

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By Roland Hughes, Daily Post

A 10-YEAR-OLD girl was saved from drowning in a North Wales swimming pool - by a new hi-tech computer.

The girl sank 12ft to the bottom of the deep end at Bangor baths.

The computerised system raised the alarm within seconds and a lifeguard dived in to rescue the unconscious girl.

She was given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and taken to hospital - becoming the first person in the UK to be saved by the £65,000 Poseidon lifesaving system, which was installed in Bangor in March 2003.

The 33-metre pool is covered by eight overhead cameras and four underwater cameras which are designed to act as a "third eye" to protect swimmers.

It can sense within seconds whether a person is not moving in a pool.

The underwater cameras are so precise, they can pick up volume, movement and texture of an object, and analyse the trajectory of swimmers.

As soon as they spot a swimmer in danger, the system sends out a message via pager to lifeguards to show the precise location.

The youngster from Rochdale, Lancashire, was on a camping holiday with a charitable trust in North Wales.

She was with a large group at the Garth Road pool Ð one of the deepest public swimming pools in Wales and the first to instal the system.

Just after 1.25pm on Wednesday, August 24, she jumped straight into the deepest part of the pool.

After only three seconds, cameras spotted she was not moving and the alarm went out to the duty lifeguard.

The lifeguard spotted the victim, dived into the pool and pulled her out of the water.

She was given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and taken by ambulance to Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor, where she recovered.

The total time between her dropping into the pool and being rescued was less than 40 seconds.

Two minutes longer, she would have almost certainly died or suffered irreversible brain damage.

Brian Evans, leisure officer at Gwynedd council which runs the pool, last night said: "The system spotted her quicker than the human eye.

"The Bangor pool is a typically 1960s-designed pool with lots of windows, which creates a lot of glare on the surface of the water and can make it difficult for lifeguards to see what's going on.

"It is also very deep at over 12ft with diving boards.

"Those two factors put together led to us installing the system.

"What is a cost like that when you can save a person's life like it did here?" said Mr Evans.

"It showed just how quickly someone can be saved - we got there right in time.

"Any longer and her heart would have stopped."

Poseidon is currently fitted in more than 120 swimming pools in Europe, North America, Japan and Australia.

The remarkable images of the girl's rescue were instantly beamed to the computer's main centre in Paris where they were last night being analysed to see how she plunged to the bottom.

Fran•ois Marmion, general manager of Vision IQ, the company which developed Poseidon, said: "It is virtually impossible for lifeguards to see everything that is happening in the pool all of the time, given the warm, noisy and crowded environment in which they typically work."

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