

# Panasonic

# ntl

## TOUGHBOOK

ntl technicians are equipped for the toughest field conditions with a new shipment of Panasonic ToughBooks, ready to be installed with a hard-working software package.

# Case Study

## Toughbook performs in STORM conditions.

Until recently, ntl's force of field technicians used mobile phones and radios to communicate with base operations. Few had access to laptop technology. Now the company's acquisition of Panasonic ToughBook CF-71 notebook PCs is set to change the face of the field work for the company, providing faster network communications and streamlining existing systems.

The ToughBook solution will allow engineers to carry out their daily tasks remotely, providing them with a complete dispatching system and handling all call allocation. Once installed with the software application STORM (Severn Trent Operational Resource Management System), technicians will be able to access the core system for work schedules, send and receive e-mails, and perform and report on diagnostic tests from the field.

### In search of the rugged solution

*"Initially, we considered several makes of notebook," explained Raphael Stipic, Business Project Manager at ntl, "but then we heard British Gas singing ToughBook's praises because of its durability in the field. Ruggedness was a serious priority requirement for us so obviously we became interested in the ToughBook."*

When ntl took over the cable element of Cable & Wireless (C&W), it inherited the laptop PCs previously used by some of the C&W engineers. These weren't really robust enough to withstand the rough and tumble treatment sustained in the field, and repair and maintenance costs were running high. It was clear that a more rugged solution was called for.





C&W briefed their systems integrator, IBM Global Services, with their requirements and asked them to source a suitable tool. They investigated a number of options (including the Panasonic ToughBook which was available through Computacenter), before finally recommending it because of its field-proof technology and modularity. C&W consequently acquired 2000 CF-71s models, with optional DVD-ROM capability.

As it was C&W's aim to roll out a national workforce management system, they were looking for standard management architecture which allowed everyone in the field to access central systems remotely. ToughBook provided a very attractive

solution, as it could incorporate GSM capability via the use of Nokia GSM cards.

800 of these units are now in the hands of ntl's 'complex' engineers – those technicians carrying out large business network installations and fault repairs. All Field Operations Managers and most of the technicians working on household installations have also been provided with a ToughBook PC.

#### **Secure management, robust support**

Whilst IBM Global Services manage the day-to-day technology support to ntl, Panasonic is providing a service package for the ToughBooks that includes three year service, support and accidental damage cover, with an 8 hour swap-out anywhere in the country, including their software build and additional third party accessories.

#### **Tangible benefits for all areas of business**

*"We are trying to stop our engineers coming into base because that is an inefficient way for us to operate, so we needed a standard platform that is rugged enough to allow them to stay out longer in the field," said Raphael Stipic. "We now think of the ToughBooks as their personal survival kits."*

#### **• Enhancing the field function**

Mobile engineers using the ToughBook solution have immediate access to the systems network and can use GSM to communicate direct from their notebook PC. This cuts down on unnecessary travel to and from base, saving transport costs and increasing time efficiency.

#### **• Benefiting customer services**

The DVD playback facility offers benefits to engineers when installing digital systems for customers. They can run educational and training videos for the customer while working on-site to ensure new users have a good understanding of the products and equipment they're buying.

#### **• Making financial savings**

Because of the extremely rugged character of the hardware, few of the units are returned for repair or replacement and the maintenance costs are very low. Financial savings are also made in the workforce because engineers' travel between jobs and base is cut considerably, and they can be more productive in the field as information is immediately accessible wherever they are, at all times.

*"Since implementing the new technology, we've experienced very few faults with the ToughBook," concluded Mr Stipic.*



**ntl:**

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