



XPLORE RUGGED TABLETS AID GEOLOGICAL MAPPING OF N.S.W.

Providing industry and other agencies with geological maps of NSW is the responsibility of the Regional Mapping Program of the Geological Survey of New South Wales which is part of NSW Department of Primary Industries. Based in Maitland, in the State's Hunter Valley, this group conducts on-ground field work that enables the development of additional 'layers' of descriptive data that expands on that generated through aerial geophysical surveys and historical information.



"Working in remote and rugged environments is demanding on our people and their equipment", says David Robson, Chief Geophysicist heading the project for Geological Survey of NSW. DPI came to Antares, a specialist mobile computing provider and software developer, wanting to graduate from using palm-held PDAs for this task. "We have recently implemented three Xplore ruggedised tablet PCs with the 'AllVue' screen and have six more on order", said David. "We are happy with their performance and our staff like using them".

"DPI's critical requirements were to have a device that could withstand rough treatment in remote and often hot and dusty environments, with superior screen readability and high-end processor speed and memory and hard drive capacity" said Peter King, Managing Director of Antares. A major attraction of the Xplore units is the design and robust construction of the tablets which means that there are no weak points to allow water or dust ingress. It was also important that they could operate for a full day in the field using two batteries (original plus spare) and the Xplore has made this possible. The tablet runs Windows XP whereas the PDAs used Windows CE which would only support 'light' versions of DPI's application software. "This has improved productivity enormously" advised Phil Gilmore, geoscientist with the regional mapping team, "along with the ability to view the screen in direct sunlight".

DPI uses ArcGIS software and the Xplore is loaded with multi-layers of data including satellite imagery, geophysical images, terrain information and a number of other variables and attributes about promising geological sites being examined. Field data is captured into the Geological Survey's custom built SITES database, a Microsoft Access application. This process is providing enhanced data that is being used by the government to invigorate mineral exploration in NSW.