



WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL ADOPTS RUGGED MOBILE TECHNOLOGY FOR ASSET MANAGEMENT

For local government authorities, tracking, inspecting and maintaining their various physical 'assets' is a constant cyclical activity in which significant resources are invested. Increasingly, councils are employing mobile computing systems to streamline these processes and in so doing, achieve productivity gains and greater precision.

One such council, Wyong Shire Council on the NSW Central Coast, has automated much of its asset inspection processes with resultant dramatic productivity improvements. WSC recently implemented a new system using four Xplore AllVue fully ruggedised tablet PCs which are used by technical officers in the field to log footpath, line-marking, street signs and drainage defects. At the same time, using the tablet's GPS capabilities, this process provides location validation for inventory recording and for facilitating subsequent maintenance crew attendance.

Prior to the implementation of the new system, WSC had to produce printed maps for field inspections. In an initial attempt to automate and streamline the process, conventional tablet PCs were used but were found to fall short in terms of robustness and screen 'readability'. Wyong's Senior Analyst/Programmer Applications, Rob Pleash says that the key things in their decision to go with the Xplore PC were its robustness, durability and the excellent screen display which is readable in bright sunlight.

"These compact devices are bound to get some rough handling and be dropped occasionally and we needed a screen that could be easily viewed outdoors in all conditions" said Rob Pleash who added "it was also important to us to have the ability for our people to make on-screen handwritten notes. The feedback from our field staff since we introduced the Xplores has been overwhelmingly positive and it now takes us half the time to do our inspections compared with the former paper map method".

Wyong Council has its Xplore tablets vehicle mounted so that they can be used either in-vehicle or hand-held. The in-vehicle configuration includes an adjustable arm and keyboard which stays with the vehicle.

The Xplore tablets have been supplied by Sydney based Antares Corporation. Antares Managing Director, Peter King believes that there is unlimited scope for the Council to use the same system for all its asset inspection, management and validation applications. "We have now supplied a number of councils with the Xplore hardware and there has been a 100% satisfaction rate. The local government area is one of the best examples of where this technology, with its robustness and affordability, should be employed" said Peter.