Panasonic CONNECT

CASE STUDY

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

Emergency operational capabilities transformed by access to vital information at the scene

Client: Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Location: UK

Challenge

A rugged mobile computing device: • In the front of cabs to be used as a Mobile Data Terminal • In the rear of the vehicles as mobile, demountable devices to accompany firefighters when they leave the vehicles

Solution

The Panasonic TOUGHBOOK 33 notebook is a 2-in-1 detachable rugged device with NetMotion's Mobility, TOUGHBOOK SmartService Diagnostics software and Absolute device security.

Emergency operational capabilities transformed by access to vital information at the scene

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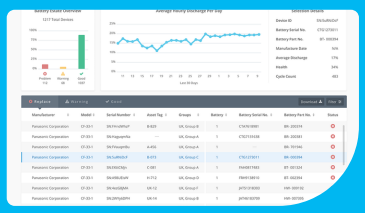
Daniel Grew
Mobile Data Technology Manager



The deployment of more than 200 Panasonic rugged TOUGHBOOK tablets is transforming the working lives of firefighters at Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) by providing access to vital information at the scene of an emergency.

The service has deployed the Panasonic TOUGHBOOK 33 tablets in the front cabs of its fire appliances as Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) and in the rear of the vehicles as mobile, demountable devices to accompany firefighters when they leave the vehicles.

The future of MDTs

Working closely with Panasonic and its partners, DWFRS has designed a solution fit for the future. A dedicated vehicle dock for the TOUGHBOOK 33 tablet from Havis meant their devices could be permanently mounted in the front of the vehicle, the Panasonic tablet is the ideal MDT for the modern UK fire service. The devices are used for providing vital information on the way to an incident, such as sending status updates to command and control centres, risk assessment requirements, details on the occupancy of the premises and nearby hydrant locations.

The demountable devices, in the back of appliances, can be used to assist fire crews with detailed schematics of vehicles to help them rescue trapped people, safety data on any chemicals stored on site and other risk-based information.

The Panasonic devices are also ready to use with a range of new technology, including being body worn, viewing images from drones, thermal imaging and 360° cameras.

A total solution

A number of smart productivity applications and additional management functionality has been included in the Panasonic solution to meet the DWFRS needs of today and in the future.

Constant connectivity

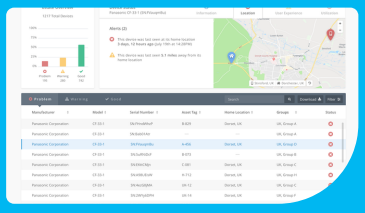
To ensure the fire crews have constant data connectivity via the devices when on emergency call-outs, Panasonic partner NetMotion's Mobility and Diagnostics software has been deployed. NetMotion Mobility monitors the connections, devices, applications and networks in use to ensure information and applications are available when needed. NetMotion Diagnostics provides the tools to pinpoint connectivity issues quickly and accurately to keep mobile users productive.

Data security

With Panasonic devices now being used outside of the vehicles, ensuring data security is a priority. Panasonic partner, Absolute, provides the ability to centrally track and secure the devices. The technology is embedded within the chip-set and once activated using a cloud-based console, can remotely identify, track and deactivate a device if it is stolen or missing. The DWFRS is also rolling out a secure RFID solution for fire crews that will provide a quick and effective method to gain access to the Panasonic devices.

Effective remote management

To allow the fire service to efficiently maintain its Panasonic devices at multiple sites across the counties, TOUGHBOOK Smart Services has been included. This range of applications helps the IT administrators monitor and analyse data from each device by looking at device performance in the areas of signal strength, battery life, network performance and application usage. These tools help the IT teams ensure the devices are being used efficiently and can help predict when maintenance such as battery replacements are required, keeping the devices in the field for longer and making planned maintenance easier and more effective.



Rigorous selection process

The Panasonic devices were chosen after a rigorous selection process. A shortlist of six devices were subjected to two test sessions, with 23 evaluation areas in total. At the end of the process, the Panasonic TOUGHBOOK 33 notebook with its partner's Havis docking station were the winners. The solution was rolled out over an eight-week period, after design and safety testing. Panasonic partners Lind Electronics provided the mobile power solutions in the vehicles and Maple carried out the specialist vehicle fitting.

Daniel Grew, Mobile Data Technology Manager, at DWFRS said: “The enhanced functionality and future capability of the devices will allowDWFRS to expand its mobile technology capabilities. Digital form completion, image capturing and video streaming, Inventory checks, training tools, incident command, RFID tag capture and mobile office applications are just a sample of the expected future benefits delivered with these new devices.”

“The 5-year warranty included with the Panasonic devices provides us with peace of mind. With the rapid return and repair service we will always have our devices deployed and in the hands of the fire crews when needed.”

Station Manager David Geddes said: *“From start to finish the support we have had from Panasonic has been fantastic. Feedback from the fire crews has already been very positive and we are only just scratching the surface of the capabilities of the Panasonic devices. We are looking forward to unlocking even more potential as we move forward.”*

Will Holmes, Emergency Services Corporate Sales Manager for Panasonic TOUGHBOOK, added: *"Panasonic TOUGHBOOK notebooks and tablets are becoming the de facto standard for Fire services across the UK and Ireland. Fire services across the country are currently using more than 2000 Panasonic rugged devices. It's their portability, optimised connectivity, clear daylight readable displays, rugged design and Panasonic's ability to design total solutions around the device that are proving to be the winning factors."*

Designed to be tested

The Panasonic TOUGHBOOK 33 notebook is a 2-in-1 detachable rugged device with a 12" screen designed for use in all extreme weather conditions. With hot swappable twin batteries, detachable keyboard, and highly configurable capabilities, the device brings unrivalled flexibility and performance for emergency services mobile computing.