



Toughbooks in Action

Mitsubishi Motors introduces Panasonic Toughbooks to improve vehicle servicing.



Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd (Mitsubishi), one of Australia's largest vehicle manufacturers, is using over 200 rugged Panasonic CF-29 Toughbooks in Mitsubishi dealership workshops throughout Australia to improve testing and diagnosis methods when servicing vehicles. The Panasonic Toughbooks are fitted with a multi-use tester (MUT 3), a vehicle communication interface which is a diagnosis test tool specifically designed for Mitsubishi vehicles.

The MUT 3 plugs directly into the vehicle's on board electronic systems and can provide diagnosis of the electronic systems of a vehicle, testing components of the car such as fuel injection, operation, active stability, anti-locking braking system, supplementary restraint systems, such as seatbelts and airbags, and auto-transmission. Mitsubishi technicians control the MUT using the Panasonic Toughbook in touchscreen mode. The Toughbooks are also supplied to Mitsubishi with a trolley for extra mobility in the workshop.



Panasonic Recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional.

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Mitsubishi Australia is a domestic manufacturer and importer of vehicles, with approximately 2,300 direct employees and a 200-plus national dealer network.

200 Toughbook units have been implemented, each with rugged features designed to prevent damage under harsh working environments – such as the dirt and grease of a workshop

Mitsubishi approached distributor SPX Australia with their requirements for a durable notebook, with Panasonic's Toughbooks being chosen as the most suitable for Mitsubishi's requirements.

The Toughbook CF-29 was more than equal to the task. The industry's fastest fully-ruggedised mobile PC, it offers a big 13.3-inch colour LCD screen and the convenience of an integrated 1.44MB floppy drive which accepts DVD-ROM/CD-RW. The CF-29 is encased in magnesium alloy, and has a shock-mounted removable hard disk drive in a stainless steel case. It is also fully protected by a moisture and dust-resistant LCD, keyboard and touchpad, and sealed port and connector covers.

"A major selling point of the Toughbook was its touchscreen capability coupled with the large screen size," said Neil Dunn, Manager of Technical Publications and

Training, Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd. "Dealer technicians often need to operate the computers without touching the keyboard or using the mouse, sometimes while wearing gloves and other safety equipment, so the fact that they could navigate through the software simply by touching the LCD was a huge benefit to them, and an improvement in operational efficiency."

"Another reason for choosing the Toughbook over other laptops was its durability and robustness. The dealer service centres where the Toughbooks are used aren't always the cleanest environment for a laptop.

Features such as the sealed LCD, keyboard and touchpad provides extra protection and prevents damage caused by moisture and dust in the workshop."

Mitsubishi also believes the rugged characteristics of the Toughbook delivers an overall lower total cost of ownership

(TCO) than other notebooks, through better reliability and longer operational lifespan.

"We need to have reliable equipment in order to provide a consistently dependable service to our customers. There has been less than a one percent return to base service requirement for the Toughbooks, making it an ideal choice to facilitate the provision of a superior, reliable service to our customers. Because the Toughbook is built specifically for industrial purposes, the dealers' costs are also kept low, as there is no need for constant equipment repairs from environmental damage," said Dunn.

Compared with the previous system, which incorporated a scanning tool which connected directly to the vehicle, the new MUT working via the Toughbook has improved communication speed between the Toughbook system and the vehicle's onboard computer system. The portability of the Toughbook protects the system from power surges and allows technicians to conduct mobile diagnosis on vehicles.

The company has plans for more extensive upgrades to the MUT software and to expand the flexibility of the software, in line with continually improving reliability of service for customers. The Toughbook solution is helping Mitsubishi to deliver on the company's 'Better Built, Better Backed' promise.



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