

# Panasonic Toughbook

## »case study«



### Panasonic Toughbook takes to the water with NSW Police sale

The NSW Water Police has purchased 15 Panasonic Toughbook ruggedised notebooks, now installed on police vessels that are responsible for patrolling the state's marine areas up to 200km offshore.

The Toughbooks were selected because of ruggedised features that make them suitable for the marine environment. Toughbook stands up to the challenges of dampness, high temperatures inside the vessels, vibration and glare and reflection from sun and water.

The Toughbooks were trialed in the Marine Area Command and the Technology Branch of the Water Police, before being selected and installed aboard vessels, including 22-metre and 16-metre launches.

The Toughbook 28, the model chosen, is Panasonic's fully ruggedised model, designed to stand up to the hazards of field use in a number of environments, with resistance to vibration, shock, water and dust.

Water Police staff have a number of responsibilities, including: preventing marine crime such as fraud through the stealing and rebirthing of vessels; search and rescue off the coast of NSW; working with Federal and State agencies to provide border protection and port security; and diving operations and underwater searches for missing persons and evidence.

Graeme Jamieson, Operations Controller, Marine Area Command, NSW Police Service, said that the organisation

was looking for a system that offered reliability and ease of use, and minimal training and service requirements.

The Water Police had looked at specialised notebook computers, but found limitations such as the fact that they were designed to operate in cars and were not suitable for the marine environment. Many custom-built solutions for the marine environment, on the other hand, would require extensive knowledge and specialised service.

Mr Jamieson said: "The main thing for us is reliability, and the ability to secure into the boat, but easily remove. To know the boats won't shake it to death, and water won't kill it. We also require portability, secure locking and ease of connection through docking - we don't need people trained up to connect the systems.

The Water Police use the Toughbook to access their C-Wiz vessel monitoring system and GPS navigation system. They can also receive intelligence and criminal inquiry data, emails, and digital photo/video files, to assist them in their daily surveillance work. Communication is via satellite. The Toughbooks will be connected online to the full COPS police data system.

Graeme Jamieson explained: "C-Wiz allows automatic retrieval and storage of police vessel monitoring information - it records everything the boat has done. Reports show the engine activity of the vessel and all navigational records, which is automatically transmitted via satellite to Marine Area Command. It can be downloaded at a predetermined time, or I can look at it on the laptop in the office in real-time if necessary.



Senior Constable Terry Dalton of the Water Police, aboard the 22-metre launch "Alert".

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"In addition, if the boat is being driven in contravention to approved usage, the driver will receive an audible warning via the Toughbook speaker."

At sea, screen visibility is an important issue to consider for the computer user, because of the amount of glare caused by sunlight and reflection off the water. Because of the manoeuvrability of the police vessels, and their large window area, light is shining from a multitude of angles.

The Toughbook 28 has a 13.3-inch screen, featuring a DayBrite anti-reflective LCD, that makes the screen easier to view in bright sunlight. The Water Police can operate the notebook via the touchscreen, which makes it easier to use when the boat is moving than a touch pad or mouse.

An internal dampener protects the LCD display, absorbing impact and preventing bending or twisting. The surface of the LCD screen, keyboard and touchpad are water-resistant, and a rubber seal around all screen edges protects the unit even if water gets inside the casing.

The Toughbooks are locked into an in-vehicle docking station, designed by Panasonic for mobile computing. This connects the notebooks to their power source, and prevents them from moving while the boat is at sea ñ while they still offer the Water Police the convenience of being easily removed for security or servicing.

To guard against destructive marine elements, the Toughbook 28 is water-resistant, utilising silicon rubber shielding to provide 360-degree protection against water penetration.

To protect against constant movement and vibration, the hard disk drive is encased in a high tech dampener that absorbs up to 70% of shock and vibration, and a tough stainless steel case.

Because Toughbook can be subject to extreme temperatures, a thermal-management system disperses CPU heat throughout the top half of the case and helps maximise the performance of temperature-sensitive components.

Overall protection includes a coating that provides protection for the unit's magnesium-alloy case; and elastomer coating on the corners and base that improves drop-damage protection and helps prevent the Toughbook 28 from scratching other surfaces.

The Toughbook 28 is Panasonic's fully ruggedised model, designed to stand up to the hazards of field use in a number of environments, with resistance to vibration, shock, water and dust. Introduced in Australia in 2001, Toughbook is able to combine performance with an impressive array of ruggedised features as standard. Toughbook features include magnesium alloy casing, shock-mounted hard drive, anti-reflection and water-resistant LCD; as well as water-resistant keyboard and touchpad.

The ruggedised notebooks are marketed to a range of organisations, including law enforcement, the armed forces, telecommunications and utilities field service, and manufacturing; as well as the "mobile" executive.



The Water Police hold the distinction of being the first civilian form of policing established in NSW. In 1789, one year after the colony was founded, Governor Philip created a "Row Boat Guard" to patrol Sydney Cove for smugglers and convicts attempting to pass letters to ships anchored in the harbour. By 1830, an independent Water Police Force was operating, and was merged into the NSW Police Department in 1862.

With the introduction of the NSW Marine Command in July 1990, all Water Police Stations became centrally co-ordinated and have been equipped with 12 sea going craft and over 20 smaller boats. The Branch employs 123 personnel, including divers and support staff.

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