

TOUGHBOOK

Computers for the Outside World™

Panasonic recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional



Toughbooks in action

Toughbook PCs handle the heat for British Gas



British Gas supplies gas, electricity and telecommunication services to millions of customers throughout the UK. To maintain the supply and keep customers happy, they must have an organised and responsive team of engineers in the field with all the vital information at hand. That's why British Gas supplies them with the Panasonic Toughbook CF-18. It reduces paperwork, helps with diagnostics – and is tough enough to work reliably in every environment.

"It's part of our toolkit. It's in the back of our van, it's being taken to customers' properties and it's going to get bumped. We work on boilers with water – so again there's possibly some damage that can happen. With it being ruggedised as it is, it's catering for the jobs we do every day."

Warren Shipton, Technical Support Engineer

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Toughbooks in action

Toughbooks designed to meet your needs

British Gas formed a strategic partnership with Panasonic back in the early nineties. They needed a powerful and reliable laptop that just wasn't available anywhere else. Their engineers have very specific needs and require equipment that can last 5 years with the down time kept to a minimum.

The Toughbook development team work closely with the Mobile IT department at British Gas. Over the years, the requests of field engineers have resulted in several innovations within the Toughbook range. This close relationship gives British Gas an advantage over their competitors in the energy market and is why they are now on their third generation of Toughbooks.

"It's what the engineers want at the end of the day. We needed something that was light and durable. And, certainly, the Toughbook is. It's nice that Panasonic are listening to the engineers' needs. Their comments are taken on board when designing it."

Warren Shipton, Technical Support Engineer

Equipment that's designed for the future

When you're buying equipment you need to know that it won't be obsolete before it reaches the end of its planned lifecycle. So, when it came to the latest CF-18s, British Gas made sure they were packed with all the latest features, including wireless capability.

The Bluetooth® enabled Toughbooks are able to communicate with the engineers' portable inkjet printers. Which means they can print out their paperwork without having to fiddle about with wires or stand near the printer. British Gas plans to push

this wireless feature further, by introducing a wireless LAN in the near future. This will let the engineers access the British Gas technical website remotely, without being near a phone line or network socket.

Meeting everyone's need

British Gas use more than one type of Toughbook. Their Sales Managers are equipped with the new CF-73 – a similarly robust laptop with a larger screen and more powerful speakers. This is ideal for training and briefing sessions, where the Sales Managers need to present to a number of Service Engineers at once. These Toughbooks also fit neatly into the service cycle of the CF-18, making it easier to manage the large number of machines in the field.

Safety laws prohibit the engineers from using their laptops on the road. So they are now equipped with P2 Dataphones to communicate with the service centre and receive job scheduling information while they are travelling. It helps them plan their route economically, giving directions when necessary. The P2s also communicate with the office, using GPS to show where each engineer is at all times.

The hottest support you'll find

The Toughbooks are certainly more rugged and reliable than any other laptop – but occasionally things do go wrong. Panasonic's service and support makes sure that engineers are never without a Toughbook. They pick up faulty equipment and supply a replacement to the engineer by 7.30 the following morning.

The engineer's computer is then repaired and returned to the British Gas buffer stock in about 3 days.

This way, the Toughbooks don't just keep British Gas happy – they keep British Gas customers happy. At the end of the day it safeguards the company's reputation and helps it stay profitable.

"Ruggedisation saves British Gas money. We need kit that will stay in the field, will last, may want some sort of maintenance – but it's got to be free from breakage on a daily basis. That allows us to maximise the business efficiency and performance – and that saves money."

Colin Lancelott, Senior Business Manager



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Panasonic
ideas for life