

Success Story: South Africa Telkom

PROBLEM: What do you do when your field workers need their handheld PCs to access the GPS network for position information and also need to synchronize important field data over an Ethernet network when you only have one PCMCIA slot available?

ANSWER: Infrared and Clarinet Systems' EthIR LAN solution.

This unique scenario was recently integrated by Optron, the leading supplier of mapping and surveying equipment based in Johannesburg, South Africa, for South Africa Telkom the national Telephone Company committed to providing telephone service throughout the country including very rural areas

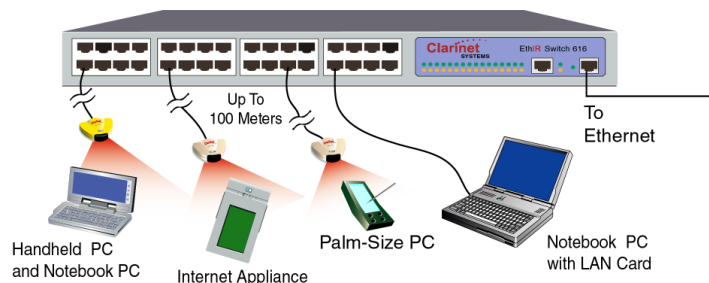


SA Telkom, who has over 600 field service offices, was looking to improve the productivity of its service technicians by automating the trouble ticket process and to be able to dispatch its technicians to the exact location of the problem. To automate the trouble ticket process SA Telkom chose the Husky Fex21 ruggedized handheld Windows CE PC manufactured by Itronix to run a customized software application. As many of the rural areas had no roads or street addresses SA Telkom decided to use a GPS satellite navigation system to record and locate the exact location of their customers, telephone poles, wiring enclosures, etc.

Optron, with their background in surveying and mapping equipment, solved the problem by developing a GPS card for the Husky PC. However, the GPS card used the only PCMCIA slot available on the device. As a result, there was no way to connect the Husky PC to the LAN for downloading the day's trouble tickets for the service technicians.

The solution was to use the only high-speed communications port available on the Husky PC...the Infrared port. Working with Optron, we were able to

demonstrate to SA Telkom the viability and versatility of our EthIR LAN system. The result was a decision to install a multi-port EthIR Switch in each of their 600 field service offices. Every morning the service technicians place their Husky PC in front of an EthIR Beam and download their workload for the day in the form of



trouble tickets. Using the GPS navigation system attached to the Husky they are able to go directly to the precise location where the problem had been reported. When the problem is resolved the trouble ticket is closed. At the end of the day, they return to the office, place their Husky PC in front of the EthIR Beam again and synchronize the closed trouble tickets to the network server.