

Roll Back Malaria Zambezi Expedition 2008

Roll Back Malaria Zambezi Expedition Carries GoBook® XR-1 Rugged Notebooks Through Six Countries to Fight Disease in Africa



Product

General Dynamics Itronix GoBook® XR-1

Application

Communications, navigation and documentation for an international advocacy expedition travelling into a remote region of the world

Solution

Lightweight and portable rugged notebook computers equipped with state-of-the-art communications and navigation systems

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General Dynamics Itronix GoBook XR-1 notebooks joined the Roll Back Malaria Zambezi Expedition 2008 in a six-country expedition along the Zambezi River in Africa. The XR-1's played an integral role in navigation and logistics planning, and helped the expedition team document and communicate the work of the international advocacy program to create worldwide awareness of the deadly disease.



Overview

Under the patronage of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership, the Zambezi Expedition 2008 launched in early April 2008 on a two-and-a-half month voyage along the Zambezi River. Often called the "River of Life," the Zambezi is Africa's fourth longest river. The expedition team traveled 1,800 miles to reach remote populations in Zambia, Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique in its quest to promote a new initiative being developed by the Southern African Development Community to reduce malaria deaths along the river by 50 percent by 2010.

Malaria kills more than a million people worldwide each year — 90 percent of them are in Africa, and 70 percent are children under the age of five. A preventable and treatable disease, malaria causes loss of income and productivity on a scale large enough to slow a country's economic growth. The Zambezi Expedition was designed to lay the groundwork for the Trans-Zambezi project, a regional malaria control initiative that will help boost health, tourism, and economic development in the Trans-Zambezi region, and save millions of lives.

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Roll Back Malaria Zambezi Expedition 2008

During the expedition, the team stopped to meet local malaria control staff in each country, document the malaria situation in remote river communities, and distribute long-lasting insecticide-treated nets and malaria medicine.

By exposing the difficulties of delivering prevention and treatment tools, the RBM Zambezi Expedition illuminated the need for cross-border cooperation in the region and helped rally government and public support and cooperation.

Problem

Extreme tropical river environmental conditions drive need for rugged notebooks with powerful connectivity

To help document their efforts, the expedition team required powerful and rugged notebooks that could operate successfully for more than 70 days aboard rigid, inflatable boats. The notebook systems had to be impervious to water, humidity, mud and extreme temperatures; they also had to be both small and lightweight so they could be easily transported from site to site while not consuming much of the vital space aboard the small boats. In addition, the systems needed to support the team's communications and logistics planning efforts, and support powerful connectivity for remote Internet and satellite navigation access.

"We needed notebooks that were both rugged enough for a two-month trip in the heart of Africa and powerful enough so photographers and videographers could use them to document our efforts to help fight back malaria," said Helge Bendl, Zambezi Expedition co-leader.

Solution

Lightweight, rugged notebook creates mobile office environment, even in the middle of a tropical river environment

The Zambezi Expedition 2008 received

a donation of rugged GoBook® XR-1 notebooks from General Dynamics Itronix. Weighing in at only 6.8 pounds with a very small footprint (11.8 inches by 9.65 inches by 1.97 inches), the high-performance GoBook XR-1 notebooks are the world's smallest and lightest, fully-rugged, full-functional wireless notebooks. Built to meet and exceed stringent military guidelines for ruggedness and able to withstand even the most extreme environmental conditions, the portability of the GoBook XR-1 notebook computers is complemented by its ability to operate up to four embedded concurrent wireless radios — WLAN, WWAN, Bluetooth, and GPS — ensuring that the Zambezi Expedition would have seamless roaming connectivity throughout their journey.

"Most notebooks would not have survived — much less continued to perform well — after a couple of weeks of traveling with this expedition," said Andy Leemann, Zambezi Expedition co-leader. "The GoBook XR-1 notebooks withstood bumps, vibration from the river's regular currents and occasional rapids, mud and sand, and 95 percent tropical humidity."

"The notebooks were extremely useful in navigating our way through mangrove forests and the river's delta," added Bendl. "Despite the dusty campsite conditions, with the help of the GoBook XR-1 we were able to create a mobile office environment that supported our communications and logistics planning efforts without having to worry about data loss or hard drive failure."

Results

GoBook XR-1 helps Zambezi Expedition fight malaria on the "River of Life"

The Roll Back Malaria Zambezi Expedition 2008 successfully visited six countries along the Zambezi River, delivering lifesaving medications, mosquito nets, and educational materials

to villages along the water's edge. By exposing the difficulties of delivering prevention and treatment tools, the expedition team highlighted the need for cross-border cooperation in the region, rallying government and public support for the Trans-Zambezi Project.

In addition to navigation and logistics planning, the GoBook XR-1 notebooks played an integral role in the successful documentation and communication of this international advocacy program.

"The GoBook XR-1 notebooks allowed us to continuously update our website and bring powerful expedition pictures to the world by uploading photos each night after spending a day on the river," said Bendl. "The Zambezi Expedition's aim is to publicize the desperate conditions in this part of the world and raise money to fight malaria. We are thankful the GoBook XR-1 notebooks were part of our project; with their help, we were able to successfully document our efforts to help rid the world of this disease." ■



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