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ONE of the keys to the development of the Prominent Hill underground operations has been the use of communications software such as Modular Mining's Dispatch system.

[Noel Dyson](#) | 11 Feb 2015 | 8:12 | [News](#) |



Modular Dispatch has been a boon for the OZ Minerals project.

OZ Minerals underground project manager Matt Rowett said the Modular Mining system had been key to the development and operation of the Malu and Ankata underground operations.

Rowett said communications and coordination were vital to the project, which involves two underground operations with both of their declines within an open pit operation.

This means the trucks hauling ore out of the copper-gold mines have to join the stream surface trucks also heading to the processing plant.

Modular's Dispatch helps OZ's management know where equipment is and what it is doing.

This can be a problem that occurs in run-of-the-mill underground operations, let alone one as complex as the OZ operation.

This lack of transparency often results in the under-utilisation of machinery, work stoppages as operators sit idle waiting on directions and an absence of oversight that can affect productivity.

The Dispatch Underground Mine Management system is designed to help mines maximise productivity by delivering relevant information to each piece of mobile equipment, allowing the operator to make the right decisions for the circumstances.

Using field-proven core functionality and optional modules, the system is scaleable and configurable to suit operational needs.

It includes radio frequency identification tag-based equipment positioning, time tracking, production reporting and purpose-built hardware on the mobile equipment as standard features of the system.

Since its initial system commissioning in 1989, the Dispatch Underground system has helped change the way underground mines operate in real-time.

With support for all common underground mining methods and processes, the system optimises the production workflow through total activity management and visibility of all Dispatch-enabled equipment.

In-cab mobile devices exchange critical information with workers at the face in real-time, improving productivity and operator safety.

Complementary technologies work to provide automated, up-to-the-minute production time and location tracking data for all monitored equipment.

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A wireless communications network and hardware innovations allow the system to continue capturing data in communications dead zones. That data is then uploaded to the Dispatch system database when the connection is re-established.

This functionality, known as Store&Forwards, allows ongoing actions and status changes to be properly time stamped and location tracked, based on RFID position readings.

With Store&Forward, vital cycle time data is captured and recorded for production reporting.

Data gathered from mobile equipment during production is continuously transmitted to the main Dispatch Underground system server and databases with minimal interaction from the operator.

Dispatchers use Windows-based workstations to monitor equipment locations and statuses, process exceptions, view transactions, update the mine layout and perform other standard dispatching duties.

Its reporting capabilities give mine managers, supervisors and owners access to comprehensive current, historical and trend data.

By minimising data loss and integrity caused by frequent voice radio communications or paper-based reporting, decisions made become timely and proactive based on accurate operational visibility.



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