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The 35-year-old leader in the global mine production management software market, US-based Modular Mining Systems, says business conditions remain steady for companies like itself as rapid expansion of mining's industrial internet of things favourably impacts the industry's data management and analysis needs.

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Part of Japan's Komatsu, Modular is on the verge of launching its first cloud-based service – a maintenance management system that fits with the industry's increasing search for predictive maintenance solutions – and

recently marked the “signing of our 250th customer” worldwide, according to innovation vice president, Michael Lewis.

Arizona-headquartered Modular has nearly 700 employees. While it’s a material part of a publicly owned enterprise, the company is opaque about its financials and will only say that 2015 promises “sustained growth”.

Lewis said “we anticipate that our growth will remain steady” this year.

He said just as the consumer world was embracing the internet of things (IoT) there was a continuing trend in mining toward connecting, collecting, correlating and extracting value from assets in mines.

“As a result, significant value to improve productivity, maintenance and improve safety through optimisation of the data is available to be claimed,” he said. “Mines are looking to make a step change in productivity and performance, and Modular is ready to help them achieve their goals. Many of the building blocks are already in place, as Modular has been working on this vision for many years.

“With the release of our cloud-based maintenance technology, mines will be able to take a giant leap forward, not only on an individual mine site but ultimately across their entire enterprise.”

Lewis said the MineCare 3 cloud-based software-as-a-service (SaaS) offering took out the need for costly IT infrastructure investments, and data storage issues, both key in a constrained spending environment.

“We believe there are significant benefits to cloud computing, which enables big data management and enterprise-level visibility,” he said. “As such, we are researching a number of big data analytics technologies that will enable mines to look at trends within a discrete mine, or at an enterprise level.

“The MineCare 3 system delivers enhanced event handling, data monitoring, and equipment tracking capabilities via dynamic, user-configurable dashboards and event snapshots, and a new Live Map view provides high visibility of in-pit activity.”

Lewis said the product’s intelligent data monitoring and analytics capabilities enabled users to specify real-time, conditional and aggregate data options, in support of specific maintenance management goals.

Modular’s existing MineCare system, which facilitates real-time equipment fleet health monitoring to allow users to “proactively reduce component degradation and prevent catastrophic failures”, has more than 160 original equipment manufacturer interfaces providing access to machine health and failure analysis data. Lewis said MineCare was proven to save mines up to \$100,000 per equipment unit, per year.

“We see the greatest opportunities in 2015 in continuing to help our existing customer base improve in the areas of production, guidance, asset health and safety,” he said.

Modular would “combine lessons learned from the past, with the exploration of emerging technologies, to understand how we can best augment our future products”.

“We will also continue looking for ways to leverage existing technologies, such as cloud-based deployment and remote management, to better serve the needs of customers.”



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