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Mining-tech pioneer retires

The grandfather of modern, high-tech mine production management systems, James White, has officially retired from Tucson-headquartered Modular Mining Systems, a subsidiary of Komatsu.

[Staff reporter](#) | [12 July 2016](#) | [2:46](#) | [Feature](#) |



Modular Mining Systems became part of Japan's Komatsu in 1996

White pioneered development of the proprietary mine-traffic management algorithm that underpinned Modular's Dispatch computerised fleet control system. Modular says its co-founder and former chairman

emeritus' 1970s vision of an automated truck dispatching product "changed the way mines operate in real time".

"The system's proprietary optimisation algorithm ... eliminated the need for visual pit oversight, increased production, and enabled mines to manage their entire haulage cycle from a central computer," MMS said.

"More than 35 years later, fleet management systems have become an indispensable tool for virtually all medium-to-large sized mines."

Modular now has 10 offices worldwide, about 700 employees, and products working in more than 30 countries.

"The talented individuals who conceptualise, build, market, sell, and support our products are the driving force behind our ongoing success," White said this week.



James White receives the Komatsu Presidential Award 2012 from Komatsu president and CEO, Kunio

He worked as a senior project engineer for chemical and plastics manufacturer, Rohm and Haas Co, before resigning from the company in 1971 (as head of its research computing centre) to join the University of Arizona's College of Mines as an associate professor of chemical engineering. White and two of his former students co-founded Modular in 1979 and two years later he left the university to become Modular's full-time executive vice president.

"As Dr White marks the end of a remarkable, game-changing career, we bid him farewell with tremendous respect, and admiration," said Modular's current president and CEO, Luiz Steinberg.

"His innovative vision has been a driving force to our success, and will continue to move the company forward."

