



Communication across the desert

FACTS

Customer: Gauthier de Hauteclouque, motorbike rider in the Dakar Rally.

Challenge: Providing a way to communicate mechanical information about a motorbike from the middle of the Sahara.

Solution: A Digital Pen and Paper solution incorporating Anoto functionality.

Benefits: Easy to explain any mechanical faults, lightweight solution, robust and easy to use.

Diagrams are best

Sometimes it is much easier to explain something complicated by writing it down on paper. If you're trying to communicate technical information, diagrams can be indispensable, but it is not always easy to communicate diagrams to people hundreds of miles away, particularly if you haven't got room to carry bulky equipment with you.

Motorbike riders in the Dakar Rally certainly can't afford to carry bulky equipment. But when Frenchman Gautier de Hauteclouque set off on his Honda motorbike, he knew he would be able to stay in touch with base thanks to the Digital Pen and Paper solution (DP&P) based on Anoto functionality.

The Dakar Rally is one of the world's toughest endurance races for cars and motorbikes. Most of the race takes place in the inhospitable climate of the deserts of northern Africa, where a breakdown can spell disaster.

The digital pen and paper solution is using special notebooks, Nokia digital pens and, in Hauteclouque's case, a Bluetooth enabled phone from Nokia.

Easier to explain

Hauteclouque was riding his motorbike through the desert without any assistance. But if something went wrong with the bike, he could describe it using diagrams and send it to his team via the phone.

"When you have a bike with a lot of small parts, it can be difficult to explain any faults in words over the phone. This way it can be explained more quickly."

Another thing that Hauteclouque was able to do was to write updates at different points during the 9,500 kilometre race, and to send them back to base.



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Fits easily into the backpack

One of the big advantages of the digital pen and paper solution for use in such extreme conditions is that it is lightweight, and fits easily into the rider's backpack.

The digital pen is a perfect solution for use in the desert. It writes just like a normal pen and it contains a normal ballpoint ink cartridge. The difference is that it also has a tiny infra-red camera which detects what you are writing.

The paper that Hauteclocque was using was also subtly different, as it was printed with a special digital pattern that enabled the pen to memorize what he was writing. But to the naked eye, digital paper looks very similar to any other paper:

"It's really just like drawing with normal paper and pen"