

Scantools

- By Matt Hardy



For some automotive workshops a scan tool is just as necessary in their workshop as the hoists are.

In other workshops that have yet to explore the digital world of scan tools there is a large array of different brands varying in almost every aspect from shape, size, colour, and price to make the decision of purchasing a rather daunting task.

This article will break up the areas that should be considered when purchasing your fifth scan tool or your first.

Software

As it is software within the vehicle we need to communicate to, and the software within vehicles is always changing, so must the software within the scan tool. The amount and quality of software within a scantool will ultimately determine its value to you. Unfortunately you can't see how extensive the software is until you come to use it on a particular vehicle.

Scantool manufacturers may state that they can communicate to a vehicle, but to what specific systems and to what degree in terms of the amount of data, number of actuation tests and

programming functions is very important.

The best way to assess a scan tool's software coverage is to use one for a period of time first without purchasing (good luck!) or getting opinions from other workshops that utilise that brand. Make sure they use it for the same reasons you require a scan tool before you ask for their opinion.

Updates

The software within a scan tool must be regularly updated for two main reasons.

1. Increased vehicle coverage software with greater functions
2. Amendments to software where bugs were reported in the previous version

If you are confident with computers and transferring



data between systems you will have an advantage, though if you are new to computers make sure you identify how a company can assist you in the process of getting this new software into your scan tool.

Remember that once you have a scan tool it will become a big inconvenience not to have it for a day if you have to send it away to be upgraded.

Ease of use

The physical characteristics of a scan tool can make the difference as to what you choose. Although it may be



INTEREQUIP



With ever-changing vehicle systems and the adding of more on-board computers or modules, vehicles today are becoming more complex as technology is coming more advanced. The need for a scantool or diagnostic scanner is a must-have in today's workshop.

But the question on most people's mind is which one to buy?

Scantools, are like any computerized equipment or even personal computers, so with that in mind technology is playing an important part in the equation. When looking for a scantool you need to look for the latest technology and features and benefits that the tool has to offer. What to lookout for is the ongoing cost of upgrading your scantool, as some scantools on the market offer a keen initial buying

price, but the question you have to ask is:-

"What will it cost me to upgrade my software after the free period ends"

"Does that software upgrade price include all the manufactures?"

"What will the cost be if I need a hardware upgrade or a new connector?"

Asking these three simple questions will give you a good indication to whether the scantool you are considering is really a good deal or not.

The AutoBoss scantool is one of the latest scantools on the market. It has built-in CanBus communication which will communicate with most of latest vehicles on the market. The software updates are two years for free and a total of \$475 for a yearly subscription after 2 years covering all the manufacturers that AutoBoss has available. Currently, no hardware upgrades are needed.

Please call 0414945380 or 02 96717811 for a demonstration or more information.

SPX-OTC Scan-Pro Plus



SPX Australia has announced the release of their updated Scan-Pro (2205AU-Plus) which includes the new Ultraplexer module which allows the Scan-Pro to communicate with the latest vehicles that are using multi-speed 'CAN' bus technology.

For existing users the Ultraplexer module is available as an individual component, so you can keep your scan tool up to date. Multi-speed CAN is used on the new Commodore, the latest Chryslers and various other new models being released.

SPX-REFLEX Motorcycle Scan Tool

SPX Australia has also

recently released their latest diagnostic scan tool to suit global motorcycles. Developed by SPX Europe coverage is being expanded each quarter.

Currently the Reflex 4130MB supports over 200 motorcycles and ATVs including;

Aprilia, BMW, Cagiva, Ducati, Gas Gas, Gilera, Harley Davidson, Honda, Kawasaki, KWN, Laverda, Malaguti, Moto Guzzi, MV, Piaggio, Suzuki, Triumph & Yamaha.

This unit can read Codes, Clear Codes, Live Data, communicates with Marelli, Sagem, Ditech and Bosch systems.

An optional 4-Channel Scope & 5-Gas Analyser makes this a comprehensive workshop diagnostic tool.

Software is upgradeable over the internet every three months.

To organize a demonstration, or for your nearest distributor phone (03) 95446222

cumbersome when new to a scan tool, after a few months you will get frustrated with minor delays of a second or two while you wait for a function to load. The simpler a scan tool is the quicker it will operate though you will miss out on various advanced functions like 3D waveforms, graphing, recording, and PC compatibility.

Warranty

As automotive technicians we must use sophisticated



electronics in fairly harsh environments. For this reason ensure you don't purchase a tool too delicate if you are going to knock it around in the workshop. Most faults that will occur with scan tools are due to not being patient enough to connect and disconnect the plugs correctly or damaging the harnesses via rotating components or melting leads on exhaust manifolds. Any scan tool's hardware should last at least five years. After this time your tools should have made you enough money to invest in another tool.

Technical assistance

If you are new to the on board diagnostic systems within vehicles you have years of learning to do. Not only do you have to learn how to drive your scan tool but you need to learn about the diagnostic systems for every manufacturer of



vehicle that you choose to maintain and diagnose.

By using the scan tool daily you will get better, though basic training in automotive electronics and specific management systems will make your job much easier and more profitable.

You can't expect a scan tool supplier to train you on every vehicle you work on though you should be taught how to use the tool and have access to some level of support in regards to

using and updating the tool. These services can make a big difference to the success of the scan tool in your workshop.

Scan tools are merely devices to allow you the technician, to access the digital data within a control module. To interpret this information correctly you will need much experience. In time your scan tool should not been seen to cost you money but been seen as a piece of equipment that earns you money.

By choosing the right scan tool for you, investing in training and vehicle information systems you will be able to provide the best possible service for your customer and increase the profitability of the workshop by minimising the time taken to diagnose faults by using the digital systems available.

New Diagnostic Scanner Range from Launch Tech



How profitable is your workshop? What is the return on your investment?

Long are the days of the carburetor and points system. If you don't have a scanner, you are falling behind the times. How much money are you losing in sub letting your diagnostic work out, in turn losing your current customers to your opposition?

Purchasing a quality Launch scanner could set you back as little as \$29.59 a week and can assist your workshop in more ways than one:

1. Save money, no more paying exorbitant scanning fees.

2. Save time, vehicles in & out of workshop quicker as you don't have to wait for someone to scan your customer's car.

3. Saving your current customers and picking up a couple of extra clients as you have the latest state of the art scanner.



4. Becoming more of a one stop shop as the equipment repair tools available in your workshop expand.

5. Speed up the diagnosing of faulty sensors, modules, clearing logged faults etc.

6. Give your customers better service.

Largest coverage 40 vehicle makes, 3 year warranty*, 2 years free upgrades, free training classes, we see it as Australia's best scan tool!

Are you looking for an affordable entry level diagnostic solution (X-431), intermediate (X-431 INFINITE with Bluetooth) or do you want to go the full hog (X-431 TOP diagnostic centre)? Launch Tech can provide you with all 3 levels of scanners. With all 3 levels of scanners Launch is now offering an incredible 40 manufacturers as standard, CAN plug standard, 2 years free software downloads available over the internet and believe it or not a three year warranty (*conditions apply).



So what are you waiting for? Get in contact with your local Launch dealer and start saving time and money.

For more information about scanners and Launch products, please feel free to contact Launch's helpline 1300 369 788