Discovering Ancient Pompeii with iPad

In Pompeii — the longest continuously excavated archaeological site in the world — iPad is revolutionizing the way scientists work. Rather than recording notes and sketches on paper, researchers at the site use iPad and apps to capture invaluable historical data faster, more easily, and with far better accuracy.

Deep Data
For Dr. Jorit Ellis, who directs the University of Cincinnati’s archaeological excavations at Pompeii, perhaps the most significant discovery at the site this year was iPad. “It used to be the case of us all bagging up our personal computers to help our teams solve one of the most difficult problems of archaeological fieldwork: how to reliably and accurately record the complex information they encounter in the trenches.”

Most archaeological researchers today collect data from their sites as others have for the past 300 years. “If all goes well and again,” says Ellis, “you have to draw things as paper, or in pre-formed print forms. That’s a problem because all these pages could be lost or damaged, or they could be written in unreadable handwriting. And eventually they have to be digitized and entered into a computer somehow.”

Although portable computers offer a plethora of capabilities, traditional computer systems used in the trenches because their size, input sensitivity to dirt and heat make them...