

# HUG Update

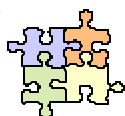
PDA's

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## Everything you wanted to know about a PDA but were afraid to ask.

Personal digital assistants devices come in all shapes and sizes, with software and add-ons to go with them. All they have in common is an ability to manage contact details and personal agendas, as well as issue reminders and sound alarms.



### Keyboard capers

You can plump for a machine with or without a keyboard. The alternative is a pen which reads characters on a touch sensitive screen. Suppliers generally pitch keyboard-based PDAs more as portable computers than organizers, but once you remove the keyboard they are all more or less the same.

However, it's obvious that keyboard-based models such as Audiovox, "Thera Pocket PC", are better suited to tasks such as word processing and data manipulation in applications such as spreadsheets. With this in mind the touch sensitive screens learn to read your handwriting making them the ultimate gadget. But it also makes them a lot slower, particularly if you need to write a document on a train.

To get around this problem some pen-based PDAs have

keyboard attachments which make them a much more flexible option.

### The PDA position

You have to remember that using a PDA is going to be a lot slower than a laptop PC. A PDA processor's headline speed is far from a clear indicator of true power or versatility.

Many other factors need to be taken into account, such as available memory and the demands of the machine's operating system.

### Extension Leads

In order to make their offerings as pocketable as possible, PDA designers pare down the features. This leaves the door wide open for third-party peripheral makers to jump in with numerous ways of upping the function count once again and relieving you of some cash in the process.

Handspring Visor owners are treated to the widest range of extras, thanks to the Springboard expansion port. Among the most popular add-ons for the Visor are the Sounds Good and MyVox modules. The former is an MP3 player with a 64Mb memory, while the latter makes use of the Visor's built-

in microphone to provide eight minutes worth of Dictaphone-style digital voice recording.

However, the most sought after gadget right now is the Visor Phone package that, as the name hints, turns a Visor into a mobile phone.

Options for Palm users are a tad more limited in the added functionality stakes, but there's still plenty of choice. One of



the most interesting is the Palm Portable Keyboard, a near-full-size QWERTY unit that folds away concertina-style into an eminently pocketable package.

### A Modem Moment

In this wired world it's no surprise that modems are available for all models for basic internet/email access, and there are any number of clip-on covers and cases. With the introduction of the Universal Connector on the new m500 and m505 models, the variety should increase considerably.

### Style Challenge

Palm's machine line-up is by far the most confusing of all PDA manufacturers',

What is HUG all about???

Members help helping members, who are seriously dedicated to computers to enhance their lives and their work. At meetings, they

enjoy the camaraderie while sharing valuable tips, seek answers to problems, view demonstrations, listen to presentations,

participate in raffles, door prizes and auctions.

Next Meeting: May 14 (second Tuesday) from 6:45 to 8:45 PM, At the Skyline View Church, 7733 Hillcrest Ave, Harrisburg

HUG Computer Workshop: May 19 (third Sunday) from 2:00 to 4:30 PM, At the Skyline View Church, 7733 Hillcrest Ave,

Harrisburg

HUG Executive Board: May 16 (third Thursday) from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM, In Brian's Pizza, 6301 Grayson Rd., in the Swatara

Square Shopping Center, Har-

At the July 9th meeting the topic of discussion will be:

### Stump the chumps

This will be a question and answer session. If you would like to be a chump send Lou a email.

# Everything you wanted to know about a PDA but were afraid to ask.

The m500 and m505 don't offer vast improvements in the interface department, but they are expandable in ways that no other Palm-produced PDA has been before

## Style Challenge

For starters, the new machines sport Multimedia Card slots that accommodate memory cards with capacities of up to 64Mb. Palm has also introduced the Universal Connector to allow hardware extras, such as digital cameras and modems, to be snapped on at will,



but that's nothing new in the Palm OS arena.

Handspring's Palm OS-powered Visor PDAs have had such an expansion capability since day one, in the guise of Springboard modules. These have proved a grand success for Handspring, helping to shift the company's machines in sufficient numbers to significantly erode Palm's market share.



The interesting point here is that, while Palm is just getting started with the additions, there's already a vast selection of Springboard modules offering all manner of slot-in functionality, from MP3 players to voice recorders.

## Clie Appeal

The most recent arrival to the Palm OS party is Sony, with its Clie. It's a stylish little number, for sure, but doesn't bring much to the fold other than a marginally more useful picture viewer. Perhaps the handiest feature is the unit's jog dial, as it provides one-handed, stylus-free control for browsing data.

## Synchronization

some PDAs' reduced dimensions make that a much trickier proposition. They are better suited to the handheld and two-thumb tapping approach. However, this can often

be improved by synching with a PC. This enables files to be backed up or transferred.

Desktop synching is sometimes via a desktop docking cradle and software. When the Palm is resting here, its built-in batteries are being recharged: expect around 15 hours' use between charges. Other desktop synching systems just connect to the PC and don't allow recharging at the same time.

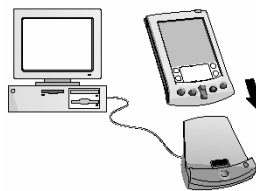


## Operating Systems

Operating systems are fairly crucial for PDAs as they can often define how the hardware will actually run.

## Windows CE and Pocket PC

Right now there are essentially two flavors of Windows CE: Pocket PC and Windows For Handheld PC



2002. Pocket PC is strictly for palmtop PDAs, and supports quarter-VGA resolution (320 x 240 pixels), while Windows For Handheld PC is designed for larger devices, with screen resolutions ranging from 640 x 240 up to 800 x 600.

With both these new editions, Microsoft has righted many of its previous wrongs. The operating system now sports a consistent interface, controlling the whole gamut of Microsoft's core applications including cut-down versions of Word, Excel and Internet Explorer.

Grand improvements aside, the highly graphical nature of the Windows interface makes much greater demands on processing power and memory than either of the alternatives. While top-end Palm devices languish in just 8Mb of memory, that's not even a realistic minimum for running Pocket PC. If you want the Windows experience in your hand, then 16Mb is just

the start - and more and more Pocket PC manufacturers are moving to 32Mb as standard.

## Palm

Palm has the shortest and smoothest history of all the PDA operating systems, starting life in 1996 and evolving gently to incorporate wireless connectivity and support for color displays.

Palm OS was not designed with keyboard entry in mind, relying instead on its own Graffiti built-in handwriting recognition system. This uses simplified pen strokes to represent characters and symbols, a technique that doesn't take long to master. As an alternative, you can peck away at an on-screen keyboard, but the small display renders this an irksome chore.

Because Palm OS is so undemanding, memory is less of a concern for machine manufacturers and users. While 2Mb is certainly tight, 8Mb is more than enough to cope with all Palm functions, as well as providing sufficient storage for tens of thousands of contacts and appointments.



## What if there were a device that would

- Microsoft Windows for Pocket PC Operating System
- Intel StrongARM Processor 206 MHz
- Dual Band 800 MHz CDMA / 1900 MHz PCS Operation Phone
- MEMORY: 32MB RAM (SDRAM) & 32MB ROM (Flash ROM)
- Reflected Type Color TFT Display (65,536 colors)
- Touch Screen Interface with on-screen keyboard and handwriting recognition
- Infrared Port

# Everything you wanted to know about a PDA but were afraid to ask.

- Mono Speaker and Headphone Jack
- Built-In Voice Recorder
- Internal 1100 mAh Lithium Ion Battery
- Weighs 7 ounces
- Software: Backup Utility, Calculator, Solitaire, Home, Pocket Word & Excel, Pocket Internet Explorer & Windows Media Player, Microsoft Outlook.
- Unlimited Call Log
- Caller ID \* / Call Waiting\* / Three Way Calling\*
- Scratchpad
- Emergency Dialing
- Speed Dialing
- Voice Mail Notification
- 2 Way Short Message Service
- Auto Answer
- Vibration Alert

## The bottom line it is a

- Phone
- Digital voice recorder
- Pocket PC
- Note pad
- Music player
- Game console
- Pager
- Instant text message device

Well feast your eyes on the Thera from Audiovox.



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