

IN THIS ISSUE:

~ PDA's

COMING NEXT MONTH:

~ Building your IT Budget

ReadyNetGo ... News

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TIP OF THE MONTH

Just when you think you've got PC terms down, along comes a new gadget and with it a whole slew of new terms. PDA's are no different but if you're familiar with digital camera's, PDA's will be a breeze...

Common Terms with PDA's

SD – Secure Digital; refers to the type of expansion slot used to add peripheral devices.

MMC – Multimedia card; same function.

Memory Stick – yet another format for adding peripheral devices.

Springboard – and another format.

CF – CompactFlash card; same as the ones used for digital cameras. Used for adding memory.

USB sync cradle – upload/download info between your PDA and PC using a USB connection.

Serial sync – same as above but uses a serial cable connection.

For more detailed information and a comparison list between these two giants, check out these sites:

www.pocketpc.com

Click on Learn More, Software, Compare Software

www.palm.com

Click on Products, Compare & Select, Palm OS vs. PocketPC

Have You Checked Out the Latest PDA's Recently?

PDA's or **Personal Digital Assistant's** are everywhere. People have given up on their paper calendar, address book and notebooks full of business cards for a simple handheld device. If you've been thinking about buying a PDA or want some ideas for an upgrade, this newsletter will get you started.

One of the big differences between PDA's is the operating system that runs the software. There are currently two choices, **Palm OS** and Microsoft's **Pocket PC**. (Note: Sharp's PDA runs a version of Linux.) Both systems offer a multitude of applications and expansion slots to add peripheral devices. There are many choices and features, so plan on doing some research to get the best unit for your particular needs.

Overview of Features

The major difference between Palm and Pocket PC devices is the software that comes pre-installed. Microsoft loads a lot of software onto their base models while the Palm OS is much simpler allowing the user to install the software they want and will use. For this reason, the Palm operating system tends to be less expensive than the Pocket PC and it is generally easier to use. The Pocket PC, meanwhile, offers more advanced features, better graphics and more memory.

Important Note: Pocket PC PDA's come pre-loaded with Pocket PC versions of MS Word, Excel and Outlook. Palm devices require add-on or third party applications.

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.pdalive.com - hardware and software reviews for pda's as well as faq's and tips & tricks.
2. www.joi.org/celebrate/hanuk - Celebrate Hanukkah, the festival of lights.
3. www.christmas.com/worldview - Learn about how other countries celebrate this festive holiday.
4. www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org - Celebrate Kwanzaa, a tradition of community, family, and culture.

Memory and Power

The one downside to the Palm is that the internal memory is more limited – 16 MB is the highest capacity although additional memory may be added through an expansion slot (usually an SD or Secure Digital slot). With the Pocket PC, you can get up to 64 MB of internal memory. Another major difference is the battery charge. Palm handhelds are more efficient with their battery charge; moderately used, you may only have to recharge the unit every couple of days. The Pocket PC requires more power so you'll probably need to recharge the unit daily.

Data Input

If you plan on writing notes or composing emails directly on your handheld, you'll appreciate the Pocket PC's input options. You can enter info by voice, keyboard, block printing or natural handwriting recognizer software. Palm users must learn "graffiti", a set of strokes which closely resembles our alphabet.

Available Software

Palm wins hands-down in this category. There are over 13,000 titles available from third parties on the Palm OS. The Pocket PC, in comparison, offers only about 1,600 titles. Keep in mind that since the Palm OS has limited memory capacity, you won't be able to install anywhere near 13,000 software options. If software is important to you, your best bet is to think about what you want the handheld for, find the software that will do the job, then buy the PDA that works with the software.

Wireless internet and email connections are available on both platforms but not all models have the capability. Additional devices are needed in most cases (except for the latest Palm i705 which has built-in wireless capability) and connection costs will apply.

Size & Style

All PDA's are handheld devices but they come in different sizes. Some things to consider: 1) Just like digital cameras, it's important to physically hold the model you're interested in because each PDA has a distinct shape and feel. Some are super thin making them convenient to fit in a coat pocket, others have larger screens making them easy to read and input data. 2) Each PDA on the market has a distinctive quality, a certain look that says "pick me, pick me". Some are straight and boxy, others have curves that mold to your hand. Since navigation buttons vary across models, it's important to choose a model that you find comfortable to use.

Color vs. Monochrome

This category may be the deciding feature for many people depending on how often you use a PDA and what software you run. Many people find black & white screens difficult to use because everything is in color these days. If you only plan on checking email and using the PDA to store contact information, then a monochrome screen is a good buy (a monochrome screen will save you a couple of hundred dollars over full color screen). If, however, you plan on playing games or searching the internet, color is almost a necessity. You'll appreciate the extra money spent as your experience will be more interactive.

NOTE: The default email program for all PDA's is Microsoft Outlook. If you use a different program, like Lotus Notes or Eudora, you'll have to get a third party email integrator program.

PDA Version

Palm OS – Palm, Handspring, Sony, Kyocera, Acer, and Samsung
Pocket PC – Dell, Toshiba, HP, Casio Computer, Acer, and NEC

Manufacturer