

## **HELPFUL FACTS ABOUT PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANTS**

**Brought to you by Hewlett-Packard Company,  
Maker of the HP Jornada Pocket PC\***

A personal digital assistant (PDA) is a hand-held computer that allows you to store, access, and organize information. Most PDAs work on either a Windows-based or a Palm operating system. PDAs can be screen-based or keyboard-based, or both.

Basic PDAs allow you to store and retrieve addresses and phone numbers, maintain a calendar, and create to-do lists and notes. More sophisticated PDAs can run word processing, spreadsheet, money manager, and electronic book reading programs, and also provide e-mail and Internet access. Some PDAs come with all of these programs included. Some of the programs may be limited versions of ones that run on desktop computers. For others, you have to acquire or purchase extra software to run these programs. Some PDAs play music and record voice memos, while some others can with additional hardware.

Most PDAs can exchange information with a desktop or laptop computer, although you may have to buy additional accessories.

### **E-Mail and Internet Access**

Most PDAs allow you to download e-mails and some Internet content from a desktop or laptop computer. You can write e-mails with most PDAs and later send them from your computer.

Some PDAs come with software for accessing certain brands of e-mail accounts. Additional software may be available to access other brands of e-mail accounts. Some PDAs also come with Internet browser software, while other PDAs require users to purchase browser software separately.

Many PDAs can access e-mail and the Internet by connecting to a telephone jack, although you may have to purchase a special modem. Other PDAs can provide wireless access to e-mail and the Internet if you buy a wireless modem or connect them to certain types of digital mobile phones. Still other PDAs permit wireless access to e-mail and the Internet without the need for additional hardware or software.

---

\* For information about the HP Jornada Pocket PC, visit [www.hp.com/jornada](http://www.hp.com/jornada).

For wireless e-mail and Internet access, you must subscribe to a wireless data network service. You may have to pay a monthly flat fee, connection-time fees, or some other type of fee for that wireless service. Some PDAs may also require you to sign up for a wireless service with a specific ISP, so check before buying. In addition, wireless service may not be available in all areas of the United States or the world, so check with the wireless service provider.

### **Quality of Internet and E-mail Access**

Currently, the ability to access the content of the Internet through a PDA is more limited than through a desktop computer. Some PDAs permit you to browse any URL on the Web using many Internet service providers (ISPs). Other PDAs require a subscription to a specific ISP. Check before buying if it important for your use.

Be aware that not all content of every Web site may be available on a PDA either because of the limited power relative to a desktop computer or because the PDA does not come with the software necessary to view all content on every Web site. Sometimes, additional software may be purchased and loaded onto the PDA to allow additional Web content to be displayed on a PDA.

Some Internet features that are available to most desktop computer users may not be available to PDA users. For example, PDAs may not allow users to play certain games, use certain audio or video features, or view information in certain formats like PDF (Portable Document Format) files. No currently available PDAs support Real Player, Shockwave, QuickTime, or other multimedia programs available on some Web sites.

Many PDAs allow you to access your e-mail accounts, but some PDAs limit your ability to send, receive, or view e-mail attachments. Not all devices are able to display attachments in popular formats like MS Word and HTML without additional software.

### **Connecting to a Desktop or Notebook Computer**

Typically, PDAs come with cables or docking stations to connect them to your desktop or notebook computer. Connecting lets you synchronize and update the files on your PDA with your desktop or notebook computer, such as your calendar, address book, and to-do lists. Some PDAs also enable you to synchronize word processing and spreadsheet files as well as e-mail messages, and copy Web site addresses and Web pages for offline viewing on your PDA.

### **Screen Displays**

Some PDAs have monochrome or gray-scale displays, while others can display anywhere from 256 to 64,000 colors.

PDA screen displays are either active matrix or passive matrix. Active matrix displays generally are easier to see, more responsive, faster, and can be viewed at larger angles than passive matrix displays.

Most PDA screens may be seen adequately in many light conditions. Many have gauges for indoor, outdoor, and power-saving modes. Some color PDAs can be set to dim the backlight if the PDA is not in use for a set time – this extends the battery life.

### **Batteries**

Some PDAs use permanent rechargeable batteries, while others use either rechargeable batteries that can be replaced or standard alkaline batteries. How long you can go without recharging or changing batteries may vary depending on the PDA. The time it takes for recharging may also vary depending on the battery. You can use the PDA while the battery is recharging.

### **Memory**

PDAs in today's market typically have between 2 MB to 32 MB of built-in memory. Two MB of memory is generally sufficient to fill address books, maintain an active calendar, take notes, and load useful programs. More memory may be necessary to store large files like digital photos or audio recordings, or to hold large software programs. You can expand memory of some PDAs with small storage cards that can be inserted into the PDA. Think about your anticipated memory requirements before you buy, so that the PDA you select is capable of addressing your needs.

### **Size and Weight**

Today's PDAs range from the size and thickness of 10 business cards, weighing 1.4 ounces, to the size of a paperback book weighing significantly more. The smallest PDAs have only basic information-organizing functions: they allow you to maintain address books and calendars, and create to-do lists. Complementary hardware -- for example, modems, cradles, and battery chargers -- add to the overall size and weight of PDAs.

### **Entering Information**

You have to use a penlike stylus to enter information into many PDAs. You tap on an on-screen keyboard or enter data by writing on the screen, which may require learning a new way of printing the alphabet. Some PDAs use common alphabet characters, while others use variations. Test the handwriting recognition on several PDAs to make sure you're comfortable with how they work.

Other PDAs have built-in keyboards. Some of these also let you use a stylus; the stylus substitutes for a mouse for navigating through on-screen menus and controls. External keyboards are available as accessories for many smaller PDAs.

### **Adaptability**

Some PDAs can be upgraded. You may be able to add software from the Web or other sources, and some PDAs offer more software applications than others. You also may be able to add memory or removable storage to a PDA, or connect it to an external monitor, a network, or a modem. Printers and external keyboards can be added to many PDAs as well.

### **Cost**

PDAs range from less than \$100 to over \$600. Generally, the higher-priced PDAs provide more features and functions than the lower-priced models.

**This brochure was prepared in December 2000. The information in this brochure was accurate as of that date. PDAs are constantly being improved and updated in their capabilities. Be sure to check the most current information before buying.**