



Pocket Computing Magazine

Mini-Laptops Newton Psion Windows CE



The magazine for those who are serious about portability

May 1998

Reviews This Month

Psion Presentation
Maker v1.0 for
Series 5
BrainForest VS
ThoughtMill
Sabotage by
Xoanan
Libretto 70
SignCrypt 2.0



Info-Views

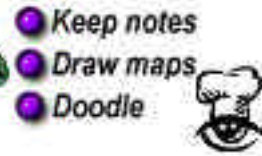
Home Finances Management
Pocket BizCalc
RhinoSkins
F11

Commentary

Mini Laptop Scene In Search of the Holy Grail
The Psioneer Life! State of the Psion
Newton Rising Testimony
Palm PC Underground Palm PC's:
In the Real World Moving On
State of the Newton

Want To see more on your Platform Choice?
Read This!





Easy Newton note keeping lets you quickly jot down reminders, to-do lists and directions, draw maps, or just doodle. With Sticky Newts running, you can instantly access your notes, create new ones, show and hide notes, or even print, fax or email them by simply tapping on your screen.

* Floats above other applications, giving you constant access to your most-needed information.

* Set alarms to bring up individual notes and wake up your Newton.

* Drag and drop text and graphics from other Newton applications to create new notes.

* Drag notes to different locations on the screen and easily re-size them.

* Hide or show all notes with a single tap.

* Individually tile notes. * Auto-start Sticky Newts when the Newton is reset.

* Access built-in graphical help for quick reference.

Visit the Concept Kitchen website to download a demo of Sticky Newts at
<http://www.conceptkitchen.com>



Publishers Page

Welcome to the first issue of Pocket Computing magazine. For the last three years I have been publishing a similar magazine known as "Gecko" This magazine which focused on Newton Technology (Rest in Peace) has been replaced by this more ambitious project dedicated to users of all platforms who use small sized computing devices.

This is essentially a non profit thing and as such really needs the services of you, the reader to make it a success. Thus, you can help by sending reviews, commentary, art work and the like. Don't ask, just send it.

This magazine will be divided into several areas:

Reviews... These are items by users not connected with the companies that produce them. They are rated on a scale of 1 - 5.

Info-Views... These are information parts that are produced by the company involved. They are good sources of basic information and are not rated.

Commentary... These are articles about just about any aspect of small portable computing. They may focus on a particular platform or not. I may agree or not. Unless it is totally inappropriate, I will print the opinions of just about anyone on just about anything. Makes for an interesting and lively read, I think.

Having been a Newton devotee for the last few years, I have been somewhat surprised by the cool stuff that is out there and has passed me by.

While you may not be a Newton user or Palm user, you will find some interesting ideas in all of the commentary sections. Do read them all. They are well worth your time.

Have any ideas for future issues, layout, etc. Send them to me at Geraldfox@aol.com



Psion Presentation Maker v1.0 for Series 5

By Dave Chadderton
chads@netcomuk.co.uk



Cost: £45-ish !! supplied on 3.5" floppy disk

Aimed at a somewhat limited market, Psion Presentation Maker (PM) is definitely a specialized application. Designed to ease the workload on the travelling executive, PM is compatible with Microsoft's Powerpoint presentation package, which has for sometime been the industry standard.

PM is not feature packed like it's big corporation brother, and perhaps disappointingly, there is no way to display your presentation other than by scrolling through the slides one by one (when zoomed out to display the whole slide this is not such a bad compromise). It may well be that the Psion 5 is not the ideal machine to link to a digital projector, but the ability to view one's presentation on the Psion as it will eventually appear would have been useful.

Basically, PM is a presentation editor which can be used to alter an existing presentation or maybe for jotting down thoughts on a new presentation before adding the 'Gucci' colours / backgrounds / animations / sounds. It does however, support the three main views (with the exception of slideshow) provided by Powerpoint; namely slide view (to view your current slide), outline view (for quick text editing) and multi-slide view (for simple thumbnail views of each slide).

PM is supplied on 3.5" floppy, so requires a PC to transfer the main app to the Psion. The disk contains the application itself, a clipart file, and converters to plug into PsiWin - you must have Powerpoint installed on the host PC for the conversions to work. Installation is easy, simply connect the Psion to the PC, hit run, a:/setup.exe and away you go as Psion's EPOC Installer takes over and does all the hard work for you. The application takes up relatively little room, around 300k, and doesn't need much free memory to run. This is though, one of those apps where the resulting files are much bigger than the main program.

Users of Powerpoint and Psion apps (i.e. the whole target market!) will find the interface familiar, it looks a lot like Psion Word but with some minor extras. The usual text formatting bars are included, as is the ability to insert objects such as sketches, clip art, graphs, word docs, sheets and even record files.

Transferring files to/from a PC is very straightforward and happens in exactly the same way as a word or sheet document. In order to copy a presentation to the Psion, simple drag and dropping in Windows Explorer brings up the standard conversion dialogue. This asks if you want to convert your *.ppt file to a Psion Presentation (or vice versa) - i.e.. yes. Once this is decided the conversion takes place, somewhat slowly, before it is copied to the destination

file on the Psion. Perhaps the reason for the slowness is that the converters must strip down your fantastic multimedia extravaganza to a text / bulleted version that is readable and editable on your 16 grey 486-type PDA. This is unfortunate but necessary, as a full Powerpoint '97 presentation would be unbearably slow on the Psion.

Any photos, drawings or graphs are represented in the outline view by a small symbol: tapping on this brings up sketch so you can edit the object - realistically this is not the best way to edit graphics, particularly if they are to be displayed on a large monitor or printed onto acetate slides. In slide view, these objects are displayed to the best of PM's ability - reproduction of a colour photograph in 16 greys is not very usable but is useful to get a basic idea of slide formatting.

Due to the lack of backgrounds, it seems that Psion have decided to not include a master slide ñ even if your presentation consists only of bulleted slides you must define each new slide when composing it on the Psion. On the plus side though, a customizable spell checker is included which works in all views. The manual provided by Psion is not really adequate for first time users, as the information contained within does assume basic presentation knowledge. This maybe because such a specialized application is unlikely to fall into the hands of a complete novice! The built-in help file is better, but still relatively insubstantial.

If your need is to have the ability to edit presentations whilst travelling, or when you are away from your PC, then PM is a good application to have stored on your Psion. It will only synchronize with PCs that contain PsiWin, Powerpoint and the converters, and as such you can only really expect to use it with your own PC. As PM is the only such application on the market so you may have to learn to live with its limitations. The major strength of Psionís Presentation Maker is down to the main strength of the Psion 5 itself - portability.

For: Portability
 Familiar interface
 Ease of use, inclusion of spell checker
 Ease of PC <--> Psion transfer
 Ability to insert objects

Against: Basic knowledge required
 Lack of Slide Master,
 Only very basic presentation features included
 Overpriced at present (should be <£30)

Verdict:

A useful product from Psion produced for a specialist market ñ it has some limitations but will nevertheless be in regular use on my Series 5. (7/10)

Psion Presentation Maker can be found at:

HYPERLINK <http://www.pSION.com/computers/psionscpresentation.html>

<http://www.pSION.com/computers/psionscpresentation.html>

Reviewers Note: Presentation Maker requires an IBM PC, Win 95, PsiWin 2.x with Powerpoint 7.0 (or higher) installed. It will also work with a Mac, System 7.5 or higher and PC Exchange/Access PC.



BrainForest VS ThoughtMill Review

Review by : Kai Wei
kaiwei@post1.com

Made By:

BrainForest; Aportis Technologies Corp <custcare@aportis.com>
<http://www.aportis.com>

ThoughtMill; Hands High Software, Inc <support@handshigh.com>
<http://www.handshigh.com>

Cost

ThoughtMill: US\$17.95

BrainForest: US\$30.00

BrainForest Professional Upgrade: US\$9.95(not out yet)

The logo for Palm Computing, featuring the words "Palm Computing" in white, bold, sans-serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.

Commercial/Shareware

Pocket Computing Rating:

ThoughtMill: 4.0

BrainForest: 4.5

THE WAR BETWEEN THE TWO LEADING SOFTWARE TITLES IN THIS CATEGORY

A lot of us bought the PalmPilot/Pilot/Palm because we need to get organized. To be frank, the packaged software for the PalmPilot is at best, tolerable. This bring to mind, third party solutions. One of the strong selling points for the palmpilot is the availability of this software. One of the most popular software groups for the palmpilot are outliners. This can be either for a project, on going function, or simply, to get your life organized. Two of the most popular titles in this category are ThoughtMill by Hands High Software, Inc. & BrainForest by Aportis Technologies Corp.

ThoughtMill; Hands High Software, Inc

ThoughtMill enables you to go ahead with project plans, meeting plans, task lists, speeches, shopping lists, course outlines or whatever you need to organize quickly. ThoughtMill's aim is to allow busy people to quickly and easily organize their thoughts on the road.

ThoughtMill's checklist feature turns any outline hierarchical, and supports drag & drop check lists as well as in-place editing. No extra taps or screens to get your information in.

Drag and drop bullets to quickly move thoughts around.

Clicking on an arrow collapses or expands the database. Clicking the check box at the bottom shows check boxes next to each item.(a la To Do lists), Import and Export from the MemoPad. Double-tapping selects a word and triple-tap selects a line. Items can be dragged to and from the trash can or Folder for later use.

Items dragged to the trash can deleted to regain precious memory. ThoughtMill's interface is very good in the sense that it is very similar to the desktop environment. However, a large amount of code has been used to achieve this effect. In the days that I have tested this product, it has never crashed although the drag & drop feature is not as easy as it seems. One big drawback from ThoughtMill is that most of the text editing hacks for the PalmPilot are disabled for some reason. Examples includes Select Hack, Pop Hack, and CorrectHack. Also, the dotted lines cloud the overall view making searching for a specific item in your project plan a daunting task indeed, especially if your project plan has a lot of items.

ThoughtMill also writes to your preferences when installed to monitor the shareware limitations. As quoted by one fellow piloter, "One of the worst I've seen is ThoughtMill. Not only does it leave the droppings after deleting it, but if you don't get it off of your pilot after it expires, it will crash your pilot, not only when selecting that application, but on a find as well. Definitely bad."

Overall, ThoughtMill is an intuitive outliner & robust in interface features. It is very suitable for the busy worker on the go who has no time to do an in depth plan. However, it is sorely inadequate for the power user who needs much more functions than the ones provided by ThoughtMill. A shareware version with a 14 day limit can be downloaded form their web site. ThoughtMill costs US\$17.95 & can be bought from their web site at

www.handshigh.com

BrainForest; Aportis Technologies Corp

BrainForest(formerly Outliner) is a comprehensive hierarchical based action item organizer, checklist manager, and idea tracker for the 3Com PalmPilot™ connected organizer and IBM WorkPad™. It increases out-of-the office productivity by consolidating information search and retrieval in one easy-to-use application.

BrainForest organizes information using a Tree, Branch, and Leaf analogy. A tree is the main plan, a branch one of the headings in your plan & a leaf is the To Do/s you have to complete for that heading in your main plan.

Unlike the PalmPilot's built-in To Do List or MemoPad, BrainForest lets you work with your ideas, action items, checklists, to-dos, memos, etc., in one program.

To Do Leaves can also be given a Start Date, Due Date, and an ability to Repeat on your schedule in addition to a priority setting . Items can be rearranged via simple dragging of an item from one location to another with the stylus.

Projects can be assigned a start date, end date, and recurring information, so that any project can be kept under control. BrainForest allows customization of how data is viewed. The non-dotted lines view really clears up the screen although some users may find it disconcerting.

Information can be sorted in several, flexible ways. For example, all Memo Leaves and To Do Leaves in a project can be organized by the date each task is due. Group related action items can be grouped together under common headings that are meaningful to you. Create Memo Leaves and optionally assign a priority level.

BrainForest is distributed in two editions, BrainForest Trialware and BrainForest Professional. BrainForest Trialware software does not expire, has no functional limitations, simple import and export capabilities, and requires registration, which can be done via the Aportis web site, or through a toll-free phone number. BrainForest Trialware is US \$30.00. Besides including all the functionality of the Trialware edition, BrainForest Professional includes the desktop applications for Windows 95, Windows NT, Macintosh and Java users, a HotSync technology conduit, sample templates for businesses (project ticker, leadership and brainstorming tools, meeting and agenda lists, and others), and general uses (shopping lists, first aid, travel/packing lists, and others). It also includes expanded export and import capabilities. BrainForest Professional is US \$39.95. BrainForest Trialware users may upgrade for only US \$9.95. This are all available form their web site at www.afortis.com

Overall, BrainForest's interface is not as intuitive as proclaimed by Aportis. I had to play around with it for some time before I got the hang of it. However, it offers a powerful plan management system which actually makes sense when you are familiar with it. Import & export functions works perfectly. To export to the MemoPad, you need the plug-in. (included) The plug-in conception is a really good idea. This allows the user to install the add-on which he/she actually needs instead of the whole suite of functions which may unnecessarily increase the program's size. Also different plug-ins, not necessarily from Aportis can increase BrainForest's functionality. BrainForest allows the normal busy on the go user to quickly turn chaos into order while the power users will also find BrainForest's suite powerful managing & planing features a gift. But the interface really leaves much to be desires. I had to drag very carefully to avoid dropping the selected item into the wrong branch.

Summary

I really like ThoughtMill's interface which makes the already difficult task of organising easier. However, it is when you try to go deeper into ThoughtMill that you will discover it's limitations. BrainForest's interface has a steep learning curve but once you spend time on it, you will soon find yourself using Trees, Branches & Leaves like a professional. I myself choose BrainForest even though it's much more expensive than ThoughtMill as BrainForest Professional includes the applications for the desktop. It includes expanded export and import capabilities. Upgrading from the registered trialware version to the Professional version costs only US\$9.95.

-kaiwei

Pros:

ThoughtMill; Hands High Software, Inc

In-place editing. No extra taps or screens to get your information in. "Undo" support
Drag and drop bullets to quickly move thoughts around Click an arrow to collapse or expand
Click the check box at the bottom to show check boxes next to each item. Import and Export from the MemoPad
Double-tap to select a word and triple-tap to select a line Items can be dragged to and from the Can or Folder for later use.

BrainForest; Aportis Technologies Corp

In-place editing. No extra taps or screens to get your information in. "Undo" support
Drag and drop bullets to quickly move thoughts around Click an arrow to collapse or expand
Click the check box at the bottom to show check boxes next to each item. More powerful management features
Import and Export from the MemoPad
Uses a plug-in architecture

Bottom Line:

I really like ThoughtMill's interface which makes the already difficult task of organising easier. However, it is when you try to go deeper into ThoughtMill that you will discover it's limitation. BrainForest's interface has a steep learning curve but once you spend time on it, you will soon find yourself using Trees, Branches & Leaves like a professional. I myself choose BrainForest even though it's much more expensive than ThoughtMill as BrainForest Professional includes the applications for the desktop. It includes expanded export and import capabilities. Upgrading from the registered trialware version to the Professional version costs only US\$9.95.

-kaiwei

ThoughtMill is a trademark of Hands High Software, Inc. BrainForest is a trademark of Aportis Technologies Corp. HotSync, PalmPilot and the PalmPilot Compatible Logo are trademarks of 3Com Corporation. All other brands and product names may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders. Copyright 1998, Pocket Computing. All Rights Reserved



Game Review: Sabotage by Xoanan

By: Lance Lasheras,
lancel@direct.ca

Pocket Computing Rating 4.0
Windows CE Software

Every so often we
WindowsCE users get a



break. A software program that we can use during boring long office hours. Many games get you more bored than the meeting itself, for you see, WindowsCE is not exactly a gaming OS. Sabotage proved us wrong! It's a redo of the Classic Apple II game. A passing helicopter drops men on to your base. It's up to you to stop them. You get a gun that is movable by either left or right and it shoots square like bullets. You can either kill them or hit their parachutes and watch them fall to their death. Sound pretty simple huh? Well that's the Classic Apple II version. Xoanan's version not only has killer sound effects but over 10 levels! The animation is superb, it doesn't even smudge if the graphics get fast (like some do). Did I also mention 256 colors on color HPC's? Yes it's brilliant. The graphics become almost 32 bit as the animated helicopter passes by. The game is also savable on a 4MB disk for safe keeping.

I could only find a few faults myself, the gun does take a second longer than it should to move left or right, and when the soldiers fall down there is no blood or mark left on the floor like the old version. Otherwise you can't go wrong!

You can download a 1 level playable demo www.xoanan.com . The price for the game is 9.95\$ US and is orderable online! It requires little space in your HPC. Works on all HPC's 4. 4 grayscale version for colorless HPC's. Rating: **** (to not try out would be inhumane!)

The weekly update with Lance Lasheras, bringing top quality game reviews.
Home Page: <http://mypage.direct.ca/l/lancel/main.htm>
lancel@direct.ca



Info-View

Home Finances Management

Shareware

<http://www.rmrsoft.com/> and support@rmrsoft.com

Platform and requirements

All models of the Psion and also the GeoFox One

Series 5	S5BANK
Series 3A/C	S3ABANK
Siena	SNABANK
Geofox One	GEOBANK



30US\$ - 60 DM - £20

These Personal Accounts Suites are very comprehensive packages, similar to Quicken, with a fully integrated range of functions for managing your personal and home finances. They have all the functionality of the commercial offerings, such as full Quicken and MS Money compatibility, Password Protection, Look Ahead mode, Tax Tracking and Automatic Interest credit/debit, in addition to all the usual account tracking facilities such as Accounts, Foreign Currencies, Budget Categories, Standing Orders (or Future Transactions) and Account Archiving.

To save on disc space you can install just the minimum core of functions as follows: Account Tracking, Transactions, Currency support, Standing Orders, Archive.

or add any combination of the following optional modules, up to the full program, to configure it to your needs : Advanced Functions - 2 different modules, Budget Categories, Annual Budget Planner, Investment Tracker, Fuel Consumption Monitor, Home Inventory, Utilities Tracker, Expense Account Tracking and Help files

The functions of each module are described in detail below.

The Accounts Screen shows a list of all accounts within the Group, overall credit/debit balance of each, and the total net worth. Individual Accounts can be defined with a Quicken type, an opening balance, a balance credit or debit limit, an interest rate, and can be excluded from the net worth if required. Backup and restore facilities allow a complete copy of the data files to be kept on another disk.

The Transactions Screen shows transactions for each Account in date order, with : descriptions; category, reference or tax rate field; the credit or debit value; and the running balance. You can transfer funds into, out of, or between Accounts, and also to accounts in another Group. An Account balance window can be toggled to show current, initial, total or today's balance, or reconciled balance shown when reconciling. The middle column on the screen can be toggled to show transaction reference, budget category or tax rate field for entries. You have the ability to set credit or debit rates for interest payments or charges. You can reconcile transactions when statements are received, and show the reconciled balance. Foreign transactions can be entered into accounts and automatically converted into the Group currency. There is a filter available to view only entries with a specified budget category, date range, tax rate or description/reference text.

The Currencies Screen shows details of up to 9 countries' currency exchange rates. The program is designed to run in one base currency (normally where you live), to then set a different currency for each Group where Accounts are held, and use a third secondary currency for temporary foreign transactions (e.g. for holidays). There is a built-in configurable currency converter.

The Standing Orders Screen shows details of up to 50 standing orders (aka scheduled transactions etc.) which can be defined for regular automatic payments to, from, or between accounts. The program handles any multiple periods of days, weeks, months or years, including last day of the month. The number of payments can be set from once to indefinitely. Different initial and regular payment values can be entered. You can also use this option to automatically enter interest payments, for estimated entries into accounts, using the credit and debit interest rates set up for each.

The Archive Screen shows transactions previously archived from accounts following reconciliation against a Bank Statement. You can have an unlimited number of archive files and file sizes. There is a filter available to view only entries with a specified budget category, date range, tax rate or description/reference text.

The following optional modules, when loaded, extend the capabilities of the program:

The Advanced Functions Module 1 provides a "Look ahead" mode for future status of Accounts and "what if" accounting. Up to 20 default transactions per Group can be defined for regularly made transactions. Up to 10 counters per Group for automatic numbering of transactions (multiple cheque books, credit slips etc) can be defined, and a "find" and "find next" function is provided to search for transaction dates and text in the Archive screens.

The Advanced Functions Module 2 allows Export and import in Quicken, MS Money, ASCII Tab separated and CSV formats. A "Pay bills" function is provided to action standing orders in advance of date set. Also, up to 4 tax rates can be defined, as well as 'zero' and 'none', for allocation to transactions.

The Budget Categories Screen allows you to automatically keep track of Budget expenditure (e.g. on food, car, gas, rent, etc.) by assigning transactions to up to 50 categories (dependent on length of names). Split categories are available to assign expenditure to more than one category, and you can record spend or income for a category.

Group : Usa		Account Name : Riggs-C		
Ac	Name	Description	Limit	Debit
1	Riggs-C	Checking	400	5
2	Virginia	Budget Account	400	1
3	Virginia-s	Virginia Savings		4
4	VISA-R	Riggs VISA	-4000	54.83
5	VISA-C	Chase Manhattan VISA	-5000	1865.27
6	AIM	AIM Value Mutual Fund		10

Group Currency : US\$ Net Worth : 20

expenditure to more than one category, and you can record spend or income for a category. This allows you to compare actual spend/income to an annual budget estimate.

The Annual Budget Planner Screen allows you to plan annual expenditure automatically by budgeting future transactions for up to 25 defined agencies (rent, electricity etc).

Group : Test		Account Name : One		
Ac	Name	Description	Debit	Credit
1	One	Checking Account		249.78
2	Two	Savings Account		89.01
3	VISA	Credit Card Account	123.56	

Group Currency : £ Net Worth : 215.23

The Investment Tracker Screen allows you to keep track of a portfolio of up to 50 stocks, shares or bonds. The main screen shows company names, last date of update, number of shares held, share values, total value per company and net worth of total holdings. A second screen shows details of an unlimited length history file of share prices maintained for each company, and also for the total worth of the portfolio. Total shares value can also be posted in the main Group Accounts screen as an 'account' to be included in the net worth value.

The Fuel Consumption Screen Allows you to keeps a running record of the fuel consumption for up to 10 vehicles with their name and number recorded. The main screen shows date, cost, price per unit, number of units, cumulative distance, driving mode, spot

and running average consumption, and any remarks. for the last 9-13 entries (depending on font and platform). You can make entries manually, or automatically from normal account transactions. The fuel consumption units are fully configurable with a wide selection of options. There is a reminder 'alarm' for servicing etc, set on date and distance. A second screen shows details of an unlimited length history file of consumption maintained for each vehicle, both in text and graphical format. Finally, a statistics window gives an extensive summary of many different attributes of the history.

The Home Inventory Screen allows you to keep track of the value of your possessions and contents for up to 10 houses. You can assign up to 20 rooms and 20 categories per house, with up to 60 items held per room or category. The entries record a description, date of purchase, value, serial number, and assigned room location and category. You can update the value of all "new for old" items, or individual categories, by an inflation (or deflation) percentage.

The Utilities Tracker Screen allows you to keep track of up to 3 metered utilities (such as electricity, gas, water). You can configure each with a standing charge, up to 2 meters (for normal and cheap rates) and a tax rate. You then enter periodic (eg. weekly) meter readings, and the usage and cost between entries is evaluated, and an estimate of the total bill is calculated.

The Expense Account Screen allows you to keep track of your Expenses Accounts. You can create up to 8 Trips to record business expenses, functioning similarly to the main account transactions but optimised for this purpose. You define named trips with an optional total or per-diem allowance, vehicle rate and operating currency. You can define up to 30 categories (dependent on length of names) for classifying expenses as meals, train, taxi etc. You can then enter expenses manually, or automatically from normal account transactions by selecting the expense trip and category in the advanced transaction dialog. You can enter the mileage distance of company car journeys, and the cost is automatically calculated from the vehicle rate. Up to 10 default entries can be defined for regularly made expenses. The module allows entry or update in foreign currencies, with conversion to the defined trip currency. You can then reconcile and/or underline entries when expenses are reclaimed.



Info-View

Pocket BizCalc

Commercial
Financial Calculator

URL: www.odysseyinc.com

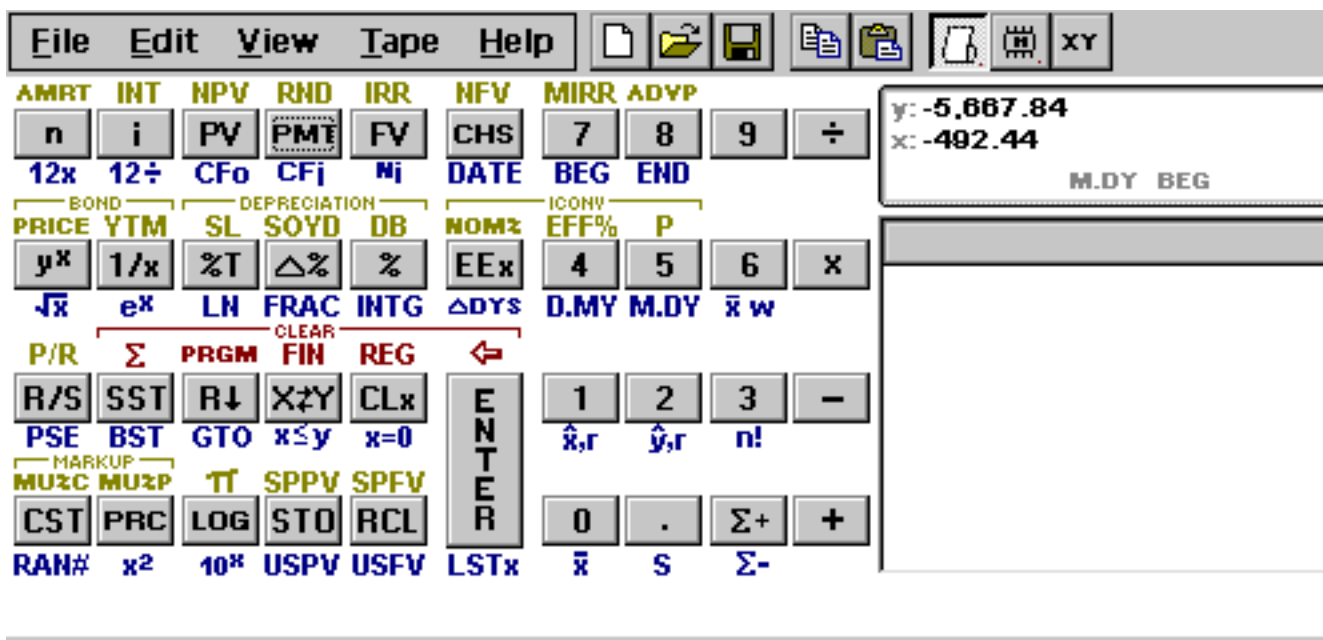
Contact Info: 800-965-7224, 619-675-3660

info@odysseyinc.com

Platform & Requirements: For the Handheld PC - Windows CE 1.0 or 2.0, complete installation requires 300KB.

Serial port or IR connection to desktop PC required for synchronization. For the Desktop PC - 486/33DX or higher processor; 3.5" drive, 8MB RAM, 1.5MB of available hard disk space for installation, Windows 95 or Windows NT Workstation or higher with the H/PC Explorer installed.

Cost: \$39.95 (Pocket BizCalc only), \$49.95 (Pocket BizCalc and BizCalc for Windows 95/NT bundled)



Description: Pocket BizCalc for Windows CE (Handheld PC) is an intuitive, full-featured

programmable business/financial software that emulates the famous HP-12C calculator.

Using RPN logic, it performs the following calculations as well as others: Loan/Mortgage, Discounted Cash Flow (NPV, IRR), Bond, Compound Interest, Leasing, Actuarial and Markup Functions, Depreciation, Amortization Schedule, making it the premier financial calculator software. It also incorporates a powerful tape display that can be annotated, date/time stamped, and saved for later use. Pocket BizCalc is an indispensable tool for business, retail, finance, banking, real estate, leasing industry professionals.



SignCrypt 2.0 Review

**Review by: Clark Chen
(clark@mobilesoft.com)**

Developer: Quintet
Contact: info@quintetusa.com

Rating 4.5

Category: Data security

Price: 29.95 USD

Availability: Early April 1998 downloadable from www.mobilesoft.com

Securing the data in your Windows CE computers

As we carry around with more and more information that we store and transfer into our trusty Windows CE handheld computers, the security of these files may be of a growing concern. For many of us, the security features that come with the Windows CE operating system may be insufficient to protect the files we deemed priceless, or simply the files that you don't want others to open or copy without your authorization.

As Windows CE based handheld computers flourish, software that promise to protect your data started to surface. In selecting the best data security software for your Windows CE computers, these are the key questions to ask:

1. How does the security software scramble (or encrypt) the data?
2. How is the key to remove the encryption generated?
3. How is the key stored on the computer?

The answers to these questions will result in a judgement of the level of protection that the security software can offer. In addition, the usability of the software should also be considered. After all, a good quality security software is the one that provides the highest level of security while remain easy to use.

SignCrypt

Whether you want to have the highest security available for the files you store on your Windows CE handheld computer or you simply want to have the most amazing usage of your signature, SignCrypt is the application. When I first came across SignCrypt, I was in awe with how futuristic this application is, especially with its accuracy reading the aspects of my signature and using that to protect the documents that I store on my HP 620LX.

Multi-dimensional biometric key generation

SignCrypt is an application specifically written for Windows CE to use the aspects of signatures to create the keys for encryption. Only by supplying the keys (which is your signature) the encryption can be removed, otherwise, the encrypted file will remain as a bunch of useless garbage text. Every persons signature has its unique parametrics. The parametrics, or the aspects, of your signature are the key elements that SignCrypt uses to authorize the removal of the encryption that was place into the files.

But before SignCrypt can verify that your signature is indeed the authorized signature, it has to be trained. Simply sign your name (or whatever text you wish to use as the key) on the LCD display 6 times, and SignCrypt will be trained and ready to protect your files.

A great feature in SignCrypt is a sensitivity adjustment, which tells the program how many aspects of the signature to capture, or how tight the signature verification criteria should be set. So for those who has a wide variation of signatures, this feature should make the software easier to use.

SignCrypt has an additional password feature to further enhance the security. In order to present the signature for evaluation to decrypt a file, the user must provide the password that was set originally when the file was encrypted. If the password is incorrect, the user will not have the chance to present the signature to remove the encryption. The password can be 1 to 256 characters long with space and symbols. Dont even try to guess the password if you dont know it. Because each time a wrong password is entered, SignCrypt tightens the signature verification criteria. This is to protect your files from professional signature forgers (assuming that they have figured out your password after a few guesses).

Just curious on how intelligent SignCrypt really is, I tried to sign my name slightly different. However, my carelessly signed sloppy signature was accepted. I figured it is not easy to disguise the biometrics inherent in my handwriting. So I asked David Huang, my colleague, to forge my signature in attempts to breach the security. I had SignCrypts sensitivity setting on default. Then I showed David five times on how I sign my name. I demonstrated my signature slowly to point out the specific areas that I believe makes my signature unique. Now its Davids turn to fool SignCrypt. After numerous failures, although I thought David was a pretty good forger, SignCrypt denied his access to the files I encrypted. Only when I signed on the LCD again, SignCrypt authorized the removal of the encryption. SignCrypts discriminating ability is amazing.

How is the key stored on the computer?

Having a strong lock does not necessary provide adequate security if the key to the lock is readily accessible. So I contacted Chih Chan at SignCrypt to understand exactly how does SignCrypt store the key in Windows CE computers. It turns out that SignCrypts keys are virtually impossible to steal. If the signature that was considered as the key, is simply stored as an image file on the Windows CE computer, it is possible to copy that file which can then serve as the key. Instead, SignCrypt never stores the original signature, rather it stores only the most significant characteristics of the signature (the aspects) into a template. Because SignCrypt uses a proprietary algorithm to extract the aspects, it is impossible to reverse the templates back into any signature. Therefore, the template does not represent any threat even if someone steals it.

How does SignCrypt scramble (or encrypt) the data?

SignCrypt uses 56-bit keys (capable of using 1024-bit keys derived from the aspects of the signatures) to drive the Data Encryption Standard (DES) routines to scramble the files. 56-bit key is the standard for the DES scrambling algorithm, which has never been cracked until last year by an organization using tons of workstations. The way of cracking DES encryption is usually beyond the reality. This means SignCrypt can provide very good data security for most everybody (probably not for national security). There is an export version of SignCrypt, which uses a smaller 40-bit key exportable all countries outside of North America.

Usability

SignCrypts signature-based data security functions are well done. The functions are complete, very effective, and are very easy to use. However, the accessibility of the functions can use some improvement. The encryption/decryption functions are not fully integrated with Windows CE file operations. For example, if you want to encrypt or decrypt a file, you must run the SignCrypt application. It would be nice if these two functions are integrated into Windows CE menu bars. Further, when attempt to open an encrypted file, a Can not be opened warning message is displayed rather than receiving a SignCrypt message to indicate that the file is encrypted and must provide authorized signature to open. However, these are very minor usability issues that Im sure Quintet has already considered for future versions.

Other products to compare to in this category

Applian Technologys DocSafe for Windows CE and Bereshit BlowFish are security programs similar to SignCrypt, except without the excitement and uniqueness of using signatures as the key generator.

Overall

I give a 5 out of 5 for SignCrypts technical excellence, 5 out of 5 for its innovation, 4 out of 5 for its implementation. I would like to see future versions to include a Win95/NT based decryption program so that files encrypted using SignCrypt in Windows CE computers can be transferred to and decrypted on Win95/NT platforms.



RhinoSkins Info-View

<http://www.rhinoskin.com>

Titanium Hardcase, RhinoPak 1000 And RhinoPak 2000



Titanium Hardcase: MSRP \$99.95

The Titanium Hardcase is our flagship product. It is constructed from Grade 1 titanium and has a bead-blasted finish. The neoprene inner lining provides shock absorbency and gives the Ti Hardcase its unique drop-proof quality. 3COM's Palm Division tested the Pilot and Hardcase for drops of 3, 6, and 9 feet onto low-pile industrial carpet. Each time the computer and case emerged unscathed. Its solid titanium slotted rod hinge, welds, and aircraft rivets make it virtually indestructible and extremely protective. Credit cards can be hidden under the Pilot and stored under the clip on the inside of the cover. The Ti Hardcase has been given very favorable reviews in several countries, which can be accessed at our website. Palmheld users everywhere appreciate the Titanium Hardcase because of its superior protective qualities and its status-symbol appeal. Consumers can opt to buy the ClipPak accessory, a cordura holster for the Ti Hardcase, in bundled form for \$112.95.

RhinoPak 1000: MSRP \$26.95

The RhinoPak 1000, made for the Palm Pilot/IBM Workpad, is constructed from water-resistant cordura, or backpack material. It features inner and outer mesh pockets for credit/business cards and the like, and a plastic insert that protects the screen. It has elastic securing straps and a belt loop on the back side. All major buttons and functions are easily accessed while the unit is secured. A Pilot with 3Com's plastic screen cover or PageMart's pager will still fit in the 1000. This RhinoPak recently won The Piloteer Magazine's Award of Excellence. Colors: Black or Black/Tan

RhinoPak 2000: MSRP \$49.95

The RhinoPak 2000 is known as the "sport-ute" case for the PalmPilot/IBM Workpad with Modem and most Windows-based HP/C's. It is an ideal travel case as it features several zipper and mesh utility pockets that allow for a checkbook, passport, disks, credit, ID, and business cards, and car keys. Also inside are a pen/stylus holder, extra battery pouches, and elastic securing straps. This case is ideal for the user who needs his/her handheld in the office one day, on the road the next, and in the backcountry on another. Colors: Black or Black/Tan

The 2000 is made for the following handhelds:

PalmPilot/IBM Workpad with 3Com Modem

PalmPilot with Novatel Wireless Minstrel Modem

Psion Series 3A, 3C, 5

Casio Z-7000

Casio Casiopeia A-10/A11

Compaq PC Companion C120/C140

Hitachi HandHeld PC

HP Palmtop PC 300/320LX

HP OmniG0 100/120

Lucky Goldstar Handheld PC GP20M/GP40M

NEC MobilePro 200/400

Phillips Velo 1

Sharp Zaurus ZR-3000/ZR-3500/ZR-5800/ZR5800FX



F11 Info-View



Shareware
Typing aid and document management

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/lichtbild>

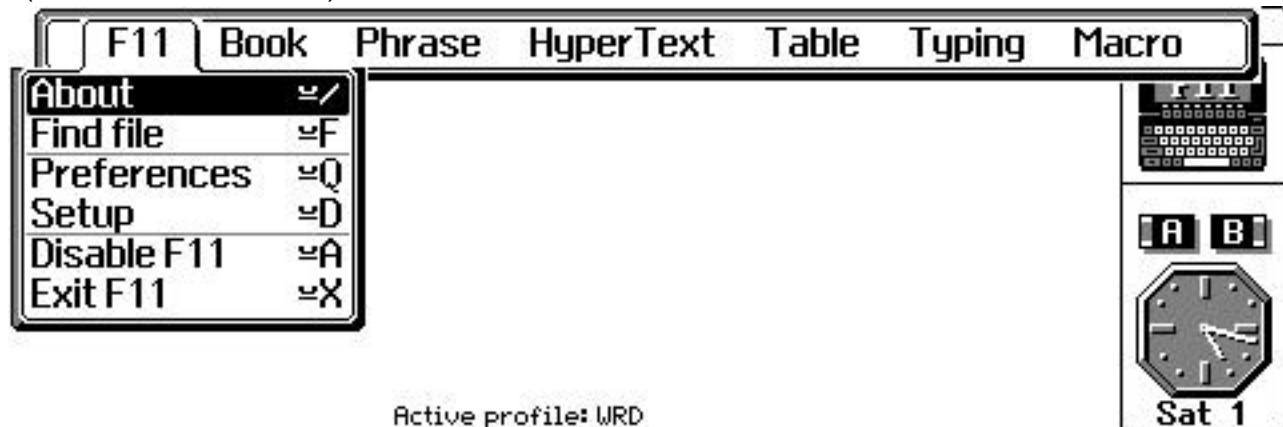
Platform:

PSION S3a, S3c, Siena, ACORN PocketBook II
Disk space requirements: 80-100k for application, 40-60k for documentation
US\$19.95

Description

You probably guessed it: **F11** stands for *Finger 11*. Originally designed as a simple typing aid for PSION palmtops it has grown into a versatile utility with typing aids, macro execution, document management, document linking, and application launching.

The **typing aid** can be customised to insert spaces automatically, convert lower case to upper case, convert hyphens to dashes, and type umlauts easily. There is a pop up **character table**. Application specific user defined phrase books allow to reuse frequently used **phrases** with just 3 keystrokes. F11 can **insert** date and time, data records, or even spreadsheet tables into documents. **Macros** from all macro systems (F11, KMAC, Macro2) can be recorded, edited and launched.



Document management includes a powerful visual browser with advanced content search and preview functions. Documents can be opened, copied, and moved directly from the browser.

F11 allows to insert **hyperlinks** to other documents and application into most document types, which makes navigation between related documents easy.



A **setup utility** allows to select the language (*English/German*) and options at installation.

F11 add-ons include a simple **contact manager** and an **address assistant** for fast creation of letters.



Libretto 70 Review

by Gerald Fox (geraldfox@aol.com)

Toshiba
Mini-Laptop

Pocket Computing Rating 4.0

Recently, Toshiba famous for it's notebook computers announced, and by the time you read this, will have released a new player in it's Libretto line. As I have not gotten had a chance to play with one of their "new" units however, I will concentrate on the Libretto 70 released in November.

I have had time to really take a good hard look at the 70 as a friend of mine owns one. My gut feeling? This is a very cool item that anyone who wants a portable computer ought to look at.

That is a hefty statement but the Libretto 70's specs are certainly worthy of a look. First of all, this is a full Windows95 computer not a CE unit. While it is decidedly a full power computer, it's footprint is small to say the least. The 70 is almost exactly the same size as my Newton 2000 and comes in a very nicely designed clamshell design.

To be succinct, it runs an MMXPentium chip at 120 mhz, has an amazingly clear 6.1 inch screen, a 1.6 gig hard disk, 16mb of ram, and comes bundled with several nice bits of software such as Word, Excel, and several others. This is a Newton sized device with serious desktop power!



The only drawback to this nice unit is the smallish keyboard. If you are a 10 finger typist, it will take some getting used to. For me though it was not a big problem. I expect that I could get used to it in a few days. I was able to type a

few letters on it and by the time I finished the second was well on my way to a comfortable relationship. Still, I must admit that it was awfully cramped.

I really cannot say enough about the screen on this unit. Although small in size, it is sharp as a bell. By far the best screen I have seen on a laptop. The unit also is very ruggedly constructed with a metal bottom and sturdy hinges.

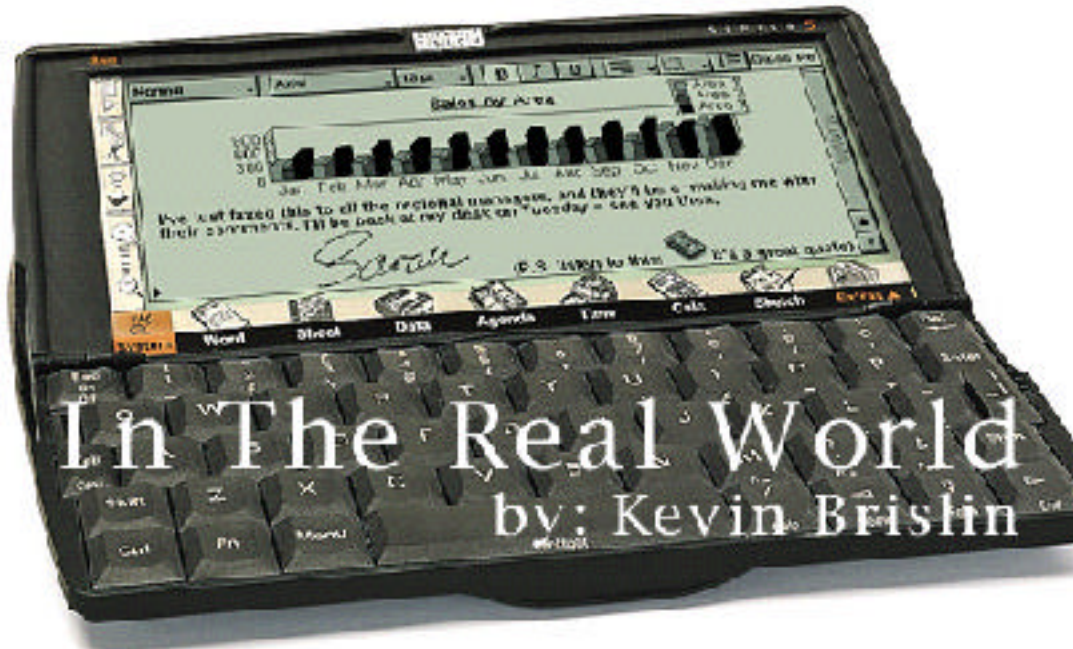
Navigation can be done though either the built in pointer button thingy or by attaching an external mouse. The pointer as a Mac person will take some getting used to but is not a terrible challenge. You may want to may opt for the mouse when at home though. Add that item to your shopping list.

Performance was right up there with what I would expect from a unit with this kind of power. Fast, and responsive are the operative words here.

Bottom line: This is a unit any pocket computer lover will treasure.

Pros: Small, Lightweight, Powerful

Cons: Keyboard



(dkimchee @earthlink.net)

How do you abandon a ship that is already sunk

Like so many, I am leaving the Newton world behind. I've used my MP100 since late 1994. It replaced all of the software PIM's that I was using on my Macintosh. It was a true Zen experience when I first heard the little swoosh it makes when you throw away a note. It has traveled all over the country with me on business trips, reminded me of birthdays and anniversaries, let me send faxes to clients, let me check my E-mail...it simply integrated itself into my lifestyle. I've also written about Newton technology since 1995 and have been published in a number of international magazines (as has the editor of this magazine, Gerald Fox.) I've used almost every model released; MP100, MP110/120/130, and the eMate 300 (never could get my hands on the 2000 series, though.) And just when it looked like the Newton was truly becoming something to contend with in the handheld world, Apple pulled the plug.

(dead silence)

I am not bitter about this turn of events, just saddened. But rather than lament the loss of a great product, or cling to the last vestiges of something that has already left this world, I decided it was time to move on to another platform. I wanted to re-experience the awe and wonder that accompanies those initial explorations of a new system. I wanted to start anew.

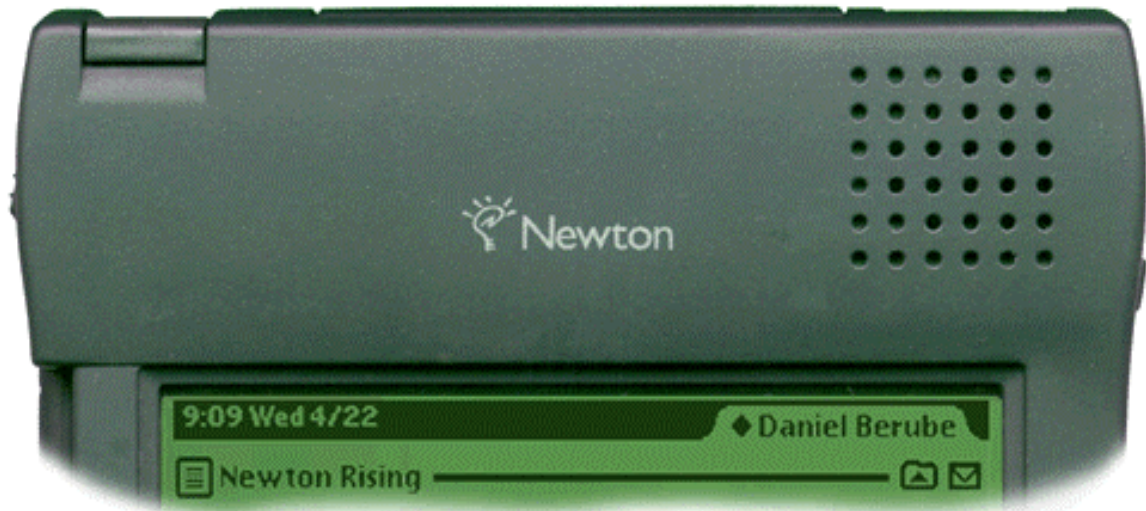
But, with what?

As a dedicated Macintosh user, my choices are very limited. None of the WinCE devices will integrate with the Mac, so every one of them was out of the question. Other PDA's, such as the TI Avigo or the Sharp SE-500, also integrate with Windows-based systems only, so I eliminated them. That left the Psion Series 5 and the 3Com PalmPilot. With that in mind, I trucked on down (Sixties term...just dated myself) to the local Office Depot and was able to play with these things for a few hours to help me make up my mind.

There are good points and bad points to each of these devices. Such as:

- The Psion Series 5 has a very elegant feel to it, has a great keyboard, and has a socketable ROM for updates to the system (something my poor little MP100 never had.) It does not have a monster user base and there doesn't seem to be a huge developer base writing programs for the S5. But it has really nice features, like the ability to do voice recording or browse the Internet on a fairly big screen that makes it attractive. It is also lighter and smaller than even the MP100. It uses a Desktop metaphone (called System) but sometimes seems overly DOS-sy for my tastes. (C: drive, indeed.)
- The PalmPilot has a *huge* user base and developers are flocking to it in droves. A plethora of software is available and the capabilities of this little box are expanding exponentially. It's light, compact and is being pressed into service for a multitude of tasks of which the initial designers never even thought. More than one person has told me to get the new Palm III when they come out. However, I hated the 2.3" screen. It's just too small for my tastes.

So, I choose the Psion Series 5. I've been looking for something that is between a subnotebook and a PDA. The S5 seems to be a good match; fairly robust applications are included yet there is room for third party developers to get their hands dirty and create great solutions for users. Yeah, I know...I won't have the hundreds of programs available like the Palm world does. The S5 is a niche product in many people's minds, so it won't get as much attention as the Palm III or the CE devices. But, that was the original reason I choose to buy a Macintosh back in 1987 and it was the reason that I bought a Newton in 1994. I like to root for the underdog. I like being an evangelist. And the Psion Series 5 is the way for me to go.



Testimony

"A body at rest remains at rest and a body in motion continues to move at a constant velocity unless acted upon by an external force."

-Newton's First Law, Inertia Law, Sir Isaac Newton, 1687.

Wednesday, 3/25/98

9:01am EST

Greetings!

No analytical critique here. As an individual, you know your involvement with the Newton, whether it be as an owner, developer, user, fanatic or skeptic, or as a high-ranking employee of Apple with a nebulous title. I'm here with you as you read on to educate, not to agitate. Thus begins what I've named "Newton Rising," a focus on the many developers who have contributed to make the Newton what it has evolved to and is capable of becoming in the very near future.

I am writing this article on my MessagePad 2000 at an altitude of 30,000ft. as I fly over the Finger Lakes Region of New York. My destination is Kona, Hawaii via Los Angeles, and I'm traveling as part of a three-person tele-production crew for an upcoming broadcast series. The Newton is alive and well in our work, since I bring my MessagePad with me on location, and our Producers use the MessagePad 2100 with software and hardware developed for film/broadcast production use.

I cannot imagine productivity in my life without my Newton, its' freedom of expression and the empowerment it embodies. Apple's decision to kill the Newton platform point blank is questionable at best, and trust me, this opinion comes from an Apple loyalist who associates its' technology with visionary status, from a company who throughout its' history comes across as wanting to stand above the rest.

Ending Newton development at the pinnacle of its' career is, in my opinion, not visionary.

This is a testimony. From my experience, and to those who've made the Newton possible.



Promotional button handed out at the official Boston Newton product launch, Symphony Hall, 1993.

Any time I see someone using their Newton in public, I'm spirited to acknowledge them with a handshake or nod of approval. The graphic above, and the following quotes below, come from someone who shared with me an experience dating back to the official Boston Newton product launch in 1993 when Apple, under John Sculley, first introduced the Original MessagePad:

"How did I get the button? Well, way back in 1993, I attended my first MacWorld here in Boston. Apple had a tennis bubble-like pavilion in front of the World Trade Center, and was running buses back and forth to Symphony Hall for the Newton premiere. As I remember it, there were Newton banners hanging in front of Symphony Hall, and the interior had been done up in the red, purple and yellow of the Newton button."

Where was I at that moment? I'd have loved to have been there, and I thank my friend for taking the time to scan the button and pass it on. For those who want it to display it, point your browsers to <http://www.bigfat.com/newtonrising/wantit.gif> to download this graphic. I'm also investigating the possibility of making this

available as a t-shirt. Anyone interested in wearing this on your chest in public, fire off an email to dan@bigfat.com.

Wear it proudly.

My friend finishes her story with this to say:

"Once in Symphony Hall, you could pick up Newton decals (alas, I'm out of them now) and the buttons; if the right Apple employee spotted you at the right time wearing the button, you won a Newton. Needless to say, I didn't win, but then again, the handwriting recognition on the 100's was, shall we say, problematic."

The Newton remains a very effective method of communication. You'll see the Newton in use for years, similar to that of the Apple II and other classic computers. But I'd like to see a better destiny for the Newton. Its' current incarnation, the MessagePad 2100, is a writer's dream. I'm still amazed at the accuracy in handwriting recognition of my upgraded MP2000 and how this accuracy increases as it learns what I write. The Newton is a computer, and my computer has the active intelligence to remember how I write, and at any time I can custom-tailor my writing preferences to suit my needs. And, since I have the Newton version of MacinTalk installed, it can speak what I write.

Let the myth of poor hand-writing recognition with the Newton end here. It's simply not the case.

"Apple, Apple, Apple"

"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."

-Sir Isaac Newton to Hooke, 5 Feb. 1676

Wednesday, 3/25/98

1:29pm EST

As we fly over the Grand Canyon and are served snacks, a flight attendant cannot help but pause in her serving to kneel down besides me and ask me about my computer. This without a doubt happens every time I work on my Newton in public, and I've come to a point where I'm ready to take the opportunity to satisfy the curious. I've got it down to a 30 second presentation that literally wins over those who ask and those nearby every time. Usually it's the same comment or question that is asked: "I saw you writing on

that and I was curious as to what you were writing.” I always make eye contact with a smile and reply that I am working on my computer, my Newton, and that whatever I write into it I can print, fax, email, upload or beam, and then I turn on/off the backlight. This usually wins them over by itself, but then I add that you can either type into it using the keyboards(onscreen, external) or by writing directly on the screen, and then I quickly write out their name and watch them smile as my writing turns into letters spelling out their name. If I worked for Apple, I could easily sell several Newtons per flight, right on the spot, the number of sells equal to the flight’s duration. Since I presently don’t work for Apple, I just tell the curious-now-convinced that I was glad they asked me about my computer, and that they will not be disappointed in buying one for themselves.

As a matter of fact, the flight attendant came back a second time for a more detailed viewing, afterwards which one of my crewmembers quipped, “What a way to meet people, having a Newton, it’s better than having a dog,” at which I chimed in, “The Newton is not a cheesy pick-up tool,” while quickly opening up Notes, and showing them a greyscale picture of my beloved pug dog, Lily.

A similar but more remarkable experience prompted me to send it to Apple and others on March 6, the day of the Newton Developer Association’s Rally at Apple Headquarters in Cupertino, CA. I’ve included the main part of it here as follows:

“We just completed filming an episode for one of the series in Cambodia and Vietnam, again we used the Newton/Shotlogger combo here. We were all very moved by one incident when we were shooting footage in front of the Silver Pagoda in Phnom Penh. Basically, everywhere we traveled/filmed, we attracted *many* curious children and adults who would follow us on-location. In this instance, the Newton came in great use just to divert attention away from the group of on-lookers so that we could pull off our shots and interviews without them in the "eye" of the camera lense. For many, I am sure, this was the first time they *ever* saw a computer, let alone the Newton. As soon as the Newton was pulled out to show them, all of the young children horded around the Associate Producer (on her knees with the Newton). It was quite a moving sight, and it warranted a few pictures to record the memory. The AP enjoyed showing the children the Newton, and I called out to her to use the hand-writing on it and turn on the backlight to show them. The crowd of children were smiling and having a great time seeing this as the AP wrote out her name and they saw it form into letters.

"The child looked up to me and said in English, 'Apple...Apple...Apple.'"

Then I asked if I could see the Newton for a second, and as it was handed to me, I knelt down to the children's level, and they all moved away from the AP and around to me, smiling, giggling. I turned the Newton back on with the backlight, noticed a small girl looking wide-eyed at me and I tapped on Notes, drew a quick drawing of her face, and turned the Newton around to her so that all the children could see it. They loved it, and the moment made all of the crew's day. As I got up to leave for our next location, one of the children was pointing at the Newton, the others looking on, noticing something. One of them spoke a word in their Khmer language, the others repeating it several times, and they noticed the curiosity on my face, not knowing what they were saying. One of the children pointed again at the Newton held out in my hands, and then pointed again, this time at the bottom of the Newton. The child looked up to me and said in English,

"Apple...Apple...Apple."

-taken from <http://www.macintouch.com/newtonstory.html>



Show Us the Way

“For every action force, there is a corresponding reaction force which is equal in magnitude and opposite in direction.”

-Newton's Third Law, Action and Reaction Weak Law, Sir Isaac Newton, 1687.

The moment is awkward right now for those who believe in the Newton way. Adam Tow, President of Foundation Systems and head of the Newton Developer Association, organized the NDA rally in Cupertino and is facilitating an attempt to draw support from a large segment of Apple shareholders who believe in the continuation of the Newton platform on April 22, 1998, at the Apple shareholder's meeting.

April 22, 1998 is going to be a defining moment for Newton, and Apple.

Here's what Adam had to say about current Newton development, Foundation Systems, and the NDA:

Adam: I am working on some projects right now with Foundation Systems that I want to get finished. For the NDA, we're trying to figure out what course of actions to take next. The thing that we're going to do is something at the (Apple) shareholder's meeting on April 22, 1998, although we don't yet know what. We haven't finalized.

NR: Adam, there are a couple of points that I want to touch upon. On your website, you've written that while it was a challenge to juggle between academics and Foundation Systems, the experience has proven very rewarding, and you've also reflected that we often tend to view our lives as happening in periods, that one period of your life has ended, and another is just beginning to emerge on the horizon. Now I know you wrote this before Apple decision, but I feel this very much applies to what is happening now.

Adam: Oh definitely, well, what's happening right now is, and I'm going to take it from a perspective of lots of developers and narrow it down to some developers and then to myself, so you can just get a sort of meta-level of what I'm trying to say. Right now, Newton developers are at a crossroads. Some of them have already taken a path of "ok. Newton, we'll continue to support our existing

Newton platform, however, we need to survive, so we're going to be moving to different platforms, like Pilot or Windows CE." We just finished the Windows CE Developers Conference, in San Jose, I wasn't actually there, but a lot of Newton developers were, and we had a dinner on Monday in San Jose. And, the usual suspects were there, Stand Alone, Catamount, NS Basic, Enfour, Enroute, VisualNewt, everybody, ok, was there, including some of the vertical market people, and representatives from Newton, from ex-Newton Inc. people. And we were reflecting, actually some people were saying it's kind of interesting that a year ago we would have never thought that we would have been together, a Newton community, Newton Developers, at a Windows CE conference. Or we'll say the same thing in December, at the Pilot Conference, the Pilot Developer's conference in December. But here we are, April 9th, 1998, and Newton Developers are starting to switch to different platforms. And, that's more or less interesting, ok, it's definitely interesting, to something that we poured our hearts into, the Newton, and to see it fall. Well, it's not dead yet, ok?

NR: I don't believe it's dead yet, either...

Adam: It's not dead in the sense that the Newton still works, I still use it, a lot of people still use them, there's programs being released everyday for them, but as a technology that will continue to grow, like a Mac or a PC, you know, there's a dead end. Unless Apple sells the technology. And the chances of that happening are not zero but they are very slim.

NR: That leads me on to my next question, unless you want to add to this...

Adam: We'll come back to all of this.

NR: Ok. In an interview with Maccentral the day after the Newton protest rally, you summed up your thoughts about Apple's decision by stating that the Newton was Apple Computer Inc's saving grace. You also stated earlier in the interview that the NDA's public stance has been to not see Apple Computer reverse their decision...

Adam: To cancel the Newton, but to encourage them to sell the Newton to a third-party that is committed,...

NR: Ok, if you could add any points to that, if there was anything that you wanted to add to on how the rally went,...

Adam: Sure. I think it would be unrealistic and stupid for us to say, "Apple, please reverse your decision on the Newton." But we weren't asking for that from the get-go. We wanted to see the technology survive by having them sell it to someone. But our desire to see the technology saved, and the success of that, rests on the fact that it rest on Apple's feet. If Apple's not going to sell it,

then, who's going to buy it? Or if they place the price so high, then...rumor has it they are looking for \$50 million to license the technology.

NR: Not to sell it...

Adam: Not to sell it, so to sell it obviously it would be much more, but I don't know how much more, but rumor has it that it is \$50 million to license.

NR: How do you feel about Planet Computing and their efforts?

Adam: Well, it's admirable, what they're trying to do, and it's good that someone has taken more of a public stance in trying to save the technology. However, if Apple is bent on...I don't think Planet Computing has \$50 million in their pockets.

NR: Maybe Microsoft does(chuckle),..

Adam: Well, Microsoft is with Windows CE, that's their strategy, (Microsoft) is not going to buy the Newton, and so with 3Com, they are not going to buy the Newton, because that is not within their strategy. So, Planet Computing, that's definitely admirable, but \$50 million is \$50 million dollars, and I don't think they can raise that amount of money. I don't speak for Planet, but I don't think they would want to license the technology, I think anyone who wants the Newton is going to want to buy it outright.

NR: In what ways have you been surprised by Apple's decisionmaking and in what ways has your relationship with Apple changed...

Adam: As a developer or a user...

NR: Well we could take it from either one or both.

Adam: We can take it from both. As a developer, I didn't work with Apple as closely as with other developers, so you should probably talk with either people in the vertical market space who have more dealings with Apple because Newton was moving more towards a vertical market, at one time. Or, you could talk with other developers like Pelicanware or StandAlone. But from my perspective, you send in a request for information(to Apple), and you don't get a satisfactory response. In the past six months, remember that the people who were working in technical support all quit, or were fired, or laid off, or left. So to answer technical questions, there was no one there, I think there is one person there right now, who is fielding questions and sort of tidying things up. But we

had no knowledge of, if Newton was going to die, or not, or if it was going to survive, no official word, no advance warning.

We saw the writing on the wall, nothing there, nothing's happening(laughter), I mean, we were not blind to the fact, to the facts. But I'm still optimistic that something might happen, that maybe they're negotiating with somebody and they couldn't talk about it. But my experience with Apple as a developer has been, well you know, we built basically the platform for you, we were the Newton community, and they didn't necessarily help us out, in the last six months.

NR: Sort of confusing...

Adam: And as a user, in relation to Apple, I use a Mac, I still use Macs, I think Macs are good, and I want to see Apple survive. And I realize, if you read the Maccentral article, they're there to make to make tough business decisions, and if Newton wasn't part of that business decision, then fine, ok. Discontinue development. That doesn't mean don't sell it to someone else. I think I wrote in it that you know by discontinuing it, Apple admits passively that they couldn't make it successful. But it doesn't entail that Newton can't be made successful.

NR: And you touched upon some attempt to make a showing at the shareholders meeting, to possibly lobby some support from Apple shareholders. I read in your post to the Newtontalk mailing list, that of how you were having difficulty in obtaining a list of shareholders to contact.

Adam: Well, the list is publicly available but you have to get that list from Apple, and you might have to pay for that list. Plus, there are FCC laws that prohibit someone from using it as a mailing list, from what I'm aware of, so any type of effort to do something at the Apple shareholders meeting would be more of a grassroots campaign.

NR: And where does it stand now, if I may ask(laughter)?

Adam: We're definitely moving ahead, ok, towards doing something at the shareholders meeting. We're not going to protest! I don't know, I can't speak for the other people who will be there. There are definitely going to be questions raised from the community, the Apple shareholders/Newton community, about its' demise. I'm not going to bring a picket or anything like that, and shout "Rah, rah, rah!"

NR: From your perspective, what type of technology do you view as hot, where do you think we are going?

Adam: In handhelds? Look at this, seven years ago we had GEO, and a few other things that were around. And five years ago, Newton was introduced, and it introduced a new, it ushered in the PDA thing, and it was ok, it kind of worked. But Newton got better, and then Pilot came, and we all know how Pilot is successful today, and Windows CE is coming, so it's clear that handhelds are coming into fashion. So where do I see the technology going? It's going to get smaller, more advanced until these things are a part of...

NR: But I don't even view the Pilot as being a computer.

Adam: It's a little, like a pager! It carries your names and dates and people's addresses with you. Well, Palm originally positioned the Pilot as something like "the window(or gateway) to your computer." I don't know if they still use that term anymore. And if you look at the literature for handheld PC's, they say things like, (reading from product literature)"Nino keeps you up-to-date when you are on the go. The Nino is what you take when you leave your desktop behind." So everywhere you go you can check your messages and things like that. But for the handhelds like the Phillips 500, they basically say that it's like your handheld PC in the palm of your hand. So, we're going to see handhelds, we're going to see computers, whether it's the network computer or anything become more like appliances. They are going to be more of general purpose tools used by the general populace, I think. I don't know what it's like in Boston, but in Silicon valley, technology is everywhere, everyone has a Pilot, cellphone, pager, whatever. You go out to the boondocks, you're not going to see these things, people are going to look at you like you're from Star Trek. Maybe we're in a glass house, but I do see this stuff becoming more and more accepted by the public, and this technology becoming more innovative. Look at smartcards, they're coming in fashion. Pre-paid phone cards? People are starting to market those, they weren't anywhere in large quantity years ago, but they are here, I don't know if we're going to get to Bill Gates version of the electronic wallet, but we're going to get around to something like that.

NR: Getting back to more about you, what's the one accomplishment you can give yourself in your Newton development, one success that you'd like to be recognized for?

Adam: One success? Well, that's a big question, and I don't know if I'm in a position to reflect on what's happened, but off the top of my head, I'd say that...The Newton community was very small, right? Do you have a Newton yourself?

NR: Oh, yes, an OMP, an MP2000 and an MP2100.

Adam: Ok, that's good. You have a 2000 and a 2100?

NR: Right(chuckle). I can't help it...

Adam: Then you've been around for awhile. Did you get the OMP from the beginning?

NR: No, unfortunately, I remember wanting it when it came out, but I got the OMP recently.

Adam: Ok. The Newton to me is fairly small compared to other computing platforms, but as you've seen, it's pretty tight. It's tight between the developers, because one knows everyone else, or at least they know of them, and have talked to them in the past. The user community is, I wouldn't say it's fanatical, but it's a very devoted following. And I guess the thing that I am most proud about is that I was part of this community in the time that it was around, and still will be around, and I'll be able to contribute some things for the community, that, that, laid some kind of foundation for it. And you can cite specific examples. The protest was kind of interesting, kind of about...(silence).

NR: Do you have any memorable moments to share, do you have one eureka moment in your development that made it worthwhile, that you may come back to for inspiration?

Adam: When I first started out, I was just a user. I went to my first Newton User Group meeting, the Stanford User Group meeting, which was one of the first user group meeting of anything related to the Newton. I went to the second user meeting that they had. And Flash Sheridan was there, Glen Raphael was there, he wrote NewtPaint. Flash, everyone knows who Flash is, and a few other people. And they were programmers and they talked about programming, and I didn't know what the heck they were saying. So I didn't come back for two years, ok? And in those two years I learned how to program for the Newton, and I got my second wind. Then, talking to Flash, I was saying, I was just a student still, and I said(to myself) "Huh! Maybe I see Ben(Gottlieb) and Hardy(Marcia) making some money out of this, and maybe I can do this too." But I wasn't anywhere near them, but I worked hard at it, and I set some goals for myself, and a timeframe in which to achieve them, and in the next year and a half, two years, I was able to get to the level of notoriety and success that, partial success, that they experienced, Ben and Hardy. So, if there's anything to come out of my Newton experience is that, like with anyone, if you set goals, have a plan of action, and you work the plan, you can achieve the goal within the timeframe, if you work slowly but surely, you know, with your eyes focused on the goal of what you need to do to get there. Rather than saying I wish I could do this, and I wish I could do this, without really knowing how to get there.

NR: Well if there is one thing that you wish you could do differently if you had the opportunity...

Adam: Well, I wish I could have started a little earlier(laughter).I started a little slowly, obviously I had school to concentrate on, and this isn't a regret, I wouldn't have done this differently, but around the time that Newton 2.0 came out, which is when Newton started to gain some steam, I was in Paris, for 5 months, so when I came back I was sort of behind the ball. So, the timing, it was good, because I came back renewed, I had this great experience, and I got started on taking things a little more seriously. So, no, I don't think there's anything I would do differently.

NR: Do you have any experiences to share at working with another developer?

Adam: Well, the development community is pretty open, I guess, not from the point of donating my source code to my programs kind-of-thing, but very open to helping each other learn and grow in NewtonScript/ Newton programming. And that's, you don't really see that that often in other communities. The Pilot community is pretty good at that. There's a lot of stuff publicly available, and there are people to answer questions. I don't think no one there is at the level of Newton developers. So in terms of experiences, the experiences I've had with those developers has been great.

NR: The NDA basically arose out of the rally, or your sense of...

Adam: We've been mulling over it for the past few months. It was actually officially formed at the MacWorld '98 convention in January. It was loosely termed "The Forth Annual Newton Technology Conference," because there were developers there. The last developer's conference was in '96, I think, when they pre-announced the 2000 and the eMate. That was the last official developers conference. So we kind of formed it there as a way to try to get Apple to be a resource for Newton developers, to get information, information that Apple didn't provide, and to try to be the bridge between the community and the corporation. It(the NDA) came out publicly after Apple did it's thing.

NR: What do we have to look forward to in terms of Foundation Systems and with the NDA?

Adam: I made a commitment to the Newton community to continue to support my products, I still use the Newton, for me the Newton works. I use it in my business, in my personal life, it's the thing to use. So I'm going to continue to support my products as are most other Newton developers in supporting their products. I do have products on the backburner I want to finish, that I want to complete, so people can expect some new stuff coming out from me.

Now, how(this will unfold), I don't know. I also have to think about the future direction of the business. And that might mean a switch to Pilot, I have two of them, that Palm Computing has been recruiting certain Newton developers to develop for the Pilot.

NR: Don't tell me they gave you one(chuckle).

Adam: They did! I just bought one, also. And they're neat, I've been using one for a while now, they're neat, and they're getting better, definitely. So Pilot may be the way to go next or maybe Windows CE, Windows definitely is going to have a large market in the future, so that's definitely a possibility. Or, I could just get out of the handheld market all together, with the exception of Foundation Systems, as in not moving to another platform, and in trying something different, completely different, I mean, I'm open to new things.

NR: I noticed on your website that you do a lot of graphic design...

Adam: Yes, I can focus on that or I can start something new, I don't like to be pigeon-holed into something. In whatever I do, I want to have a passion for doing it, because if I can't get excited about something, I can't do it. Some people might say, "you're too picky." Well, I say, I'm going to enjoy what I'm doing so I better choose something I enjoy doing, and to do something I don't want to do compromises who I am, I guess, and I don't want to do it.

NR: Do you see yourself working on Apple's new product, the "MacMate" or whatever it becomes?

Adam: No.

NR: Because, of Apple?

Adam: No, I just don't think it's...Well, if it's a MacOS-based product, it's very limited in what it can do, it won't be as fun, I guess. Apple has publicly stated that in 1999 that they are going to release a MacOS-based affordable computer as pioneered by the eMate. That's their quote. All that can mean is a Powerbook that's under \$1,000 that's in an eMate case, and if that's the case, it's just a Mac, right? The Newton was new, the Newton was different. It was a sign of what was going to happen in not just handheld computers but in computing in general, I think.

NR: Maybe they'll bring it back like Coca-Cola, ala Newton Classic...

Adam: (laughter)I don't think so....I don't see myself as developing for the Mac with Mac programs. I don't see myself as developing for this MacOS-based pda. Although some developers are. But I think most Newton developers aren't,

because they are so pissed off with Apple, that they don't even want to touch them again.

NR: Is there a Newton product that you would like to see realized?

Adam: A Newton product?

NR: Hardware or software...

Adam: Good question. Not really, no, not other than things I am working on. I'd like to get to....a lot of users are running into the "10061" error.

NR: As I have, too.

Adam: So, I actually admit I haven't run into that until I started loading other people's programs. But, that would be nice to get resolved. So, if Apple could somehow, if we can encourage Apple to do something about it that would be good, although....don't hold your breath on it.

NR: Ok. We basically talked about how the Newton has contributed towards creating a pda culture.

Adam: Ok, what I would like to see in the future, if Newton does die, is, I want to see the history books set straight that the Newton was a far, forward thinking technology that didn't survive, that it wasn't the little scribbly pad that it was five years ago, as an OMP or MP100. That it could do things that it couldn't do five years ago and that it was a good product and that the reason for it dying or getting killed were not because the product was poor, but because of more mismanagement or personal vendettas and things like that.

NR: One thing I'd like to see end is the misconception of the handwriting recognition. That needs to end.

Adam: Right. Well I mean, who knows, who knows what might happen in the future, about what we can do to get that out into the public knowledge. I think it's possible....

NR: I do too!

Adam: Very possible!

NR: I'd like to give you the opportunity now to share with me anything you'd like to share with us that we haven't covered, any seminal points or message you'd like to leave us with?

Adam: Let's see....Ok, well you know you don't have to print this if you don't want too, if you think it's too weird, ok...But, how long have you been a journalist or a writer, is this what you do...

**"...with the Newton,
we couldn't really
control it's future...
Apple held the cards..."**

NR: Actually, I work on documentaries produced for PBS, I work on a series called "The Visionaries," in its' fifth season, and also we're starting an oceanography series for Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. So I basically have about thirteen years of documentary, film and broadcast experience...

Adam: You should do a documentary on the Newton!

NR: I want to! If there's any way, I mean I have the resources available to if the opportunity exists...

Adam: What is "The Visionaries"? Is it visionaries in technology or visionaries, period?

NR: Visionaries, period! "The Visionaries"(<http://www.visionaries.org>) is about non-profit organizations that have contributed towards being unique in what they do as far as philanthropy or human service, creating a better world. It's sort of a good version of "Cops," it's good television. If you have a PBS station near you, the fifth season is starting soon, so...

Adam: Ok, so to answer your question, and I guess this is sort of off-the-wall but with the Newton, a lot of the people, the developers, and also the users were able to rally behind a technology that they believed in, ok? And in the case of the developers, they started out at ground zero, most of them, some of them came in a little later, like myself, and we created something from basically nothing, I guess. And the users who believed in the product, did so, even in the

face of public ridicule, the public ridicule inside the market, marketplace rejection, you know, all that fun stuff. Are you following me?

NR: I'm listening. And writing!

Adam: And we knew it was a good product. And we believed in it, despite all the negative stuff that was surrounding us. And it's unfortunate that, come April 22nd, if nothing happens at the Apple shareholder meeting, and if nothing happens, and it really is, the long-term future of the Newton is dead...we'll just look back on it as great technology and stuff like that. But, with the Newton, we couldn't really control it's future....Apple held the cards, right? Or Steve Jobs held the cards. But that doesn't necessarily mean that our own futures can be, or are controlled by other people, and that kind of thing. Are you following me?

NR: Oh yes. Excellent observation!

Adam: I'm kind of moving on to, kind of what you do, in documentaries(laughter). So this is going to seem like off-the-wall stuff.

NR: No problem.

Adam: A lot of times we as individuals give into the pressures from the outside. We, we're ridiculed for doing something in a particular way, or we're engaged in some kind of thing that is not looked upon as being good. It might not be, I'm not thinking about immoral stuff or unethical stuff, ok, but as a general consensus thing we might be doing something that is not looked upon as good for the rest of the community. But it's good, because we believe in it. OK?

NR: Right...

Adam: And so what I am trying to say is people should do what they believe in, and have a passion for, and not follow the herd mentality, and if they did that, not only will they reach success in whatever they are doing, because they are driven by their goal. And they are driven by their passions. Not only will you be successful in those things, but they will lead more, they will do it on their terms, and their lives will be more fulfilled.

NR: Thank you, Adam. I only hope that more people make the attempt, at least.

Adam: Yes, more people should! Hey, if you subscribe in the belief that we're only here for one chance, one shot in this world, enjoy it, do it, work towards what you want, and not towards what other people tell you to.

NR: Well, as Apple advertises, here's to the crazy ones!

Adam: The interesting thing is, can one person(or company) make a difference, in the greater scheme of things, and, I think that one person can make a difference with the help of other people who do the same thing. And we kind of saw that come together in our Newton gathering/rally/protest, call it what you will, right after the announcement, but everyone came together for this one thing, you know, to show their support, or whatever, for the Newton. And, if we can do it with that, we can do it with other things, and make a difference, in the lives of the Newton community, and in our lives.

Adam, thank you for joining us.

If you would like to respond to this article, please send an email to dan@bigfat.com.



Mini Laptop Scene

In Search of the Holy Grail

by Andy Spiegel (aspiegel@earthlink.net)

I earn my living writing, and I do a lot of it on the road. Never bought a laptop, though, because, for my taste, even the lightest of them are too heavy and bulky. And too expensive.

PDA's? Way too wee for serious writing.

So what, then, is my personal holy grail of mobile computing?

It's the smallest machine possible with a screen and keyboard you can actually use. Lightweight but not flimsy. Powerful enough to run the word processing and communications software I need, and with a big hard drive to store it. Plenty of periph-ability. A price that doesn't rival the national debt. And of course, the kind of cool look that make me want to keep taking it out just to gaze at it! Not to mention preen before jealous friends.

In other words . . . the Libretto.

At least that's what I thought for the month I owned it.

What I liked best about my 50CT was its portability and styling. Far smaller than a laptop but slightly bigger, and featured-packed enough more than a PDA, to look and run like a real computer.

But alas, I learned, not enough of a computer. Turned out the keyboard really wasn't big enough for the kind of writing I do. Having access to only one PC slot was a huge handicap (I dreaded having to attach the port replicator every time I wanted to use some of my peripherals). As for battery life--well, white flies hang in longer.

So there I was with an \$1800 investment (that included a wireless modem, card, CD-ROM drive and a case), and pretty much back where I

started: nothing to road-write on. I still liked my Libretto, I just didn't love it anymore.

And then I spotted Hitachi's VisionBook Traveler. WHAMMO! This, I had to make my own.

Don't ask how much I lost selling the Libretto (and before that, my Newton 2100), or how much I paid for the Traveler. Suffice to say I could have bought a couple of Dell desktops. Ah, but let me tell you what a neat little machine I got.

This is nothing less than a full-featured computer, though only the size and weight of the latest Grisham hardback. Sure, the keyboard is small, but absolutely serviceable. Runs Windows 95 on a 133 Mhz Pentium and 24 mb ram, and within its sturdy plastic case holds a gig-sized hard drive. Three PC slots, plus all the ports you'd find on a desktop. Beautiful color on a decent-sized screen. And battery life more than twice the Libretto's.

Does it pass the "Cool Test"? Well, I have to wear a sweater whenever I look at it!

So now I've had my Hitachi for two weeks and the love affair rages on. But here's the Big Question: have I truly found the holy grail of portable computing?

Absolutely.

Well . . . until I spot a holier one.



The Psioneer Life!

Stefan Smith (stef@psionworld.net)
<http://www.5alive.ndirect.co.uk/>

Since this is the first issue of Pocket Computing Magazine (PCM) it is only polite to go through the formalities of an introduction. So, welcome to "The Psioneer Life". Having offered to host a regular commentary in this magazine, I had the arduous task of deciding what such a column would feature. In the end I thought it more appropriate not to limit the scope of any subject matters discussed. To this end, "The Psioneer Life" will peek into various events in the Psion World as and when they happen. However, it would be fair to qualify that this column will be primarily of interest to those who own either a Series 5 or Geofox One.

Where we are now?

Despite a rather less than commendable start to life, the Series 5 is now proving itself to being a worthy adversary in the PDA market. For those of us

who upgraded from the Series 3x, the sketchy beginnings of the S5 were very much out of character for Psion. After all, the Series 3 dominated the handheld market for so long and Psion were the market leaders. However, the last year or so has seen a huge increase in handheld and PDA development. It's a growing business and Psion have had no choice but to stand aside and make room for other competitors. The Series 5 is only now beginning to settle down.

Software Development

For the vast majority of Psion owners, trawling the Internet is a task repeated with regularity in search of the very latest software. After all, the bells and whistles of hardware are long forgotten when you have little or no software to run. Fortunately, the Psion scene has always generated interest from enthusiasts with sufficient programming knowledge to bring us quality freeware and shareware. It would certainly be fair to say that the 3x would never have been so successful if it were not for the thousands of shareware titles developed over the years.

The release of Epoc32 has attracted a similar amount of enthusiasm. There is now a huge base of software already developed with many other packages in the pipeline. Unfortunately, other PDA platforms have seen a greater input from software houses. Their ability to throw greater number of resources into software development is beginning to highlight deficiencies in the current crop of Psion applications. Lets face it, your 8Mb RISC processor, all singing all dancing machine, cannot send files as attachments with email messages!!!

Fortunately, there is a glimmer of hope. Take for example, RMR Software (<http://www.rmrsoft.com/>). Apart from their increasing range of shareware, they are now producing some of the tools needed by programmers to generate the kind of software sadly missing.

Another boon for Psion owners is the recent formation of Palmscape (<http://www.palmscape.com/>). With a slightly different emphasis to RMR, Palmscape is a coalition of shareware authors. Although many of them have ported existing software titles under the wing of Palmscape, the most exciting aspect of this group will be the forthcoming applications currently in development. A strategic aim of Palmscape is to collaborate on new projects. This collaboration brings together the skills and abilities of the various team members making it much more comparable to a dedicated software house.

If there's a good reason to visit the Palmscape web site, it should be to check out their Wish List area. This is the Psion users chance to suggest the type of software that they would like to see developed.

Lastly, but by no means least, are the recent crop of titles announced by various software firms. Pelican Software (<http://www.pelicansoft.com/>) have already announced public beta testing of their LogIt application, a time and

billing system that will be sold commercially.

Atelier, (<http://www.atelier-fr.com/>) another new firm to join the Psion scene, has also announced the release of Essential Disk Utilities, the Norton Utilities for the Psion.



And finally, there's PurpleSoft (<http://www.purplesoft.com/>) who have been supporting the Eposc platform for many years now. Their most recent addition has been Navigator.

Navigator

Navigator is an interesting application. It introduces a Windows 95 style work area to your Palmtop with some additional features thrown in as well. It has been designed from the outset to replace the familiar Eposc32 interface. A very brave move!

The program gives you the equivalent Windows 95 desktop, minus the Start button. You can drag and drop shortcuts to applications, drives, files, folders and so on. In addition, you can navigate your way around your Series 5 (or Geofox One) with multiple windows that have a very similar look and feel of Windows. There's no doubt that PurpleSoft have achieved what they intended to – a complete alternative to the Eposc32 interface.

Thrown in are a couple of extra features, such as the ability to ZIP and UNZIP files, as well as an advanced search facility. The ZIP compression is the best implementation to date that I have seen on the Series 5. The speed is impressive and the program is worth buying for this aspect alone. The search facility is also well implemented and very quick. A nice touch is the ability to search within ZIP archives.

Admittedly, I am a Navigator convert and would recommend everyone try it. This achieves software title of the month!

Coming Soon

This month's column has been very much a general introduction. In future months I will endeavour to bring more news and events from the Psion World, as well as exploring some of the wider issues likely to effect the PDA scene.

Until then....

Stefan Smith
stef@psionworld.net

Stefan Smith is webmaster of 5 Alive, a dedicated Epoc32 Web Site featuring a daily-generated news page and on-line journal with reviews and articles. To keep up-to-date with events in the Psion world, you can visit 5 Alive at: <http://www.5alive.ndirect.co.uk/>

PALM PC UNDERGROUND


www.palmpc-underground.com

By: Nathan L. Miller, President, Palm PC Underground

Palm PC's: What's To Come

Mobile computing is reforming the ways people get connected, stay organized, and conduct business. It is one of the fastest moving industries, where technology is continuously changing and improving. Within the next few months a much-anticipated technology, driven by Microsoft, and utilizing the latest Windows CE Version 2.0 Operating System, will invade this industry: It is called the Palm PC.

The current market for PDA's (personal digital assistants), also known as "connected organizers," is clearly dominated by 3Com's PalmPilot. With such a useful, integrated, and especially compact device, we see why more than 1.6 million of these have been distributed to this date. This article is not a review of any specific device, nor is it a detailed comparison/contrast. Rather, let me give you an overview of the new Palm PC/Windows CE 2.0, and answer the fundamental questions posed for what's to come in palm computing.

There are currently seven "announced" Palm PC vendors, who will eventually be providing a device for the platform. As I see it, the "big three" that stand out right now are Everex, Casio, and Philips. In that order, these companies will be the first to manufacture and ship their own unique Palm PC devices to the public.

How will the Palm PC be a successful device? This all depends on the support that the platform gets from developers. The PalmPilot's proprietary operating system gained the support of a significant number of followers upon its release, from which vast amounts of creative software was spawned. This is the kind of stuff that the Palm PC needs. With Microsoft being a developer-friendly corporation, it should be somewhat easy for a company or individual to learn how program Windows CE 2.0.

One of the main reasons for the PalmPilot's success is because of its size and form factor. It was meant for organization, and users who take things down on the fly. Mobile users need something powerful, something portable.

Writing for Pocket Computing

Well, I and several others put a lot of time and effort into getting PCM out each month. We could really use some help.

Generally, I try to review 7 - 10 products a month. and as many Commentary columns as I can get. This is difficult to do when enough people are not contributing so.... I would like to find several people willing to write ONE Review or Commentary item each month and send it to me on time. (without nagging)

Writing Commentary

Are you a lawyer, teacher, health care professional?
Why not write a monthly commentary section?

This section is really open to most anything you would like to do. For example if you are a health care professional, you could discuss trends in Pocket development and the impact it may have on health care. How to use your computer for keeping records, billing, and just about anything else you can think of. Discuss and recommend software (provided you are not the author) and in general comment on anything that suits you.

PCM is read by thousands of people a month. It is free and there is no advertising. The quality of the magazine is largely up to you, the reader.

So, if you are interested in writing commentary, here is what you should do.

1. Write a column, with title, and send it to me.
2. Do this every month. (due date is the 1st of each month)
3. send me a web site url if you have one.

That's it! Not so tough once a month is it?

Thank you very much for your support.
Jerry Fox

Writing Reviews

Step one: Check and see that what you are interested in has not been done recently. Look in the reviews section for this information. (fairly easy at this point as this is issue #1!) I would like to suggest that you write one review each month and email it to me by the 1st of each month. Shareware reviews are fine as are commercial and freeware reviews. In most cases, content and style are up to you. You can look at the reviews in the current issue for style guidelines. Generally though, I do not interfere much in what reviewers write as long as it is in good taste and is fair to the company involved. If questions arise, I will contact you about possibly re-working an item but so far this has not come up much. If you can COMMIT to one review a month, that will be really helpful. Also, as to the "what shall I review", well if you have not seen it reviewed recently, then feel free to do it. If I get two reviews for the same package, I will publish both. Sometimes it's good to get two views of a product. Different angles and all that. Still if you want to avoid this, drop me a line and I will try to work things out. I'd like to have included in the review the following parts

- a. PCM rating 1-5
- b. Publisher name, and email addresses as well as phone info if available.
- c. Type of software. Platform, Shareware (also how much \$\$) Commercial (Ditto \$\$)
- d. Screen Shots if possible (1 or 2) company logo also if possible.
- e. Purpose of the software.
- f. The review itself. Size is not a consideration on the web. Long or short is OK.
- f. Pros and Cons
- g. Bottom line...

Lastly, If you are going to review items each month, send me a short self description with any web pages etc that you have up. I will add the links to PCM. Last note.. Perhaps the a-g outline looks daunting but really I think it should be a few hour or less job each month. Not too much and well appreciated by the Pocket Community. Again thanks a lot for your help. I look forward to receiving your reviews.

Anyone out there good at drawing?

Could really use some art work.

Drop me a line if you can help here!

Thanks!

Copyright Stuff

Everything you see here is copyrighted.

You may read this magazine, make copies of it (as long as you don't change it) and give it to your friends. You may include it on CD collections if you like.

Hey! I'm easy!

You really should:

Ask though before printing any part of this magazine in advertising or in commercial endeavors.

Thanks a lot!

Gerald Fox

geraldfox@aol.com