"PDAs: Destination Librarian - What's In It For Us?"

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When personal digital assistants (PDAs) first burst onto the scene in the early nineties, these hand-held, usually pen-based computers were mainly used for time management. In recent years, much attention has been devoted to their use in clinical settings, at the point of care, and educating users about how information can be accessed. Because of their size, portability, and ability to synchronize with the desktop PC, PDAs are ideal for managing time, accessing knowledge tools, reading documents, generating content, storing files, and monitoring expenses. This presentation explores how librarians can integrate the use of PDA technology into their work environments to make more efficient use of their time and resources.

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Managing Time

The PDA time management system includes the *Date Book* and the *To Do List* which allows users to:

- Schedule events (meetings, desk shifts, etc.) on the fly without having to be at the desktop

- View To Do List (tasks) in conjunction with scheduled activities on the calendar

- Prioritize time to accomplish needed tasks

- Enter data once and then sync information between desktop electronic system and the PDA, using software like Easy Sync

Manage your time while at MLA Annual Meetings
MLA Itinerary Builder
Allows you to download meeting sessions and events to easily plan your time while in the host city

http://www.mclibrary.duke.edu/dukemla02/pdalib.pdf

Accessing Knowledge Tools

Any information resource that is helpful in the user's environment can be deemed a *Knowledge Tool*.

Traveling "Tools of the Trade"

- Addresses and telephone numbers via the *Address Book*
- NLM classification scheme
- Local classification schemes (i.e. for reference collection)
- Medical terminology
- Answers to frequently asked questions
- Library policies and procedures
- Library-created databases (i.e. reference collection inventory)
- Bibliographic databases (*Ovid@Hand, PubMed Clinical Query*)
- Teaching tools (*5-Minute Clinical Consult, ePocrates*)

Centralized and readily-accessible *Knowledge Tools* can be used to:

- Augment new employee orientation
- Employ the "teachable moment," anywhere and at anytime

Areas to Explore

- Downloadable tables of contents for journals related to Library and Information Sciences

Reading and Storing Documents

The PDA offers the ability to read and store documents in a variety of formats.

Types of Document Readers

- Acrobat Reader - Adobe PDF files
- Documents To Go - Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files
- iSilo – HTML formatted files

Practical Applications for Documents

- Download documents for meetings, etc., avoiding the excessive use of paper
- Review and edit documents "palmside"
- Preserve formatting of documents by retaining original layout and font styles (i.e. **bold**, *italics*, underline)
- Capture Web documents
- Keep résumé accessible to "beam" to other users
- Transport PowerPoint presentations
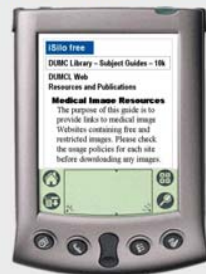
Generating Content

The PDA enables users to generate original information in a number of formats, such as text documents or fields of content (databases).

Input Methods

- Desktop computer
- PDA stylus
- Portable keyboard accessory

Content Creation Programs

- Documents To Go
- Memo Pad
- Mobile DB-PC
- HanDBase

Practical Applications

- Take notes at meetings - additional information can be incorporated into these notes (copied and pasted) from pre-existing sources already on the palm
- Create and/or edit documents on the spot eliminating the need to retype information later
- Use it to manage a collection of resources. For example, creating a "mobile reference inventory" permits easy retrieval and updating of records.

Monitoring Expenses

PDA *Expense* allows users to record and manage expenses.

$ Categorize Expenses

$ Track by Date, Category, and Dollar Amount

$ Add Receipt Details or Notes