

:: Desperately PDA Seeking: For a daily PDA of Choice ::

Written by [Henry Kong](#), on March 29th 2001

What a great time to be alive for the PDAer! We are spoilt for choice in the endless array of new offerings. Yet the ideal daily PDA of choice looms somewhere in the uncertain future like the unattainable Shangri La of sorts.

The ideal daily PDA of choice should have the form factor of a Palm V/m505. Anything more bulky is intolerable. It should have CF expandibility. 8mb swoping will just not do. While colour and speed would be nice, it ranks way below these two essentials.



In my mind, there is no doubt that iPAQ is THE best PDA in the market. It stands head and shoulder above all others in speed, quality and display. The upcoming 64mb version will push the ante even higher. There seem to be more software running for the Ipaq than any PPC, especially in the gaming arena which I am very interested.

As good as the Ipaq is, and as slim as it is (compared to other PPCs), the naked Ipaq (with or without an iLid) produces

a more than noticeable bulge on my shirt pocket. No, it won't pull your pants down, but it ain't no Palm V either. I have been using GM's fabulous Silver Slider with my 192mb CF at home and the church, and just the naked Ipaq (with iLid), when out visiting, dinner etc. This has worked for a while but I do long for my CF on the road where I can refer to more stuff (like Bible commentary, dictionary etc) which I must delege to the CF.

Lately, I started looking again, especially after a spate of new PPCs and Palms have hit the streets. On the form factor alone, I studied the Palms, but realised that I would never be able to go back to just 8mb, especially since none of them have the albilty to run programs from their MMCs or plug-in modules.

At the Palm OS...

Handspring's Visor Edge is very nice and professional-looking. However, with the plug-in on the back, it is as unslightly as an Ipaq with its CF expansion (even a nice one like the Silver Slider).



The Palm m505 is a foxy-looking PDA in its form factor. The colours are extremely good, a big leap over the Palm IIIc that I used to own. However, besides the pretty face, there is nothing ground-breaking except for the tiny MMC slot. At present, all you can do is to swop programs with it.

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The best bet in the new Palms in my humble opinion is Sony's new Clie PEG-N700C. While maintaining the Palm V form-factor and Palm m505 colour, it comes with 320x320 screen as well as integrated DSP (Digital Signal Processor). If I am a Palm user with no ambitions to upgrade to a PPC, this would certainly be my daily PDA of choice.

Meanwhile, back at the Ranch...

Looking around at the PPC, we see the promising and cheaper HP Jornada 525. If this was released just 6 months ago, I predict that there would be a backorder even longer than the Ipaqs. Early reports say that it looks as good as any Jornada 5xx series and even appears to be a tad faster. Since I have sold my Jornada, because it is too bulky and heavy for my shirt pocket, there is no way I am going back. And yes, it DOES pull down your pants.

At the 206 MHz arena, there are two newbies. First, there is the much-ado-over-nothing Palmax @migo. I have been keeping in touch with discussion board participants at the Brighthand Palmax discussions. So far, none of them have convinced me that the @migo is a quality product nor bug free. In fact my ears are still burning from the whines and cries of those who rushed in where angels feared to tread. The only advantage that @migo has over Ipaq is that you can carry the CF without the need of bulky expansion paks. It is still as large and heavy as any Cassiopedia. I have handled a Palmax pd 131, and the @migo has a similar form factor.



The other alternative is the 206 mhz Intermec p 70. Although I cannot find any information at the official Intermec site, MobilePlanet has listed the product (which may not even be available). Although it is very expensive, especially for a black and white PDA, I kind of suspect that the form factor would be like Compaq's Aero, only half an inch in thickness. I can only guess as MobilePlanet has not answered my queries and Steve has yet to post his promised review (hint, hint). I was tempted to go ahead and order the unit, but on second thoughts paying a premium price on a pig-in-a-poke may be the second biggest mistake in my life.

As I was quite content with my Ipaq, I was in no hurry to purchase anything. The new array of Palms did stirred up wistful thoughts of how I used to carry a Palm V and Sony Clie 300 smugly in my shirt pocket. My preference at that time was to wait for further confirmation of the thickness of the Intermec p 70 (.5 inch?) and the product availability. I had the unhappy experienced of purchasing a

Palmax pd 7m from an internet vendor based in UK. Since they were offering a discount on that item, I was certain that they must have it in stock. Instead, I was later informed that the product wasn't even shipping.

I spent two weeks scouting the computer malls in Singapore and reading what I can on Compaq's new PPC Aero 1550. The form factor was fine and the CF slot even better (overcoming the miserable 16mb RAM). My only reservations was the 70 mhz speed and the black and white display. But for a \$300 price tag, I feel less guilty to take the plunge and realised that I would be having a lot of fun and won't lose out too much even if I decided to sell it off later. So there I was, in two minds, ping-ponging between the Intermec p 70 and Aero 1550. Price, after all should never be brought into consideration.





What tilted me over the edge in favour of the Aero was the posting of a MIPs Atari 2600 emulator at PocketGamer.org. As an emulator zealot, I realised that even at 70 mhz (hey, that's twice the speed of any Palm), the emulator of this puny console should run to speed, and so will ComeBack, the C64 emulator. Checking back at BrightHand's discussion Board and looking at "What's in my Aero", I realised that there are lots more that works at that speed.

Yesterday evening I posted a "Wanted to Buy an Aero" on BrightHand's Aero Discussion Board before the evening worship. By the time I got home from church, David Fuller had offered to sell me one 'in excellent condition'. I palpayed him, and called it a day. The next morning, David emailed to say that he will send it by USPS airmail to Singapore (4-5 days) tomorrow. It was when I sat down and whipped out this writeup.

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