

The Perfect Pocket PDA: Best of The Bests!

If you have been blandly deceived into reading this article, congratulations, we have achieved our objective! You and I are fully aware that there is no perfect Pocket PC... but if you will indulge me, I will share with you three of the best - Cassiopedia, Jornada and Ipaq.

I will use my personal judgement on critical areas as I line them side by side for a shootout. You may award points in areas that are important to you (1 for worst, 2 for in-between and 3 for best, then average or add 'em up) to help you decide on the next buy.



- 1. Speed:** Ipaq is the clear winner here with Jornada as the slowest. I must say that for most applications, even the slowest does a fair job. However if you are into emulation like Pocket NeoGeo and MAME, speed is needed especially if sound is implemented.
- 2. Display:** the winner here is Cassiopedia and the Jornada takes the last place with the only ppc sporting a non-TFT screen with 12-bit colour. It is almost impossible to read it outdoors. Ipaq seems to be hazy, but the Cassiopedia is bright and clear.



3. Casing: Jornada has the heaviest, and IMHO best casing of all. The Cassiopedia is not too bad, has a great metal feel which is very good for playing games (especially with the jog-button). Ipaq is the worst with plastic casing and sticky joy-button that is a pain to use.

4. Expandibility: All three Pocket PCs handles type-I Compact Flash without any problems. For the Cassiopedia range, the EM 500 accepts the future standard of mircomedia cards, but are limited up to 64mb at this time. Ipaq, like Casiopedia 125 accepts both type I and II of Compact Flash devices. Although all are designed to take in all kinds of add-ons, Ipaq's (love it or hate it) sliders may lead the way.



5. Footprint: IMHO the Cassiopedia EM 500 feels best on the palm. Ipaq is the smallest and lightest of the lot, but with an expansion pack (which is essential if you want to use more than just 32mb), even with George's scaled down slider, it is quite a handful. My personal preference is Jornada as it comes with a flip lid, making an additional case unnecessary.

6. What you see is what you get: The Jornada is best packed and opening the box is like receiving a Christmas present. Everything is included from CDs to Manuals to an extra travel charger. The others are minimal at best.

There are many more areas of comparison, but suffice it is to say that even with poor screen, colour and speed, IMHO the Jornada is the best PDA for serious work. On the gaming side, the other two are excellent, depending if you want speed (Ipaq) or gameplay (Cassiopedia). BTW, Ipaq is coming out with a patch, but the press-one-button-at-a-time feature will not be resolved.