

PDA's

Despite the digital revolution that rages through fiber-optic lines and wireless wizardry, you still consider yourself a maven of old-school organization. Appointments get jotted on the back of receipts. Business cards go in pockets that go through the washer, and phone numbers get scribbled upon napkins.

If this sounds painfully familiar, perhaps it's time to — gulp — move the lunches, contacts schedules and other such assorted necessities to the little computers called personal digital assistants.

Before you go plunking down more of the cash that isn't in your wallet, though, let *Golfdom* take you on a crash course in getting organized with a stylus and a hand-held electronic device.

Operating systems — There are but two: the Palm and Windows Pocket PC. Those accustomed to using Windows at work will find the mini-Windows that comes on PDAs to be familiar. The Palm system, though, is just as simple and is compatible with darn near every operating system out there. One of the more popular PDAs now is the HP Ipaq (\$299-\$399), which uses a Windows operating system. The Ipaq is easy-to-use and has a color screen. So does the midline Palm Tungsten (\$299-\$399). Neither operating system really dominates the

IT'S TIME TO MOVE ALL
YOUR IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM
PAPER TO THE LATEST IN PDA TECHNOLOGY

BY MARK LUCE

other, so this choice becomes a matter of personal preference.

Memory — Increasingly, PDAs are loaded with things like built-in digital cameras, bigger screens, music players and the ability to play short videos. But each of these type of extras takes up serious memory. Something like the Palm Zire (\$99) comes with only 2 MB of memory, while the high-end Sony Clié (Model Peg NX80V \$599) crams 32MB into its slim package. So what does that mean? Well, the Zire would be the perfect basic model for someone who only needs to keep addresses and a calendar, while the Clié can do everything the Zire does as well as serving as a giant jukebox, a camera, and a video arcade.

Hot Sync and Bluetooth — Although these names sound like the latest prepackaged boy bands, they are actually the thing that enable communication between your PDA and your everyday computer. Keeping the two in tandem, obviously, has its advantages. The Bluetooth lets you do this without

wires — as long as your computer is enabled to handle it. Is there a difference? Sure, Bluetooth is vastly more secret-agent cool than the other one, but they both get the job done.

Extras — For a picture of excess, check out the Samsung I500 Wireless (\$599). It's a cellular phone and Palm PDA in a compact package. In addition to all the things a normal PDA will do, this crazy phone can send and receive e-mails, have sports scores delivered and allow you surf the 'Net. Of course, a monthly fee will apply.

There exists an insane amount of software for these gizmos. There are also a tremendous amount of accessories. Remember, none of these bells and whistles are truly necessary, but having a reliable way to keep yourself from forgetting a budget meeting — or, more importantly, your anniversary — is certainly worth one crisp Ben Franklin.

Mark Luce, a free-lance writer based in Lawrence, Kan., had his second anniversary last month — and he didn't miss it.



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