

Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) Constituent Group
Minutes of Meeting
EDUCAUSE 2001
Tuesday, October 30, 12:45 p.m. — Indianapolis
Leader: Linda Deneen, University of Minnesota, Duluth

This meeting drew a great crowd with an interesting and engaging discussion. Sixty-four people signed attendance sheets. All are encouraged to join the group's listserv at

<http://www.educause.edu/memdir/cg/cg.html>.

Also, you might want to check out the Educause Evolving Technology Committee reports at

<http://www.educause.edu/etcom/>

Outline for discussion

1. Introductions: name, title, institution, institution size, brief description of institutional use of PDAs

We did this for awhile, but there were way too many people to have everyone answer this question. So in the end we asked just for people to speak who are actually using PDAs on their campuses. Examples:

University of Iowa - business pilot, medicine for pharmacy info,
central IT for support

Carnegie Mellon - Project Handheld Andrew

Stanford - School of Medicine - access for 3/4 of students

U of South Dakota - all freshmen students (1000)

Valparaiso U - beginning testing

IBM

Ottawa U - beginning testing

Case Western Reserve

U of Oklahoma Health Sciences - concerned about patient data

Idaho State U

Shenandoah U - exploring, have standards

Western Illinois U

West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine - developing clinical
applications

US Air Force Academy

Macon State College

DeMoines Area Community College - all students have an iPAQ with
wireless, tech camps, all curriculum, IP telephony, using iPAQs as
phones

Arkansas Tech U - School of Education, teacher observations

Case Western Reserve School of Medicine - students have laptops but
also use PDAs

Cedarville U - professor doing speech evaluation

U of Louisville - third year med students, considering dental, nursing
U of Minnesota Duluth - 250 freshmen students in computer science and
engineering, next year all freshmen in College of Science and
Engineering, wireless

2. Uses in higher ed institutions: expand on the introductory descriptions to generate a list of applications at our institutions. How do these tools go beyond the basic organizer features?

online information resources
ebooks
ejournals
reading list via Avantgo
programming
databases for observations
push info through calendar application

3. PDAs and wireless communications: what wireless communications are used or planned at your institution for PDAs? Any recommendations? Cautions?

802.11b
hot sync through cradles
beaming stations (Clarinet)
Bluetooth not yet available

What are we using for security/authentication?

VPN for encryption
educate users about insecurities
network-based authentication prevents access without password

How did institutions make the choice of platforms? What factors impacted the decision?

cost
applications the PDA would run
Microsoft compatibility
wireless enabled
warranty

4. PDA support issues: what has been the impact on support staff? What applications are most problematic to support? Any lessons learned?

Support demands are rising fast.
Lack of standards is a problem.
Strategy: buy PDAs for IT staff, then ask them to support.
Strategy: president required IT staff to support them.

Strategy: use students to provide support.
Strategy: preload software for standard load
Strategy: do student training at orientation
Maintenance and repair - on campus or off?

Palm versus iPAQ?

screen resolution better with iPAQ
readability better with Palm
battery life longer with Palm
wireless came with iPAQ, now available for Palm
use of screen real estate, better with whichh?
iPAQ doesn't work with Mac, although new product announced

WebPad versus PDA?

Will the WebPad really take off?

5. Predictions for the future: how will PDAs evolve? Will they merge with cell phones?
Will new functions emerge?

Any ideas for revenue generation?
Police use for writing tickets
Event processing

How to sell the technology?

A champion helps
Bottom-up also works
Cool factor
Organizer
Enjoyable to learn with PDA
One device, light weight
Eliminate text books
SRI International study

Is there anything you can do with a laptop that you CAN'T do with a PDA?

Some applications, like SPSS and SAS, but these might come.

What mail systems are we using?

Exchange
Groupwise
Unix sendmail

Has it improved learning?

Access to information quickly
Mobility
Empower students to be organized (calendar)

Has it hurt learning?

Games and email during class

Cheating

Input interfaces?

keyboards

handwriting

voice recognition?

Material dissemination

calendar

maps

class info

Please feel free to add comments by responding to the listserv.

Nice to meet you all.

Linda

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