

EDUCAUSE 2003
Personal Digital Assistants Constituent Group Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 05, 2003, 12:50pm

Number of Attendees: ~ 47

Facilitators: Linda L. Deneen, University of Minnesota Duluth
Paul Luppino, Tufts University

- I. General administrative tasks at the start of the session included:
- Notice that vendors might be in attendance
 - Request the vendors remain silent unless addressed
 - Outline of the agenda based on the e-mail sent to the PDA listserv
 - Request to fill out attendance sheets
- II. Linda announced that she would be stepping down as facilitator after this session and that Paul would be taking leadership of the group.

Individuals stated their name, institution, and reasons why they were interested in the PDA group. After the introductions, the group spent 15 minutes brainstorming topics for discussion during the remainder of the meeting. Any topics not discussed would be continued on the listserv.

Topics/Questions:

What is a PDA?

Discussion regarding handheld PC vs. PDA. An example about Palm was given indicating that a PDA is a simple organizer and that a handheld has more capabilities. For our purposes, we will consider the term PDA to mean both types of equipment.

Myth that a PDA will make you organized

It can be a tool to help you organize or stay on track. General uses were discussed with some people leaning more toward the calendar/to do list features. Many talked about the agenda linking system provided by Educause.

OS Security / Support Issues

Several people asked who used virus software. How/if physical security was an issue and if schools are using policies similar to a laptop policy (if they have one) regarding security (HIPAA compliance for health science applications?). Symantec and Trend Micro have virus software available for the PDA.

Questions about support and service level agreements (SLAs) were raised. Ideas about how to support these devices and examples of support tactics including “Train the Trainer” and student staff/interns for the helpdesk, which are in use by some schools were discussed. Several institutions are reluctant to do any official support other than mail/calendar syncs if they support a device at all.

What do we use it for? Value added applications

Possible uses include student assessment/grades, patient tracking, medical reference, audience polling, replacing laptop-projector combinations for PowerPoint presentations, Flash applications, E-book studio, databases, and music recording. GOKNOW.COM was mentioned as a web resource.

Budget/Cost – who buys them?

A point was raised that the cost of PDAs is going down and most cost less than the cost of a standard textbook. Requiring PDAs for a course may allow the cost of a PDA to be covered by financial aid. GRANTSTREET.COM was mentioned as a web resource.

Research results and their impact on teaching/learning

A time management survey is available from a federal academy represented at this meeting (hopefully that individual will remind the list how to obtain it).

Institutional best practices

General discussion regarding the use of the tools/strategies for best practices included SLAs, licensing software, adding a research clause to user agreements, creating fees for covering PDA support and hardware, ability to do knowledge checking by faculty, field research, GPS, reference material, student assessment and grade viewing, and use with BlackBoard.

Industries using PDAs

Healthcare, airlines, police, sales/marketing

If you wish to clarify an item in the minutes or elaborate further, the listserv is an excellent place to share your thoughts and ideas.