

Personal Digital Assistant: An Information Management Tool for Medical Professionals

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Handheld computing technology, commonly known as Personal Digital Assistant is having a tremendous impact in personal, educational and business settings. The potential is particularly significant for healthcare, specifically in clinical settings. This article explains the basics of personal digital assistant, its features, limitations, applications and advantages of using the technology in medical settings.

1. Introduction

Medical information revolution has attained a new dimension with the emergence of Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) as a tool for the Point Of Care (POC) information management. These powerful handheld devices are becoming invaluable in the daily lives of medical professionals. Medical information management with PDA can improve patient care activities and enhancing efficiency of health system.

2. What is PDA?

PDA, also known as palm computer or notebook computer, is a handheld device with information storage and retrieval capabilities. The earlier versions of PDAs were glorified electronic date books and address books. As the technology advanced, the functionality of PDAs expanded exponentially. In addition to the basic organizer functions, PDAs can now store reference books, database programs and can keep track of patients and clinical procedures. In addition modern PDAs have E-mail, Internet and other networking facilities.

3. Origin and Development

PDA was originally designed as personal organizer but developed into a multipurpose tool over the years. In 1993 Apple Computer Incorporation introduced the world to the first PDA, called 'Newton Message Pad'. The release of 'Newton Message Pad' was