Personal Digital Assistant:
A New Information Management Tool

Shijith Kumar C.

Department of Ship Technology,
Cochin University of Science & Technology, Cochin-22, Kerala.
E-mail: shijithkumar_c@rediffmail.com

Abstract

Handheld computing technology, commonly known as Personal Digital Assistants are having a tremendous impact in many personal, educational and business settings. This article explains the history and development of personal digital assistant, its features, applications, advantages and limitations of using the technology.

1. Introduction

Information revolution has attained a new dimension with the emergence of Personal digital Assistant (PDA) as a tool for personalized information management. This powerful handheld computing device is becoming invaluable in daily lives of professionals in various fields.

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

2. Origin and Development

PDA was originally designed as personal organizers but became a multipurpose tool over the years. In 1993 Apple Computer Incorporation introduced the first PDA, 'Newton Message Pad'. The release of 'Newton Message Pad' was heralded as a mile stone of the information age. But 'Newton Message Pad' was too big, expensive and complicated and its handwriting recognition was poor. As a result, it had only a limited number of users. Following Apple Computer Incorporation, other