





TOP 10 PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANTS

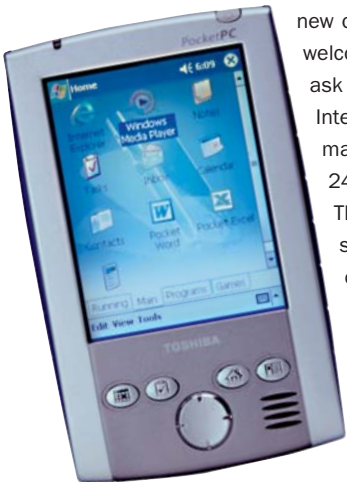
Details	Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Warranty	Dimensions (width x depth x height)	Weight	Operating system	Processor	RAM	Screen size (pixels)	Internal modem	Battery type	PC connection
 <b>1</b> Toshiba Pocket PC e570 01932 828 828 www.toshiba.co.uk	1	Jan 02	£399	2-year	76x124x18mm	180g	Pocket PC 2002	206MHz StrongARM	64MB	240x320 colour	N	lithium-polymer	USB
 <b>2</b> Palm m505 020 7365 9820 www.palm.com/europe	2	Aug 01	£339	1-year	79x114x10mm	128g	Palm OS 4.0	33MHz Dragonball VZ	8MB	160x160 colour	N	lithium-polymer	USB
 <b>3</b> Compaq iPaq H3850 0845 270 4000 www.compaq.co.uk	<b>NEW</b>	Mar 02	£449	1-year	84x133x16mm	190g	Pocket PC 2002	206MHz StrongARM	64MB	240x320 colour	Y	lithium-polymer	USB
 <b>4</b> Palm m125 020 7365 9820 www.microanvika.co.uk	3	Jan 02	£170	1-year	78x122x22mm	151g	Palm OS 4.0	33MHz Dragonball VZ	8MB	160x160 colour	N	AAA	USB
<b>5</b> Handspring Visor Pro 020 7309 0134 www.handspring.co.uk	4	Dec 01	£229	2-year	76x112x18mm	161g	Palm OS 3.5.2H3	33MHz Dragonball VZ	16MB	160x160 colour	N	lithium-ion	USB
<b>6</b> Palm m500 020 7365 9820 www.palm.com/europe	5	Aug 01	£272	1-year	79x114x10mm	113g	Palm OS 4.0	33MHz Dragonball VZ	8MB	160x160 colour	N	lithium-polymer	USB
<b>7</b> NEC PocketGear 0870 010 6326 www.nec-online.co.uk	6	Jan 02	£382	1-year	76x125x20mm	280g	Pocket PC 2002	206MHz StrongARM	32MB	240x320 colour	N	lithium-ion	USB
<b>8</b> Sony Clie N770 0870 511 1999 www.sony.com	7	Jan 02	£340	1-year	71x119x17mm	160g	Palm OS 4.1	33MHz Dragonball EZ	8MB	320x320 colour	N	lithium-ion	USB
<b>9</b> HP Jornada 568 0870 547 4747 www.hp.com	8	Jan 02	£467	1-year	77x132x17mm	173g	Pocket PC 2002	206MHz StrongARM	64MB	240x320 colour	N	lithium-polymer	USB
<b>10</b> Handspring Visor Neo 020 7309 0134 www.handspring.co.uk	9	Dec 01	£144	2-year	76x112x18mm	153g	Palm OS 3.5.2H3	33MHz Dragonball VZ	8MB	160x160 mono	N	AAA	USB

1 Toshiba Pocket PC e570



The Toshiba Pocket PC has secured the top spot for the third month running. Although Toshiba may seem late to market with its PDA (personal digital assistant), its decision to wait seems to have paid off. The Pocket PC 2002 operating system offers a number of refinements over its predecessor. First up, Graffiti fans will be pleased to know that Palm's handwriting recognition system now offers a similar input method, in addition to cursive handwriting recognition. The interface has been given a visual overhaul and the operating system is now upgradeable.

Although Pocket PC 2002 is not as groundbreaking as Pocket PC, the enhancements within this new operating system are all welcome. Internally, you couldn't ask for more – there's a 206MHz Intel StrongARM processor, a massive 64MB of RAM and a 240x320 16bit colour screen. The price tag of £399 may sound expensive, but if you compare it to the competition it's fairly reasonable. If you've got the money to spend, and you want the most capable PDA on the market, then the e570 is still the one to go for.



2 Palm m505



Palm continues in the number two spot for another month with its m505 portable device. Almost identical to the m500 sitting in fifth place, the inclusion of a colour screen gives this model an edge over its monochrome sibling. Palm may have invented the keyboard-free PDA (personal digital assistant), but that's simply not enough to stay ahead in this highly competitive market. With the m505, though, Palm finally addressed two of the platform's major deficiencies – slow synchronisation and lack of expansion. It now communicates via USB, providing faster data transfer and simpler connectivity.

A colour display may seem unnecessary on a PDA, but advancements in both screen and battery technology now make it a realistic proposition. Fortunately, it also hardly adds to the bulk of the unit. The colour screen complements the impressive software bundle, which includes the latest Palm operating system, version 4.0. All of this is packed into a unit that is just 1cm thick and tips the scales at a mere 128g. Overall, then, the Palm m505 sets the standard for the other Palm OS-based handhelds to beat, and is a worthy winner of our Recommended award.



TOP 10 PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANTS

3 Compaq iPaq H3850



We were impressed with the latest release of Compaq's iPaq PDA (personal digital assistant), the H3850. Previous versions have proved popular with consumers and corporates alike. The new iPaq sports a gorgeously vivid 240x320 16bit colour screen which performs incredibly quickly. This speed is driven by a 206MHz Strong ARM processor, coupled with 64MB of RAM and 32MB of onboard ROM. And there's a wide range of software applications for the iPaq. So what keeps it from the top spot in our PDA chart? Price: at £449 it's the second most expensive device in our Top 10.



4 Palm m125

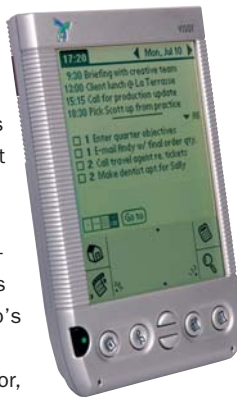


While the m505 represents the top of the Palm range, the m125 slides neatly in the middle between the m500 and the m105. If you like the USB connectivity and the SD (secure digital) expansion capabilities of the m500, but weren't looking to spend quite so much, then the Palm m125 is the answer. The hardware specification is nothing new, offering the same 33MHz Dragonball VZ processor and 8MB of RAM as the m500 and m505. At £170 this PDA (personal digital assistant) is targeted at the undecided user who's torn by the lack of upgradability on the m105 and higher price tag of the m500.



5 Handspring Visor Pro

The Visor Pro is a mid- to high-end model, with a different finish and colour to previous models in the range. It comes with 16MB of memory – twice the amount found on any of the other Palm OS PDAs currently available. Visor also offers excellent value for money, costing £229 – £43 cheaper than the Palm m500 with its 8MB of memory. The rest of the Visor Pro's hardware line-up is pretty standard – it features a 33MHz DragonBall VZ processor, rechargeable lithium-ion battery, USB synchronisation cradle and a Springboard slot.



6 Palm m500

There's little to choose between the Palm m500 and the m505, but the latter's colour screen makes a world of difference. However, the m500 is still a neat little package that offers plenty of features. The



high-contrast mono screen does justice to the impressive software bundle, which includes the relatively new Palm operating system, version 4.0. All of this is packed into a unit that is just 1cm thick and weighs a sylph-like 113g.

7 NEC PocketGear

The PocketGear is NEC's first PDA (personal digital assistant), and it certainly isn't a bad attempt. However, the strength of the competition means NEC has to settle for seventh place. The PocketGear features the Pocket PC 2002 operating system, and the hardware specifications are also good, with a 206MHz Intel StrongARM processor and 32MB of RAM. The screen stretches to 240x320 with 16bit colour, although it requires a stronger backlight as it isn't the most vibrant available.



8 Sony Clie N770

On the Clie N770, Sony has concentrated solely on providing a top-notch display. Not only has Sony opted for a 16bit colour display, but it's also provided a resolution of 320x320. Like many Sony products, the Clie is an expensive device. However, if you've got the money to spend, then the Sony N770 is one of the nicest Palm OS-based handhelds out there.



9 HP Jornada 568

HP has been a Windows CE fan for a long time, so it's no surprise it's quick off the mark with a Pocket PC 2002 device. At first look, the styling of the HP Jornada 568 seems to have altered little from the 545. But HP has opted for a lithium-polymer battery, which makes for a smaller, lighter design. The hardware line-up is competent, with a 206MHz Intel StrongARM processor, 64MB of RAM and a 240x320 resolution, 16bit colour screen. The main thing that lets the Jornada 568 down is its price – at £467 it's the most expensive device in the chart.



10 Handspring Visor Neo

This second entry from Handspring's Visor range is more of a budget unit than the Visor Pro at number five. The Neo has the same 33MHz DragonBall VZ processor as the top-of-the-range Visors, as opposed to the 16MHz chip found in the Deluxe. It also has a 4bit greyscale display, 8MB of memory, USB cradle and runs off two AAA batteries. The Neo may languish in tenth place, but if all you want is a basic organiser then the Neo is still a good choice.

