xp advisor

Back to basics

As concepts go, paper and ink is arguably the most elementary. But that hasn't stopped Microsoft gambling millions on its success as the next big thing in computing

Never let it be said that Microsoft doesn't know how to whip up a storm. It's spent more than two years and several hundred million dollars developing and marketing its vision of the future of computing. And, naturally, it's got a clutch of big-name manufacturers clamouring to make products to fit around it. And that big concept is… paper and ink.

Okay, so we're talking digital ink and a fairly substantial notepad, but it's really an extension of the sort of graphics tablets that the likes of Wacom have been putting out as an alternative to the clumsy mouse for years. And a portable device with a rotating, even detachable screen? Sounds a mite similar to a couple of other notebooks we could mention.

At the official UK launch of the Tablet PC, Microsoft showcased the possibilities of the new form factor and demonstrated its application across a range of business uses. Field workers could edit maps to inform HQ about new holes they had just dug, while hospital surgeons could update patient reports on the fly as they rushed from X-ray room to operating theatre.

A totally mobile, desktop-grade wireless device is all well and good but the incredible handwriting-recognition capability built into the Tablet PC version of Windows XP is the real star of the show.

Yes, we like the idea of collaborating with colleagues and the oh-so-user-friendly pictorial approach to team work. Yes, we relish the idea of being able to use the self-same device for all our computing tasks. But are we convinced Tablet PC is the salvation of the PC? Not so far.

But the quantum leap in text-recognition found in XP for Tablet PC – now that really is something to write home about. ■

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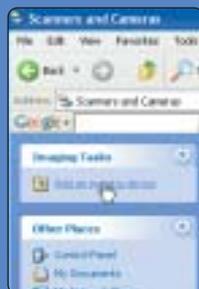
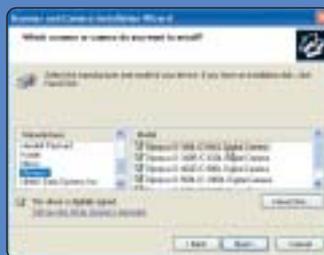## A wizard for scanners and cameras

Because so many of us use imaging devices to digitise and store our photos, Windows XP introduces an oh-so-handy Scanners and Cameras Wizard. With it, most modern devices should work straight out of the box – no drivers required.

↑ Choose Start, Control Panel and double-click the Scanners and Cameras icon

↑ Then click 'Add an imaging device' in the lefthand taskpane

↑ Now follow the instructions given by the Installation Wizard, choosing your device's make and model from the list when it appears

↑ Your device – in our case a camera – appears as an icon in the Scanners and Cameras folder. Double-click it to transfer images to your hard disk