Microsoft

Microsoft Announces Broad Availability of Handheld PCs With Windows CE

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LAS VEGAS, Nov. 18, 1996 — Heralding a new era in personal computing, Microsoft Corp. today announced broad retail availability of the first handheld PCs, the new category of mobile companion devices for Microsoft® Windows® based PCs based on the Microsoft Windows CE operating system platform. As part of the broadly supported launch of the new product category, handheld PC manufacturers Casio Computer Co., Compaq Computer Corp., Hewlett-Packard Co., Hitachi Ltd., LG Electronics Inc., NEC Corp. and Philips Electronics joined Microsoft in demonstrating handheld PCs and Windows CE-based software and communications products at COMDEX/Fall in Las Vegas. Microsoft also announced that more than 90 independent software and hardware vendors plan to have Windows CE-based commercial applications, hardware peripherals or communications solutions available for the handheld PC by or near the end of the first quarter of 1997.

The handheld PC is the inaugural product category based on Windows CE, Microsoft's new open, scalable Windows operating system platform designed for a broad range of communications, entertainment and mobile computing devices.
"The introduction of the handheld PC with Windows CE is a critical milestone in Microsoft's continuing strategy to bring the popularity and ease of use of Windows to new categories of information devices,"
said Bill Gates, chairman and CEO of Microsoft.
"The broad support and enthusiasm for Windows CE we are receiving from the computer and consumer-electronics industries provides the firm foundation on which we will build future product categories."

The handheld PC, with Windows CE, is designed to provide the millions of mobile professionals using Windows-based personal computers with an affordable, easy-to-use mobile PC companion to keep their most important information up-to-date and close at hand.
"The handheld PC with Windows CE allows users of Windows to take the productivity of their desktop with them wherever they go,"
said Craig Mundie, senior vice president, consumer platforms division at Microsoft.
"With its easy-to-learn user interface, familiar companion applications, automatic desktop synchronization, broad communications capabilities and numerous third-party solutions, the handheld PC is well on its way to becoming the next essential business tool for mobile professionals."

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The familiar Windows CE user interface and customer-driven hardware design make the handheld PC easy to learn and operate, so users of Windows can pick it up and know how to use it instantly. The Windows CE user interface is designed to be immediately recognizable to users of Windows 95 and includes such standard features as the trademark Start button, a Taskbar and an Explorer interface.

Microsoft worked closely with manufacturers of handheld PCs to help ensure that they are convenient, easily accessible devices that users feel comfortable taking everywhere. Weighing less than 16 ounces, handheld PCs are "pocketable"
– they fit comfortably in a jacket pocket or purse. Handheld PCs also offer the flexibility of keyboard-based or touch stylus input and, under normal conditions, run for weeks on two AA batteries. To spare users the frustration of waiting for their machines to boot up to access applications, handheld PCs come with the convenience of Instant On.

Familiar Companion Applications

Handheld PCs with Windows CE come equipped with companions to familiar desktop applications that help users get organized, productive and connected. Because these applications support and retain the look of many commonly used features found in their desktop counterparts, users can begin to work immediately.

- **Information Manager.** Handheld PCs with Windows CE include a full-featured suite of personal information management (PIM) software with Calendar, Address Book and Tasks that seamlessly and automatically integrates with Microsoft Schedule+ version 7.0a on the desktop.

- **Microsoft Pocket Word.** With Pocket Word, users can take notes, compose memos or review files while out of the office or away from their desk. Pocket Word exchanges files with its desktop version.

- **Microsoft Pocket Excel.** Pocket Excel allows users to create reports and manage data while away from their desks, crunch numbers while on the road, or take budgets and forecasts with them to a meeting. Pocket Excel also shares files with Microsoft Excel on the desktop.

- **Pocket Internet Explorer.** Handheld PCs include a version of Microsoft's popular Web browser for remotely accessing unlimited sources of news and information on the World Wide Web or product information on the local company intranet.

- **Inbox.** This electronic mail client allows users to send and receive e-mail remotely using a dial-up network connection, an Internet service provider or a third-party wireless service. Inbox works as a companion to Microsoft Exchange Server, allowing for transfer of inbound and outbound messages between the handheld PC and the desktop.

Rich Communications

Windows CE provides a rich communications architecture that enables a wide variety of both wired and wireless communications capabilities. TCP/IP and PPP protocols are built in, as are familiar Windows-based communications APIs, enabling handheld PCs to access the **Internet** and connect to remote access servers. PC Card support allows users to take advantage of a wealth of existing PCMCIA wired or wireless modems as well as faxing or paging communications products and solutions. The universal inbox e-mail application supports SMTP and POP3 protocols and has an open API that enables third parties to extend it to work with most e-mail environments. Built-in IrDA-compatible infrared support enables infrared transfer of information between handheld PC devices.

PC Compatibility and Synchronization

Windows CE desktop compatibility enables simple information synchronization between the handheld PC and Windows-based PCs, allowing users to keep important information up-to-date and close at hand. Handheld PCs ship with HPC Explorer, a Microsoft desktop application that automatically detects when a handheld PC is docked with a Windows-based PC and initiates manual or automatic replication and synchronization of PIM data between the handheld PC and Microsoft Schedule+ 7.0a on the desktop. HPC Explorer also provides a Windows Explorer-like view of the hierarchy of programs, files and folders on the handheld PC and enables simple drag-and-drop moving and copying of files between the handheld PC and the desktop. HPC Explorer can also be used to easily back up all handheld PC programs, files, databases and other data to the desktop to provide security and easy restoration of the system in case of damage, loss or theft.

"With the handheld PC and Windows CE, Microsoft and its OEM affiliates have successfully built the mobile PC companion that can take handheld computers out of niche status and into the business mainstream,"
said Tim Bajarin, president of Creative Strategies Inc., a computer consulting firm in San Jose, Calif.
"Windows CE finally delivers on the promise of handheld computing with its ease of use, companion applications and no-brainer desktop synchronization. The handheld PC will easily become an indispensable desktop companion for mobile professionals."

Broadly Supported Platform

The open, broadly supported Windows CE platform provides consumers and businesses with a choice of affordable hardware options and ensures wide availability of third-party applications. While handheld PCs share certain basic characteristics, the various computer and consumer-electronics OEMs manufacturing handheld PCs are expected to differentiate their offerings with a variety of display, form factor, peripheral and packaged software options, allowing users to choose the configuration best suited to their individual needs.

The robust development environment for Windows CE guarantees the broad availability of aftermarket companion applications and custom business solutions. The Windows CE-based development environment has been designed to take advantage of the expertise that thousands of software developers already have with Windows-based programming interfaces and tools. Familiar off-the-shelf tools, including the Microsoft Visual C++® development system and a comprehensive subset of Win32® APIs, mean developers use their existing skills and programming knowledge to create applications and custom solutions for the Windows CE platform. To date, more than 600 developers have enrolled in the Windows CE Technical Beta Program, and more than 90 companies have already announced products for the platform. In addition, individual users and businesses can take advantage of Microsoft's network of trained VARs, Solution Providers and system integrators to support their investment in handheld PCs.

Availability and Pricing

The first handheld PCs are available today in leading consumer-electronics and computer stores nationwide. Handheld PC devices from additional OEMs are expected to roll out over the coming months with international versions expected before the second half of 1997.

Handheld PCs offer a high price-value relationship compared to personal digital assistants (PDAs), palmtop devices, and other handheld computers and come packaged with Microsoft productivity and connectivity applications. In addition, the desktop HPC Explorer application and all necessary PC connectivity hardware come packaged with the handheld PC. While there is no suggested retail price for the handheld PC with Windows CE, street prices for base configurations are expected to start around $500.

Base Product Specifications

- Windows CE operating system

- "Pocketable"
  clamshell form factor

- QWERTY keyboard

- 480 x 240 x 2 bit-per-pixel LCD touch screen with stylus

- 4 MB upgradable ROM (minimum)

- 2 MB expandable RAM (minimum)

- Input/Output: IrDA-standard infrared, serial port, PCMCIA type II slot, .wav sound, LED notification

- Hitachi SH-3 and MIPS R4000 series microprocessors

- Optional docking cradle for synchronization

- Win32 API subset including TCP/IP stack, PPP protocol, WinSock 2.0, RAS, DCC, TAPI

- Individual OEM devices may differ.

Minimum Desktop Requirements for HPC Explorer

- Personal computer with a 486/33DX or higher processor (Pentium P90 recommended)

- Microsoft Windows 95 operating system (support for the Windows NT® operating system is expected in the first quarter of 1997)

- 8 MB of memory (12 MB recommended)

- 10 to 20 MB of available hard disk space (actual requirements will vary based on selection of features and user's current system configuration)

- Available 9 or 25 pin communications port

- One CD-ROM drive (3.5-inch high-density disks provided on request)

- VGA or higher-resolution graphics card (Super VGA 256-color recommended)

- Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device **Options**

- Audio card and speakers for sound

- Microsoft Office 95 (Office 97 support is expected in the first quarter of 1997.)

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ
"MSFT"
) is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers. The company offers a wide range of products and services for business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing every day.

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For online product information:

Visit the Windows CE home page at **http://www.microsoft.com/windowsce/** **(/windowsce/default.asp)**

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