

Psion User

Red alert

The Siena and Series 3c: with infrared

Printers to go

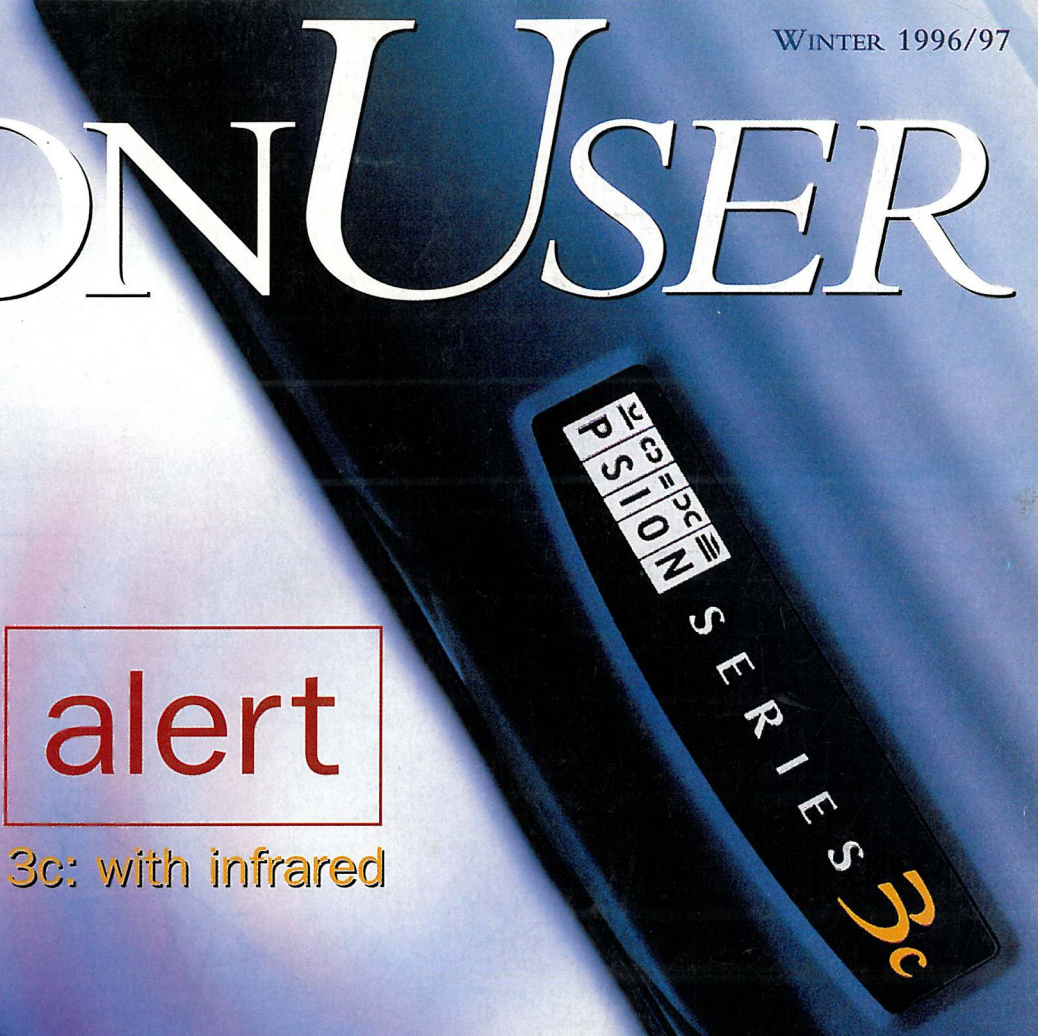
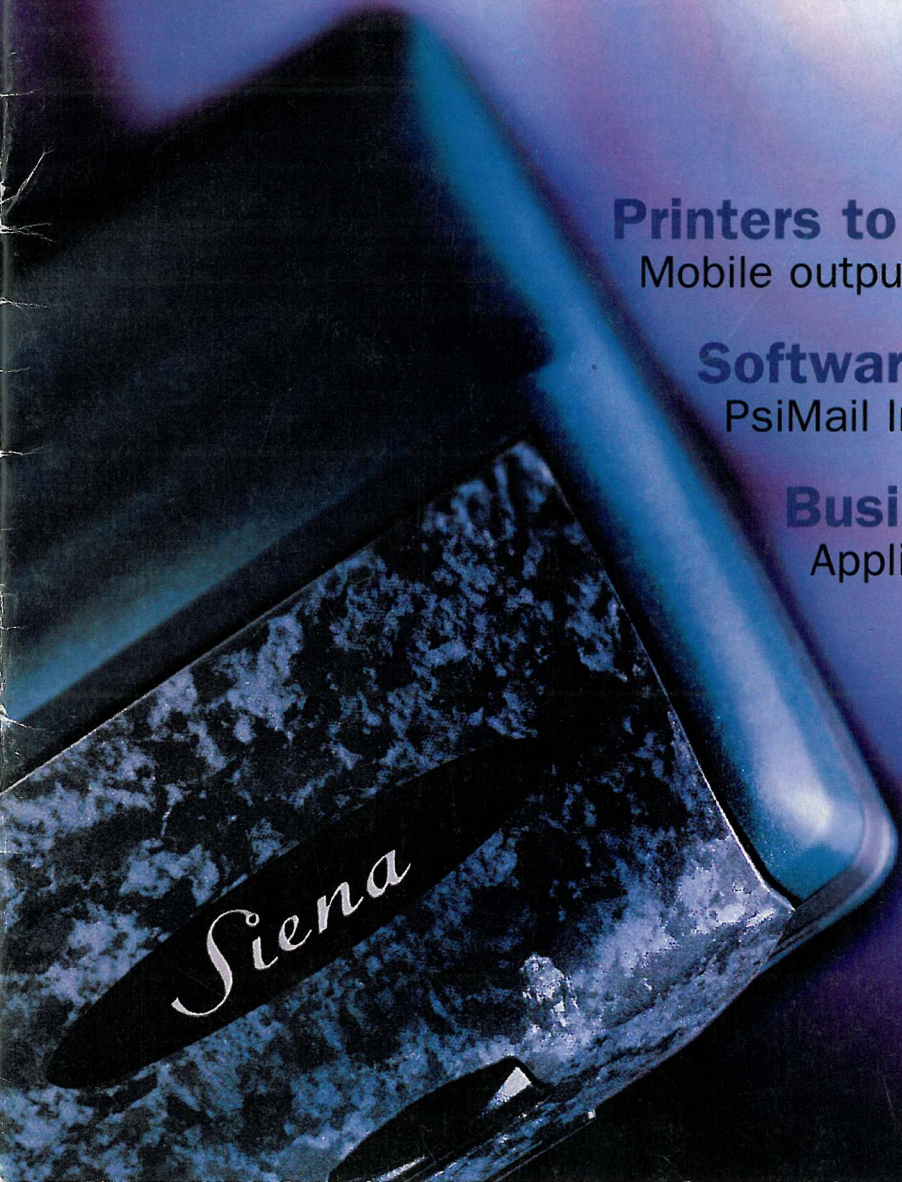
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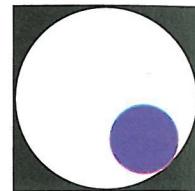
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Psion User

Chairman's comment



If you were to wake tomorrow and find yourself in the year 2001, what role do you think your Psion would play... a mobile information terminal, perhaps?... a personal data manager?... an Internet browsing device?

Well, my view is that between now and 2001, we will see an expansion of the capability of handheld devices and a continued integration with business IT systems. You only need look inside *Psion User* to see the increasing variety of corporate uses our machines are being put to.

As you read the cover story, you will see how we are preparing for the future, today, with our two new product ranges: the Series 3c and the Siena.

The Series 3 has evolved in much the same way as the PC – regular upgrades in capacity, speed, functionality and scope, as silicon and software developments have driven performance upwards. We have miniaturised and integrated chips; and we have maintained battery performance in the face of capacity increases and screen size expansion.

If this means nothing to you, the Siena is designed especially for you. All the techno jargon applies to the Siena – multitasking, graphical user interface, built-in RS232 – but this is not a technical machine. It is an inexpensive organiser designed for people who use paper-based organisers or databanks. It is easy to use, compact and lightweight, and you can even personalise it with a different cover.

2001 may still be years away. But with these two devices we have already begun to shape the handheld market of the new millennium. I must admit that when it came to making a choice, I was lucky: I chose both the Series 3c and the Siena! It is one of the perks I get as chairman of the company. Happy choosing!

David Potter

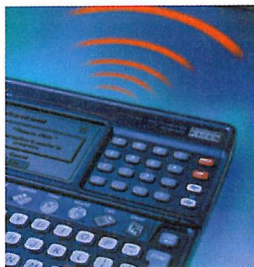
Chairman, Psion plc

Editor Marc Beishon **Deputy Editor** Amy Wislocki **Art Director** Paula Hickey **Production Controller** Natasha Flowers **Production Director** Ian Sewell **Design Director** Rami Lippa **Publisher** Jules Rastelli **Publishing Director** Sue Thomas **Managing Director** Michael Potter **Editorial Director** Christopher Ward **Editorial Team for Psion** Monica Kochhar, Anthony Garvey and Paul Lubbock **Cover** by Douglas Fisher

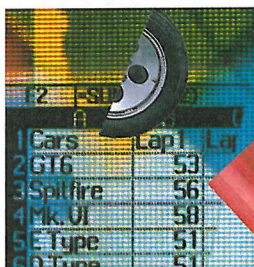
Psion User is published on behalf of Psion plc by Redwood Publishing Ltd, 12-26 Lexington Street, London W1R 4HQ Telephone: +44 171 312 2600 Fax: +44 171 312 2601 Email: 100566.3042@compuserve.com. © Redwood Publishing Ltd 1996. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part is prohibited without prior permission of the editor. Contributors' opinions are not necessarily shared by Psion plc. Colour reproduction: Precise Litho Ltd. Printing: St Ives plc. Psion User cannot take responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or illustrations, or for errors in articles or advertisements in the magazine. 6903-0011-02



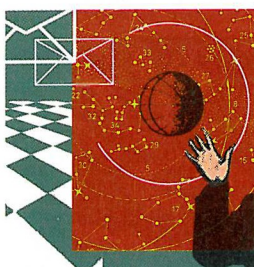
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London guide

Mobile Software, the company that specialises in databases for the Psion Series 3a and 3c, has announced a new product, *Nicholson London Pages*. Based on HarperCollins's *Nicholson London Guide*, the database contains details of more than 3,100 venues and services within London – including restaurants, hotels, pubs, theatres, tourist attractions, concert venues and much more. The database has been designed to help Londoners and visitors get the best from the UK's capital city, and is supplied with a printed colour map, referenced by entries within the product.

Meanwhile, Mobile Software is continuing its free 'Mobile Pages Challenge'

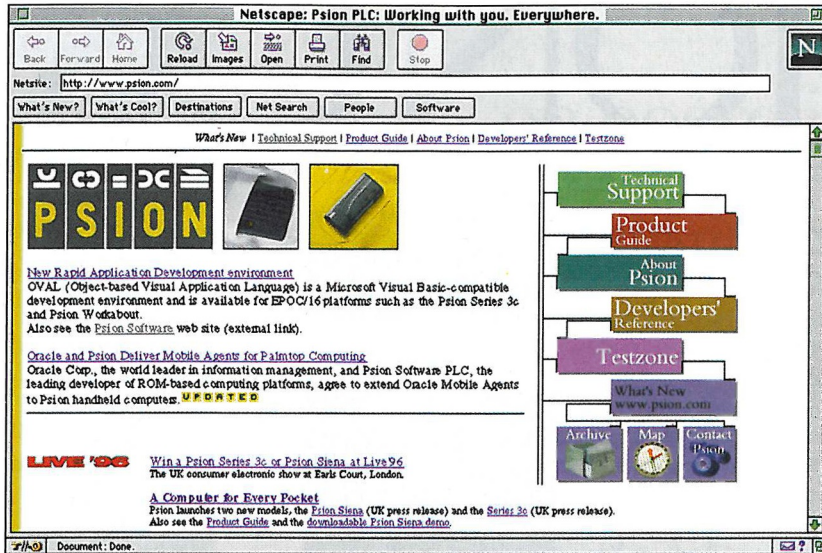


offer. The company is so confident in its ability to access large amounts of data that it is inviting people to submit samples of their company data. Mobile Software will process your data and return it to you with a copy of the Pages Viewer search software so that you can assess the information on your Psion.

Mobile Software. Tel: +44 181 906 0002. Email: info@mobilepages.com

The company's World Wide Web site can be found at <http://www.mobilepages.com>

Nicholson London Pages is available from Widget Software. Tel: +44 1438 815444.



The new Psion plc Web home page. Links are available to Psion Software and other Psion firms

Psion Software lays a path for developers

Psion has formed a new company to license its operating systems and applications software, in a move that will help other companies to develop products such as palmtops, sub-notebooks, smart phones, intelligent terminals and mobile Web browsers. Called Psion Software, the company is marketing the EPOC/16 platform (which lies at the heart of the Psion Series 3 range) and a new EPOC/32 platform, which is being developed for future high performance products.

Operating systems and applications (collectively known as platforms) designed for solid-state, handheld computers are fundamentally different from desktop PC platforms. They have to start immediately, be power and memory efficient and never lose the user's data. They have to be responsive and bug-free, and

offer a high degree of functionality in small code size, while appearing intuitive to novice and power users alike.

Now, with 13 years of experience in developing these platforms, Psion is making this technology available to licensees.



Psion Software's new logo for the EPOC platform

'One of our strategies is to establish our platform as an open standard,' says David Potter, chairman of Psion. 'We are already recognised as the world leader in the palmtop computer market and this sector will inevitably attract more players as

computing and communication technologies continue to converge.

'We expect licensing revenues to come in during 1998; our licensing strategy will allow us to participate in emerging markets without defocusing our existing business.'

It is predicted that the uptake of EPOC/16 licences will be for compact, handheld devices, such as phones with an integrated organiser, and other devices which can benefit from powerful and intuitive user interfaces. Psion Software will continue to design and develop for Psion's own product range, which will benefit from the open platform. The company already has many developers, whose applications will be able to run on systems from other vendors.

Psion Software has also formed partnerships with Advanced RISC Machines (ARM), Cirrus Logic and Digital Semiconductor.



Kenneth Clarke: using the Series 3a while in office

Party machine

Psion's press office is always looking out for influential people to impress with a Series 3a. They recently sent one to Kenneth Clarke, the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer, to help run the economy – and here's his reply:

'I am very grateful for your kind and thoughtful gesture and I am greatly impressed by the amazing things it can do. Unfortunately, as I am sure you will understand, I am very much regret that I am unable to accept the gift personally, but the Treasury is able to accept it instead, which I hope you will be content with. And I will be using it for so long as I am Chancellor!'

ORACLE®

Special agents

In another major partnership, Psion Software has teamed up with industry giant Oracle to provide Psion users with Oracle's Mobile Agents software on the Series 3 range and Workabout. Mobile Agents allows remote workers to connect to host applications over a variety of network technologies with a minimum of effort.

We will be reporting on this application more fully in the next issue of *Psion User* magazine.

Shareware: added extras

Here's a couple of shareware items that caught our eye, but we didn't have room for in our *Shareware Report* (p28). One's serious, and the other is fun (or perhaps deadly serious to some).

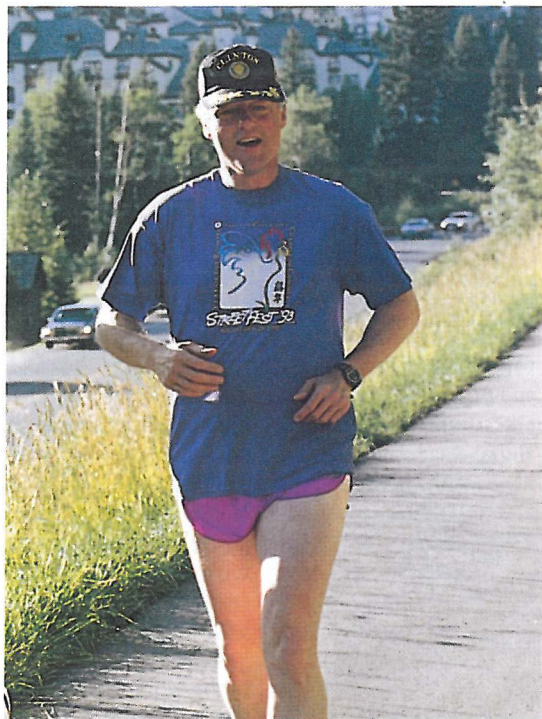
MedMemo is not a program, but a medical database that holds information useful to any general doctor. According to the database's compiler, Dr Michael Weiner, there are three types of record: adult doses for major drugs; standard laboratory reference values; and medical abbreviations and miscellaneous notes.

Dr Weiner says the database has been expanded extensively for the Series 3 range, and offers it as shareware (donations of \$10, he says, will help him improve MedMemo further). For more information, email Dr Weiner at: mweiner@welchlink.welch.jhu.edu. See also *Insight* about medical applications, on p33.

And now for something completely different: Formfinder for the Series 3a/3c, which has been written, says its author Adam Squibb, 'with the sole aim of predicting the outcome of any given horse race'. Converted from a version for the Atari ST, Formfinder contains data for British horse racing. Squibb reckons you'll be able to smuggle your Psion into the bookmakers or racetrack, so gaining an advantage over the ordinary punter.

From: *Aztec Software, 11 Beaulieu Place, Peel Common, Gosport, Hants PO13 0QP, UK. Tel: +44 1329 235249.*

Presidential run-in



Ron Kilgore used his Psion on a run with President Clinton

Ron Kilgore has long reported from the White House and the world for NBC Radio news. Today, the Los Angeles-based journalist is a reporter and producer for all-news radio station KFWB, and a correspondent for NBC Radio, covering major stories such as the OJ Simpson trial, the

Academy Awards and visits by President Clinton. Kilgore says he could not do his job without his Series 3a.

'When I'm out in the field and need real portability, bringing a laptop is out of the question,' says Kilgore. 'My Series 3a does everything I need – and it fits in my pocket.'

He mentions two situ-

ations where his Series 3a has been invaluable. The first required him to hike for several miles to a remote mountain top where federal investigators were trying to discover why a plane had crashed. 'The hike would have been much more difficult with a laptop in tow. I just put my Psion in my pocket and could use both hands to negotiate the climb.'

Then, recently Kilgore received the most coveted of invitations: to go on an early morning run with President Clinton. The question was how to take notes and keep up with the President. Easy, says Kilgore: 'I used my 3a, which fitted easily in the pocket of my shorts.'

Kilgore's Series 3a was also useful during the recent retrial of brothers Eric and Lyle Menendez. Judge Stanley Weisberg forbade journalists to take notes on laptops because he found the clicking sound of keys distracting. This was no problem for Kilgore, however, as the keyclick on the Psion can be switched off.

Web site latest

Psion plc has made lots of changes to its Web site to coincide with the launch of the Series 3c and Siena. The home page has a new look (see picture opposite), and links are provided to all the other official Psion Web sites, including a new one that's been set up for Psion Software, which will be of particular interest to developers.

There are also comprehensive lists of links to other Psion-related Web sites, including Steve Litchfield's shareware pages, Internet shareware archives, Psion user groups, and Psion discussion groups. The Usenet news groups about Psion's computers have been expanded lately, with separate groups for announcements, applications, programming, marketplace and reviews.

Psion's new-look Web site has plenty of material on the new launches, including a downloadable demonstration of the Siena, details of exhibitions that Psion is attending around the world, a question and answer section for the Series 3 range, and a query form for other questions.

Horsewoman steps out

The British seem to have a thirst for adventure, judging by the many hardy individuals who have sailed around the world, reached the Poles, or tackled the highest peaks. Barbara Whittome is no exception: last year, she rode 2,500 miles on horseback from the Russian Steppes to the

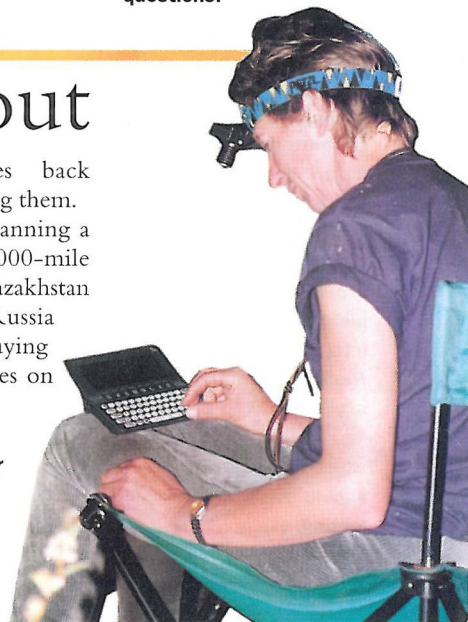
UK, fighting off robbers, negotiating 'terrifying' terrain – and outlasting her Cossack guides. She even managed to write a book of her experiences on the way using her Series 3a; *Russian Ride* has just been published.

The adventure began when Whittome, a horse breeder by profession, decided to bring four

Russian horses back home – by riding them.

Next, she's planning a truly epic 9,000-mile ride through Kazakhstan and parts of Russia and Ukraine, buying and selling horses on the way.

Whittome: used her Series 3a to document the journey





Alex Lambrechts: holder of a most unusual world record

Record breaker

Alex Lambrechts is in the 1997 Guinness Book of Records – as the world's most pierced man. Lambrechts, who runs two body piercing shops in Belgium, carries out navel and nipple piercings, among other decorative operations, for a living – as well as practising what he preaches.

He's often on the road at weekends, attending tattoo and piercing conventions around Europe, and naturally he always carries his Series 3a with him, making full use of its organiser features for his diary, addresses, clock and notebook, as well as record keeping and statistics for his work activities.

If there's one thing a man carrying extra metal on his person doesn't need, it's a bulky notebook computer – a fact also noted by colleagues on Lambrechts' convention visits.

And for those of you who are wondering how many piercings you need to get into the Guinness Book of Records, the answer is a massive 137. So unless you have a high pain threshold, perhaps you should stick to stamp collecting...

The time machine

You have the technology – we have the techniques'. So goes the message from Time Manager International, a specialist training consultancy that has integrated the Psion Series 3a/3c into its latest course.

TMI's Time Manager philosophy has been adopted by thousands of companies around the world: it aims to help individuals and teams to manage time and

resources more effectively. Now, with ever more organisations in periods of constant and stressful change, TMI is extending its reach to the Psion Series 3 range.

The company's new two-day programme is designed to show individuals how to integrate a Psion into daily planning routines, automate goals and priorities so that tasks are completed on time, and manage databases and paperwork so that infor-

mation is always at the fingertips.

Included in the price of the two-day course, which is called *Performance Management for Psion Users*, is the TMI Flashcard, a Psion disk that allows the Agenda application to be customised, in line with TMI's approach.

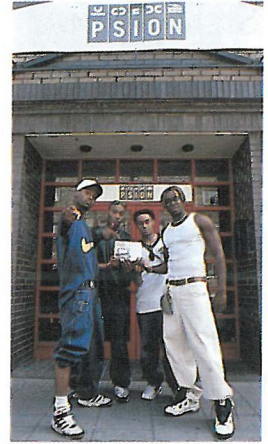
Gary Ling, head of communications at TMI, says that increasing numbers of people are using palmtop computers such as the Psion, plus personal information management tools on desktop computers. 'People need to know how to use these technologies more effectively in the workplace,' he says. 'We can help people set goals in key areas of both work and private life, and establish tasks and activities to get things done. People really can improve their performance.'

Initially, courses are scheduled for the UK at venues in London and the Midlands, with the first taking place on 11-12 December 1996.

TMI says that courses in other countries may be held according to demand. TMI: +44 1564 794100.



In time with technology: a visual from TMI's course promotion



MN8 at Psion's HQ: We've got a little something for you

A tough act to follow

MN8 have a busy schedule lined up this autumn as they jet off to promote their new album, *Freaky*. But the band took time out to display their new Psion units outside the Psion headquarters in London. The machines have already become an essential part of their luggage, and the boys use them to store itineraries, memos and contacts.

MN8 broke on to the pop scene last year with the smash hit, *I've Got A Little Something For You*, and have since achieved chart success across the globe with five Top 30 hits from their debut album. Their latest single is *Tuff Act to Follow*.

PHOTOGRAPHS: GARY CHILDS, REX FEATURES

Purple Software presents...

Purple Software has released a number of new packages this autumn.

Notepad Deluxe is an 'intelligent' note-taker which integrates information on your Series 3a or 3c by linking notes to Word files, spreadsheets, databases and Psion pic-

ture files. A graphic map provides an overview of your notepads, and a search facility allows you to locate notes quickly.

Two possible uses of the application would be to attach to files descriptions of their contents by creating links to Word files; or to create a contact

manager by linking notes to contacts in Data.

Also new is ToolKit 2, which contains four elements: IconBox (for producing icons to customise your system screen); DataSafe (for archiving and encrypting data files); SysInfo (for analysing your system

resources); and FileView (for viewing large text files in different formats).

On a lighter note, Purple has launched new versions of Chess, and Chinese Chess and Backgammon for the Siena. Purple Software. Tel: +44 171 387 7777. Fax: +44 171 387 1188.

Spread the word

We had a huge response from readers interested in the King James Bible software, which is available from National Technology Services in the US.

The software allows users to store as few or as many of the Bible's 66 books as they wish on their Series 3a/3c, and to search, browse and earmark passages with a memo feature.

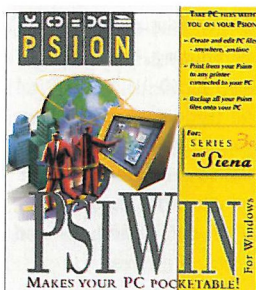
European readers will be pleased to learn that the King James Bible on floppy disk or SSD is now also available from Widget Software.

For further information and pricing details, contact Widget Software in the UK on +44 1438 815444; or NTS in the US on +1 609 663 0354.

PsiWin V1.1

Psion has launched a new version of the popular PsiWin connectivity package. The revised edition (V1.1) offers two converters for Microsoft Schedule+ 7.0 and Lotus Organizer 2.1, allowing conversion of both Agenda and Data files. It caters for Series 3c and Siena users as well as Series 3/3a owners.

Users of PsiWin V1.0 can buy upgrade software on diskette from Psion. For more details of the new PsiWin version, see page 13 of the cover story, *Red Alert*.



Bosnian peace code



Workabouts are used to keep track of local forces' weaponry

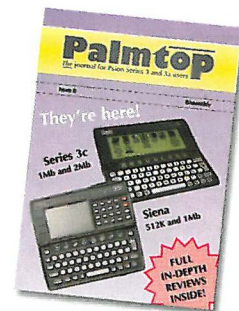
NATO personnel in Bosnia are making use of Psion Workabouts to keep track of weapons held by local forces. The peacekeepers are using BASSET, a bar code asset tracking system designed by Sage Data Solutions, of Ottawa, Canada, in a trial to log equipment such as tanks and artillery.

The situation in Bosnia requires local forces to declare their weapons to peacekeepers, who periodically check that those weapons are still in their possession and not in use. Doing this manually would be time-consuming, with delays in processing the information, and inaccurate data can cause unnecessary alerts.

The BASSET system uses bar code labels provided on tamperproof tags to keep track of where each piece of equipment is located and when it was last inspected. This eliminates manual checking and informs the peacekeepers within minutes of any missing weapons.

The system was recommended by Canadian Colonel Ed Fitch, who knew of Sage Data's systems prior to being assigned to Bosnia.

When his British counterparts were looking for a better tracking system, he recommended Sage Data, which was able to deliver an 'off-the-shelf' program to meet their requirements within just one week.



Handy magazine

For those readers who turned straight to the cover story on p8 to learn about the brand new Siena and Series 3c, and who want to read more about these exciting launches, the current edition of Palmtop (above) goes to town on the new products, with pages of detailed coverage. Published every two months, the magazine is available worldwide by subscription.

Tel: +44 1869 249287
Fax: +44 1869 246043
Email: palmtop@aol.com

WIN a new pocket-sized Siena...



Here's your chance to win one of Psion's new pocket-sized Siena computers. All

you need to do is answer correctly the following three questions – and to help you, the answers can all be found in the cover story review of the Siena and the Series 3c, which starts on p8.

1. The Siena's memory options are:

- A – 256KB or 512KB
- B – 512KB or 1MB
- C – 1MB or 2MB

2. Both the Siena and the Series 3c have a new Busy view in Agenda. On the Siena, how many weeks can be displayed at a time?

- A – 1
- B – 2
- C – 4

3. The Siena is easy to carry around, but how much does it weigh, exactly?

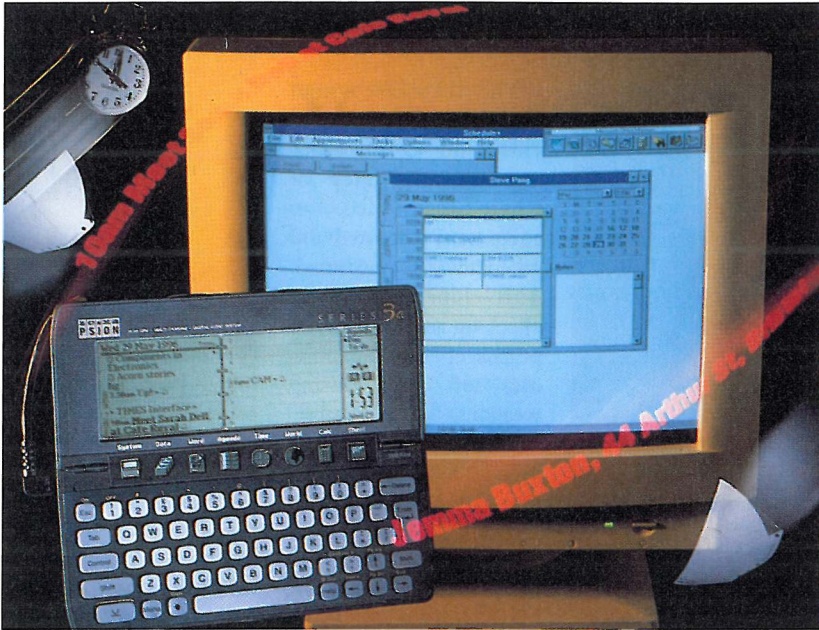
- A – 183g
- B – 216g
- C – 363g

That's it – simply write the three letters corresponding to your answers on a postcard. For

example, if you think that the Siena has 1MB/2MB options, can display four weeks at a time, and weighs 183g, write C C A.

Mail your answers to us to arrive no later than 17 January 1997, not forgetting your name, address and telephone number. On that day, the first three correct solutions selected at random will win a Siena, in the language version of your choice. Please mail your entries to:
Psion User
Redwood Publishing
12-26 Lexington Street
London W1R 4HQ
United Kingdom





On the agenda – synchronisation

When the Series 3 range was introduced in 1990 it was intended to be a personal device, essentially a superior electronic replacement for the paper-based personal organiser. Today, the role of a Series 3a or 3c is far more extensive – the world's most popular 'personal digital assistant' has now become a serious corporate tool, capable of interfacing with company-wide productivity programs.

The desktop PC is, of course, well catered for when it comes to personal information managers (also known as PIMs). Of the dozen or so titles available, two Windows titles account for around two-thirds of the installed base of PIMs – Microsoft's Schedule+ and Lotus Organizer.

Schedule+ is popular mainly because it was

'bundled' with Windows for Workgroups 3.11 (and is now included in Office 95) and so was essentially free.

Lotus Organizer succeeded largely because of its successful translation of the traditional six-ring, paper-based personal organiser to the computer screen. The use of a personal organiser 'metaphor', with tabbed sections and pages that 'turned', made users feel immediately at home.

Like the Series 3 range, these PIMs were originally personal productivity tools, but with the increasing importance of networking, both have evolved into group information managers, allowing teams of workers in a department to arrange meetings by sharing their agendas over the network. Thanks to 'group-enabled' PIMs, it is now

possible to find the first free time slot for several people at the touch of button – contrast that with the manual method, which requires many phone calls, at the very least. So for making best use of a department's resources, group-enabled PIMs are invaluable.

Mobile workers

But what about staff that spend time away from the office? With many mobile workers equipped with a Series 3a, there's now a compelling need for software capable of integrating the agenda data on the Psion with that stored in a desktop PIM, to ensure that both sets of data remain identical. The solution is synchronising software.

Synchronising software is a utility program, typically run on the PC under Windows, that

Synchronise diaries: there are three packages that allow your office computer to keep up with your Psion

reads both sets of agenda data from the PC and the Psion, converts the data into a common format, and analyses it to look for additions and deletions. It also checks for conflicts, such as different appointments booked at the same time on both PC and Psion. The software then amends each set of data as appropriate and writes them back to the PC and Psion.

Synchronisers can also co-ordinate address and contact databases on both the PC and Psion.

Synchronisers are different from file transfer utilities such as PsiWin, which, although they perform format conversion from, say, Psion's Agenda to Lotus Organizer, don't reconcile different sets of agenda data. In practice, synchronisation works like this: every time you return to your office you connect your Psion to the PC, using a 3Link cable (or PC Link if you have a Series 3c or Siena) and run the synchronising software. A few minutes later, your desktop PIM is updated with new data from the Psion and vice versa. It's as easy as that.

With the new Series 3c and Siena, 'entry codes' have been added to Agenda. These allow the segregation of personal or private Agenda details from those intended for departmental consumption, which is crucial for group-enabled scheduling.

Now, when you create an Agenda entry you can assign one of three codes

to it: Open, Private or Restricted. The Open code allows anyone in the group to view the details; Private allows blocks of time to be made unavailable for reasons known only to you; and Restricted stops a Psion Agenda entry from appearing on the desktop system altogether.

This means that anyone can access the PIM on your PC, see what you have planned, and book time with you – but the time slots for entries you've marked as private on your Psion won't be available.

You're more likely to have personal information on your Psion than on your desktop PC, and Agenda's new entry codes let you keep your personal affairs just that, personal and restricted to yourself.

And speed is another advantage of the Series 3c. With its serial port, the 3c can transfer data at least three times faster than the 3a, an advantage if you have a busy schedule, cutting the time taken to synchronise agenda and contacts data.

Roger Gann

Choice of three

Three synchroniser packages are available:

● **AgendaLink – Widget Software.** Tel: +44 1438 815444

● **Agenda Synchronizer – Time Technology.** Tel: +44 1483 424442

● **TIMELink – Yellow Computing.** Tel: +49 71 369 5110

All three packages allow you to synchronise your Psion with the two most popular PIM packages, Microsoft Schedule+ and Lotus Organizer.



GLOBAL REPORT

Psion computers are used in many valuable and challenging projects around the world. We continue our regular look at the extra benefits of portable power

Giving hope

Mark and Caroline Cook established Hope and Homes for Children after witnessing the results of the ethnic conflict in the Balkans. The UK charity has since built homes for orphans of war and disaster in Croatia, Sarajevo and Sierra Leone (see right); and projects are planned in other areas.



Founder Mark Cook uses a 1MB Series 3a in his extensive travels on behalf of the charity, with a 3Fax, printer cable and PsiWin. He uses the Series 3a primarily to write reports, keep track of the charity's finances, send faxes and collect email. Portability is the main advantage, but battery life is also crucial because the mains power can be unreliable in many locations.

Golden effort in Atlanta

The first ever Paralympic Yachting Regatta was held this summer, with British team Andy Cassell, Kevin Curtiss and Tony Downs winning gold. Held on Lake Lanier, north of Atlanta, the seven races were sailed by 14 teams.

Sailing was recognised as a Paralympic sport only 18 months ago, yet it is one of the few sports in the Games which enables people with an extremely wide range of disabilities to participate, including quadriplegics and those with cerebral palsy.

John Derbyshire, the shore-based manager and coach of the British team, used a Series 3a during the Games

as his portable office. 'I sent faxes using the 3a,' says Derbyshire, 'stored contacts in Data, and wrote team notices in Word. I also played chess with the team on the flight to Atlanta.'



On-board communication

On 29 September, 14 yachts set sail on the first leg of the BT Global Challenge. The 10-month race includes stops in Rio de Janeiro, Wellington, Sydney, Cape Town and Boston, before returning to the UK.

Psion has equipped the crew of *Nuclear Electric* with Series 3a's to run navigational software and to store their ideas and reflections throughout the race. Each crew volunteer has also received a 3Fax, so that they can send faxes to family, friends and local newspapers.



Science lessons

In the new South Africa, there is an urgent need to provide science education. The Giyani Science Centre, in the Northern Transvaal, was built in 1989 to help meet this need. The centre houses labs, workshops, computers and a library, and hundreds of pupils and teachers pass through its doors weekly.

Psion helped the Canon Collins Educational Trust for Southern Africa to cover the educational fees of seven South Africans who work at the Giyani Centre, and who came to the UK to upgrade their science qualifications. The students have now returned to Giyani to train other teachers and teach local children.

Travelling light

Watch out for the start of an epic voyage. From the end of the month, Richard Branson will be in Morocco awaiting weather conditions which will allow him to launch his hot-air and helium-filled balloon, the *Virgin Global Challenger*. His aim: to fly non-stop around the world in no more than 20 days. A Series 3a will be an essential part of Branson's luggage, allowing him to record airborne events without exceeding his baggage allowance.



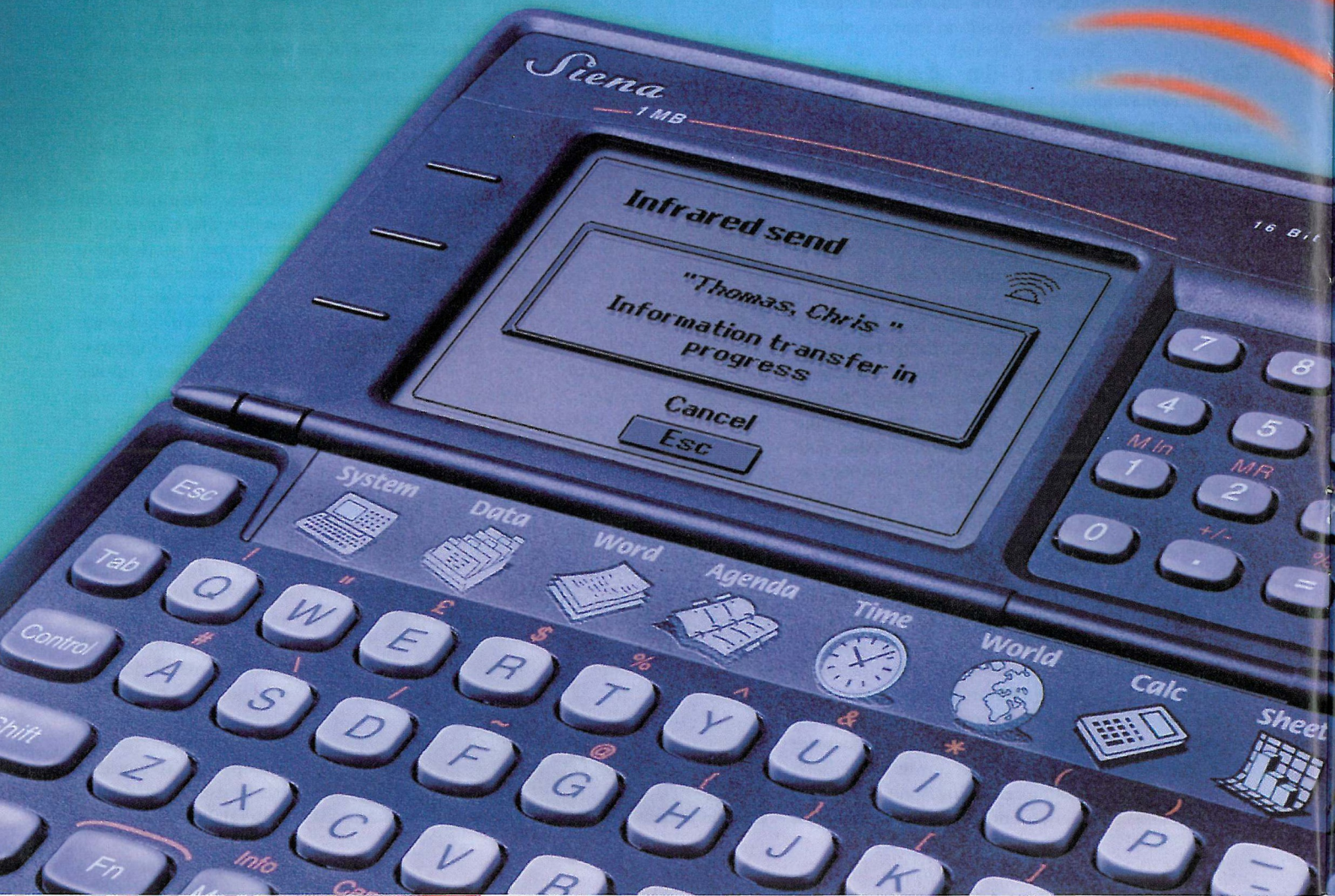
Hearing aid

Despite the capabilities of modern communication systems, the needs of the deaf have not generally been catered for. Now a three-year research project aims to influence telecoms developments to take account of the needs of people with hearing loss. The TCALL (Telecommunications for All) project involves the evaluation of varied experimental equipment, including GSM phones linked to Series 3a's, which are used to send and receive short text messages. Because speech problems are often a consequence of hearing loss, text and images are ideal communication media. The project is managed by Portset Systems, of Southampton, UK.

Red alert

Just when everyone was expecting a new product from Psion, up pops the double act of the new Series 3c and Siena – both equipped with an infrared communications port and improved applications. We put them both through their paces

Photography by Douglas Fisher





After a good deal of speculation in Psion circles about a new machine, the pundits have their answer in the shape of not one, but two additions to the Psion family. At first glance, the new Siena and Series 3c appear to be very different products – but both share the same pedigree of the best-selling Series 3/3a range, and indeed both have a very similar set of upgraded applications, which is why we are looking at them together and separately, if you get our drift...

And because the Siena and Series 3c have all the usual core Psion applications, they are fully compatible with data created on a Series 3 or 3a, so you don't have to worry about transferring your valuable information when you opt for either of these new models.

Series 3c – quick facts

Any Series 3/3a owner will be instantly at home with the new 3c. It is essentially an evolution of the Series 3a, and has several new features, including a high-speed serial communications port; an infrared port that conforms to the emerging IrDA standards (see section on infrared); new file management software; improved digital sound recording and editing; and a Jotter application for taking quick notes.

Apart from these features, the Series 3c has a number of improvements to the other core applications, such as Data and Agenda, and it shares these upgraded applications with the Siena's own application set – all of these are described in the following pages.

Siena at a glance

The Siena is aimed fairly and squarely at a big hole in the personal organiser market. While the Series 3/3a, and now the Series 3c, have been getting increasingly powerful, with a range of sophisticated communications and storage options, some people require only a smaller, pocket-sized machine for the core organiser functions.

However, the many basic 'databank' products on the market simply don't have the scope and power of the organiser functions on the Series 3a – and won't have nearly as much memory either. So Psion provided the Siena with all the core Series 3a organiser functions, while designing a more lightweight package for them to ride around in – a truly 'shirt-pocket' sized product that nonetheless packs a considerable punch.

The most striking aspect of the Siena is indeed its lightweight form – but the familiar 'button bar' applications of the Series 3a are all there, as are both serial and infrared communications ports.

The Siena and Series 3c are described overleaf, as are the extended set of applications that are shared by both new models, including the infrared capability.



Series 3c: *talking business*

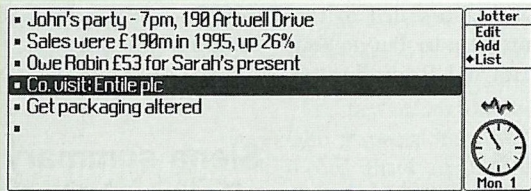
First things first – what happened to the Series 3b? That's a question we put to Roy MacKenzie, the Series 3c product manager. 'The letter B, in English at least, implies something less good, such as B-movie or beta version,' he explains. 'That certainly isn't the case with the 3c.'

Now that one's out of the way, we can tell you that the 3c is indeed the next step in the evolution of the Series 3 range. It has a new, satin-feel finish, the design is even more stylish, and the colour is a rather darker shade of grey (almost black, in fact).

The Series 3c uses the same processor as the 3a and indeed the Siena. It comes in 1MB or 2MB memory versions, and has a standard RS232 serial communications port that works at a speed of 57.6kbits/s – allowing much faster transmission of data to and from the Series 3c than is possible with the 3a. Like the Siena, it also has an IrDA compatible infrared port.

A higher cost, back-lit version of the 2MB model is available only in North America at present.

Apart from the enhancement to the core applications already described, there's a number of new software features designed for the Series 3c. Jotter is a new application that takes its place in the button bar. This provides a notepad for you to jot down information very quickly, without having to create a new file. You



Jotter allows quick notes to be made without opening files

can create a set of notes using Jotter and, when time allows, you can copy the information to another application.

Perhaps the most powerful addition is a new file manager, which you access from the System menu.

'Files' allows a true tree structure of all your files to be displayed, and also allows files to be selected and copied from one window to another without typing in file names. You can also use it to find files.

Psion has also added in an improved version of the

package – see *News* on p6 for more on synchronisation. You can also link these categories to the entry codes described above.

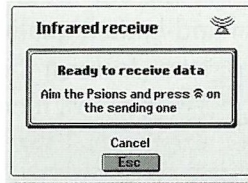
Other applications show further minor changes. The Time clock is now of a rounded design, and there's a new calculator that looks like a desktop unit with a printout. On the Siena, there are a few more changes to accommodate the smaller screen size.

Inside infrared

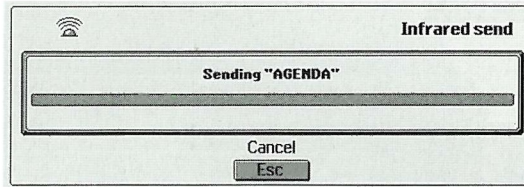
You can't, of course, see infrared radiation with your eyes, any more than you can see radio waves. But this particular wavelength band is proving very useful in portable computing, especially now that a standards body (IrDA, the Infrared Data Association) has laid down some ground rules for its use. The standard that Psion is using in the Siena and Series 3c enables fast data transmission between devices placed at up to one metre apart. You can send any file, such as an entire database, or just a single item, such as an Agenda entry or an individual Data entry.

Psion has made it very easy to transfer information – you simply place the cursor on, say, an appointment entry in Agenda and press the infrared send key – all the recipient has to do is press the infrared receive key, and the Psions take care of the rest. The Agenda item is posted automatically to the other person's diary.

A file that's transmitted in this way goes automatically to the same location on the other person's Psion, but if there is already an existing file of the same name, you are prompted for a name and location in which to save the file. Help information on both the Siena and 3c shows you how to select information in Agenda, Data, Word and other applications for trans-



Aim and fire: receiving an infrared transmission on the Siena



Time to delegate: sending your entire Agenda file from a 3c to a colleague who no doubt will be keen to take on your work...

mission to another Psion. You even get some whizzy noises to indicate successful transmission and reception – but these can be turned off if you want some privacy. During a meeting for example, you may want to send a private note to someone opposite without anyone else knowing... this indeed raises some interesting possibilities.

As for speed, the Series 3c supports 115.2kbts/s; the Siena 19.2kbts/s. In our test, 150 Data records took about six seconds to move from a Series 3c to a Siena. At present, apart from other Psions, only laptop computers and printers tend to have infrared interfaces (see also *Printers to go* on p18). But desktop computers will soon feature an infrared port as standard – which will allow you to backup your Psion without a cable.

PsiWin upgrade

To coincide with the launch of the Siena and 3c, Psion has released PsiWin V1.1, which comes complete with a serial cable that's compatible with the serial interface on both new machines.

The new PsiWin has converters for Lotus Organizer 2.1 and Microsoft Schedule+ 7.0, enabling synchroniser products to work properly.

There are two versions of PsiWin:

- PsiWin 1.1 3Link, which has the 3Link serial cable for Series 3/3a users.

- PsiWin 1.1 PC Link, which has the new PC Link cable for both the Siena and 3c.

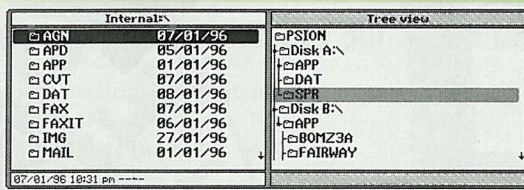
In addition, those who already have PsiWin V1.0 can buy upgrade software on diskette; this has an auto-install program to put the new converters into the existing PsiWin folders on your PC.

Record application as standard. This combines the digital editing elements of the SoundMaster application with the Record feature from the Series 3a. Accessible from the System screen, it's called Sound.

Other minor changes on the Series 3c include an easier way of applying styles such as underline and bold in Word; and Sheet now has the concept of inserting and deleting cells (instead of opening and closing gaps), making it more like Microsoft's Excel.

The serial communications port has the same, new 25-way connector as the Siena. On the Series 3c, it runs at 57.6kbts/s, and needs the new version of PsiWin plus new PC Link cable to connect to a PC. There's also a new PC Card Modem Adaptor for connecting all Series 3a or 3c machines to standard PC Card modems (see *Software Review* section for more).

Finally, the 3c comes with built-in support for OVAL, Psion's programming language that is compatible with Microsoft Visual Basic, allowing easy 'porting' of applications developed on the PC.



The Files application on the 3c allows easy location and movement of files with its 'tree' structure

Series 3c summary

- The Series 3c is an evolution of the best-selling 3a.
- It's available in 1MB and 2MB memory versions.
- It has a fast 57.6kbts/s serial port, and an infrared port.
- New on-board software includes the

Jotter notepad, file manager (called Files), and Sound application. Other applications have been enhanced.

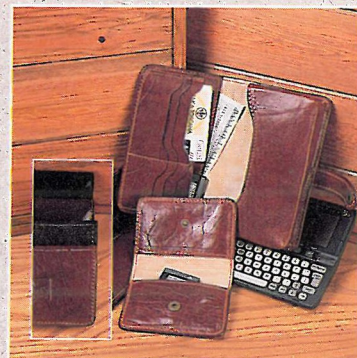
- The Series 3c runs OVAL, compatible with Microsoft Visual Basic.

- Initially, the Series 3c is available in English, German, French, Flemish and Dutch versions.

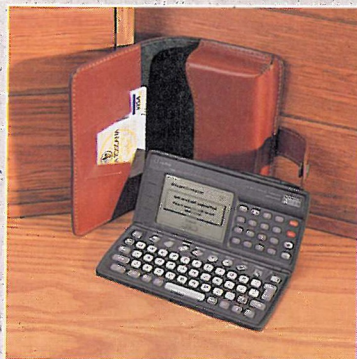
Organise Your Christmas Gifts.



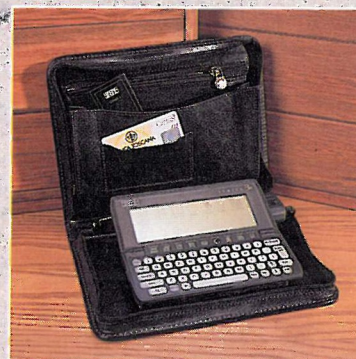
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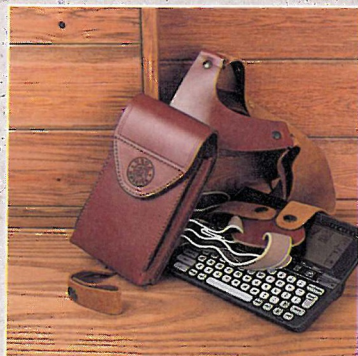
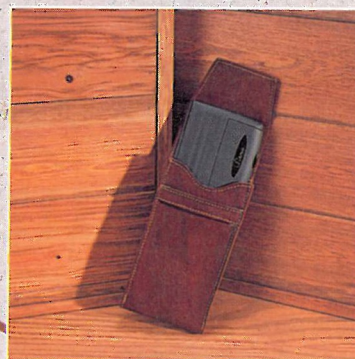
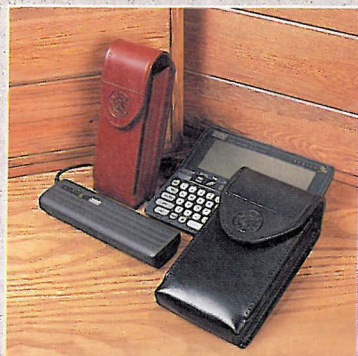


As well as offering protection from theft and expensive accidents VEGA HOLSTERS are practical, stylish and above all functional.



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Gifts

galore

Stuck for inspiration? Take a look at our

Christmas gift ideas

1. Lighter socket adaptor. Vega Holsters. Tel: +44 1706 44177.
2. Car mount. Widget Software. Tel: +44 1438 815444.
3. Chinese Chess & Backgammon. Purple Software. Tel: +44 171 387 7777.
4. Chrome desk stand. Widget Software. Tel: +44 1438 815444.
5. Soft leather cases in classic colours. SystemLink. Tel: +44 1234 711220.
6. Coloured cover designs for the new Siena. Contact your local Psion distributor for details of the full range.
7. Hard protective cases in a range of designs and colours. Widget Software. Tel: +44 1438 815444.
8. Useful Programs for the 3a. Capall Bann Publishing. Tel: +44 1635 46455.



6



7



READERS' RESPONSE

Got a Psion tale that you're longing to share, a problem, or a handy hint for other budding Psion users? Drop us a line without delay, by letter, email or fax

Memory aid

I have been in hospital for nearly four weeks, after suffering a near-total memory loss due to stress and anxiety triggered by an accident in which I hit my head on the pavement. I was found wandering around a car park, with no idea of who or where I was. Eventually I was identified and brought to this hospital.

I was carrying my Series 3a at the time, which was password protected. After two weeks spent trying to remember my own password, I tried one word as a joke, and this luckily happened to be correct. The 3a and the information stored in it has since been a godsend. As I read every file stored in the machine, I am slowly beginning to recognise things.

I have to say that if it were not for my 3a, I

would still be unable to remember the little that I have to date.

*Michael Kaye
Fairfield General Hospital,
Bury, UK*

Outgunned

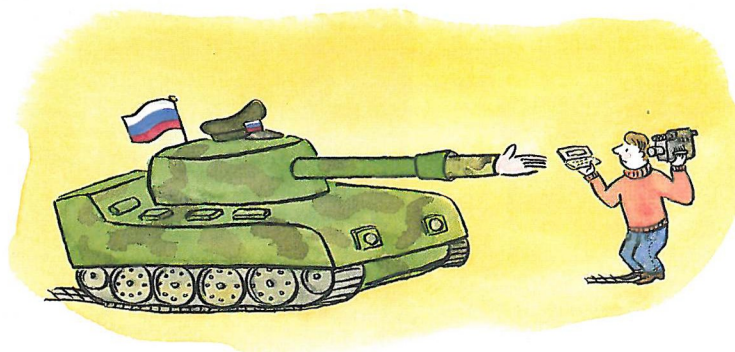
I have unfortunately been parted from my Series 3a through rather unusual circumstances. While working for a German television news programme, I spent an afternoon filming Russian Interior troops in Chechnya.

They were engrossed by my Psion, and as 'payment' for allowing me to film them, I had to hand over my 3a. To be honest, they didn't give me much choice and as they all had guns, I didn't argue!

*Richard Parry
Brixton, London*

Winter of discontent

The last issue of *Psion User* was dated Summer



96 – but it was winter for us here in South Africa. What's going on, may I ask?

*Caroline Curtis
Cape Town, South Africa*
Well, you've got us there.

We send the magazine to many countries, mainly in the northern hemisphere, so we have to ask your forgiveness for this unseasonal treatment.

Simply magic

Like many others, I use my Series 3a to keep track of appointments and to jot down ideas. However, as a professional magician, one of the Psion's most important tasks is helping me perform magic.

One effect, which I've called 'Miscalculation', has been published in the journal of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and I also use the 3a for... well I can't explain any further, I'm afraid. Suffice it to say that the Psion enables me to perform an outstanding effect, but is unseen by the audience.
*Geoff Chippendale
Westerham, Kent, UK*

Reader in diskress

Are there any sturdy SSD holders around, as my desk is getting very cluttered?

*M. Fitzpatrick
Birkenhead, Merseyside*

You're in luck – Widget Software sells a sturdy, aluminium 'toast' rack for SSDs (and a matching desk stand for the Series 3 range). Contact Widget on +44 1438 815444.

Help with Hebrew

I was recently on holiday in Israel, and noticed that Psions were sold with software supporting Hebrew script in Word and Data. Being a student of modern Hebrew myself, I would be interested in obtaining such software for my own Series 3a. Can you help?

*Gavin Collins
London, UK*

For software supporting Hebrew script in Word, Data and Sheet, contact MEC Commercial Division on +44 171 924 3383.

Bible prayer

As a clergyman, I was glad to learn that the whole Bible is available

on a single SSD. The only problem is that it is the Authorised (King James) Bible that is referred to, which contains inaccurate translation in places.

What I and, I suspect, many others would like is a modern translation (such as the Revised Standard version, New International version, or Good News Bible) available on SSD with search and quick-access facilities. How about it, Psion or other developers?

*Rev Jim Medcalf
Bromley, Kent, UK*

Cleared for take-off

Can I use the Series 3a on board an aeroplane, especially during take-off and landing?

*Michael Hadrian
Germany*

You can use your Psion at any time on a flight, but don't use a mobile phone to pick up your email during take-off and landing.

Join the club

I like your new *Psion User* magazine in German. It has given me some information about



the Series 3a, and I then went out and bought one as a result.

Will this magazine come out regularly from now on? How do I get the next issue?

*Andreas Becker
Germany*

Psion User is currently available in English, German and French, and is free to all registered Psion users. Please check with your country's Psion office or main distributor to make sure you are on the mailing list.

German group

I read in the last issue that there are active user groups in several countries, including Germany. It would be nice if you could publish the addresses.

*Ralf Klippelberg
Gelsenkirchen, Germany*

The Psion User Club in Germany is at: c/o WAVE Publishing, Tegernseer Landstraße 31, D-82054 Sauerlach. Tel: +49 81 041383.

On your bike

Recently, my girlfriend and I were on holiday in Italy on our motorbike. Naturally the Series 3a came with us. I used it every evening to write my diary, and we kept a detailed record of our expenses, so we always knew what the cash situation was.

There was another table for the petrol costs, that also showed the number of kilometres and the amount of petrol we'd used. Back at home I transferred the text to the PC and polished it a bit, then printed it.

There is hardly a better way to use a computer. What use is the fastest system when it's

sitting at home while you are somewhere else?

*Dirk Boehmer
Germany*

See also Starting Grid on p20 for more on how to make the most of your spreadsheet.

Loud and clear

As a Church of Scotland minister, I regularly visit the sick in the hospitals in Aberdeen and, on one occasion, I was very grateful for my Series 3a.

When I visited one of the church members I discovered that she had lost her hearing and was unable to hear what I was saying.

I took my Psion from my jacket pocket and used it to communicate with her, and I have to say she was overjoyed at this novel use of the Psion, and was able to follow what I was saying.

*Rev T.C. Richardson
Aberdeen, UK*

Net results

We recently read an article by Roger Gann giving an example of using his 3Fax to receive data over the Internet. I contacted the technical support department at Psion Inc and they said that this wasn't possible. Please send me any special software requirements as well as directions on how to use the Psion and 3Fax on the Internet.

*Steve Jackson
Lodi, California, US*

There's a little confusion here: Roger's article explained how you can access the Internet via a service such as CompuServe, which acts as an intermediary. All you need is a 3Fax, which includes basic log-on software, and you can then download

better software, such as Psion GmbH's Terminal. Once on CompuServe, you can use its FTP, Telnet and Usenet services. Of course, now there's more choice, with the launch of PsiMail Internet and the PC Card Modem Adaptor (see Software Reviews).

Price shy

I can't see any prices for items mentioned in the magazine. Why is this?

*Michael Morris
Dallas, US*

We don't quote prices because Psion User is distributed in many countries in three language versions. Please ask your local retailer for prices.

Sea view

I use a Garmin GPS 45 receiver when I go sailing on the Lake of Neuchatel - although the lake is only some 25 nautical miles long, difficult weather conditions can make for tricky sailing. I also take my Psion on board to store my log book, and would like to find software which can combine the two units.

Does anyone know of any nautical navigation software which can be used with a handheld

GPS unit, like Auto-Route for car drivers?

*Karl Georg Scheuter
Zollikofen, Switzerland*

Call answered

I prepare an emergency on-call schedule for Duke Medical Center in the US. Each of the clinicians has a Psion and can check daily to see who is scheduled to be on call. Currently I have to input manually the data into the Agenda and also into a daily planner on my Mac or PC. Is there a program that will allow me to input the data directly into the PC or Mac and then download into the Agenda program on the Psion?

*Barbara Willingham
US*

See our page on synchronisers (p6) for good news.

Readers can write to Psion User magazine at 12-26 Lexington Street, London W1R 4HQ, United Kingdom. Fax: +44 171 312 2601. Or email us on 100566.3042@compuserve.com. We are unable to reply to all readers' letters individually.



Q&A

Psion Technical Support receives hundreds of calls every day. Here are some of the questions commonly asked about the system screen and general use of the Series 3/3a.

I've forgotten my password. Can anything be done?

No. The system password is very secure; the only way to clear it is to hard-reset the machine, which deletes all the information stored in the internal memory. If you have a back-up of your information, you will be able to restore it after the hard-reset; if you don't, all your data will be lost.

How do I stop alarms interrupting a meeting? On the System screen, press Psion-S. In the 'Set the sound' dialogue, set the 'Alarm Sounds' line to 'Off', and then press Enter.

Should I use rechargeable batteries? Although you can use them with the Series 3 or 3a, rechargeable batteries are not ideal. They will last for less time than long-life alkaline batteries, and will lose power very suddenly when they start to fail.

So if you do use them, it is a good idea to carry a spare set of fully charged batteries, just in case. How do I hide the Status window (or clock)? In most applications, including the System screen, the Control-Menu keypress controls the appearance of the Status window; on a Series 3 it switches it on and off, on a 3a it cycles between full size, half size and off.

Printers *to go*

Imagine being able to print from your Psion wherever you are. Appealing? Read on for the low-down on mobile printers, which are now smaller and more affordable than ever

Illustration by Lawrence Zeegan

it's a cliché, but it's true and becoming harder to ignore: the world is going mobile. You can now make phone calls, send faxes and even log into a computer network without leaving your car; so it should come as no surprise that you can do something as simple as print from your Psion wherever you are. More and more people are printing on the move – indeed, printer giant Hewlett Packard estimates that the mobile printer market will have grown by 43% between 1995 and 1996. And all this is good news for the buyer. Inevitably, choice has increased and prices have fallen as the competition heats up.

Linking up

Just because you're connecting the printer to a Psion, your choice isn't restricted. Any printer with a standard parallel (or Centronics) port will happily connect to your Psion; you simply buy Psion's parallel link and use it to plug the two together. If you want to connect via the printer's serial (or RS232) port, you need to get hold of the Psion serial cable, which is supplied with PsiWin, plus a serial printer adaptor cable, available from Psion.

If the printer has a non-standard port – which has been adapted, say, to the smaller build of the model – you should be able to buy an adaptor cable with the printer, which will then plug into the parallel or serial cable provided by Psion. This is how Citizen's PN60 works.

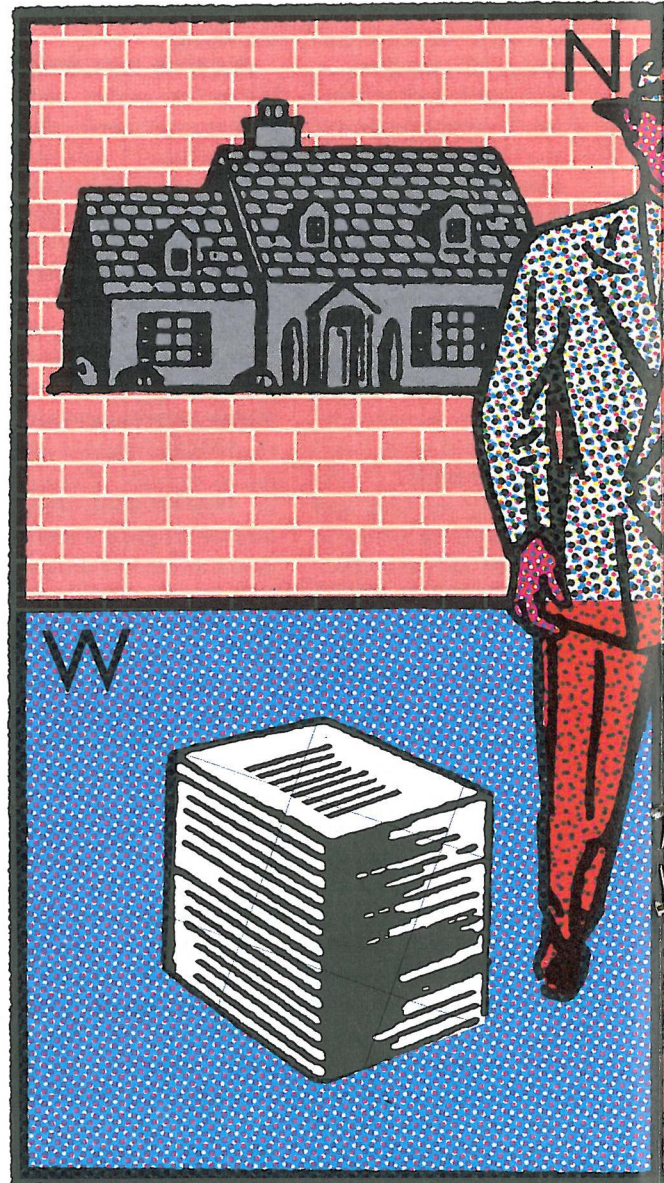
You may not even need a cable at all. The new Series 3c has an infrared port which allows you to print from an infrared printer simply by pointing one infrared port at the other. (The port also allows you to swap data with other Psions without physically connecting the machines.) If you like the sound of this, but your printer isn't infrared, you can buy inexpensive third-party devices which plug into the printer's parallel port and add the infrared function. Infrared printing isn't initially supported on the new Siena, but upgrade software will be available from your local Psion distributor and on the Internet.

(For more on infrared and the new machines, see *Red Alert*, starting on p8.)

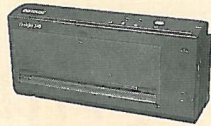
What to buy

So now you know how to get the printer connected. But which model do you buy? There are two main technologies used in mobile printing: inkjet (or 'bubble-jet'), and thermal transfer (or 'thermal wax'). Machines using either of these technologies will cost more to run than the laser printer in your office, but the capital cost of machines is considerably lower.

Although many mobile printers can print in colour, you will not be able to take advantage of this extra capability when printing from your Psion. This is because the Psion cannot give the printer the necessary 'colour' commands. However, printers with optional colour often cost little more than ordinary monochrome printers nowadays, and it can be useful to have the colour option in case you ever



PRINTER REVIEW



MODEL NAME:	Canon BJ-30	Citizen PN60	Hewlett Packard DeskJet 340	Star SJ-144
TECHNOLOGY:	Bubblejet	Thermal transfer	Inkjet	Thermal transfer
PRINT SPEED:	2ppm	2ppm	3ppm	3ppm
RESOLUTION (DPI):	720 x 360	360 x 360	600 x 300	360 x 360
PAPER CAPACITY:	30 sheet feeder	Single sheet	Single sheet; 60 sheet feeder optional	30 sheet feeder
CONNECTIVITY:	Centronics parallel	Psion kits optional (parallel and serial)	Centronics parallel	Centronics parallel
WEIGHT:	1.4kg	0.5kg	2.5kg	2.5kg
INFRARED:	No	Due 1997	Optional	No
BATTERY POWER:	Optional	Yes	Yes	No

Features run-down

PAPER CAPACITY A few mobile printers have no cut sheet feeder as standard, but most come with a sheet feeder that holds up to 30 sheets of A4-sized paper.

PRINT SPEED Don't expect the same speed from your mobile printer as you get from the laser machine in the office. You'll probably find that it prints between two and four pages per minute.

RESOLUTION Given in dpi (dots per inch) this indicates the level of print quality. The higher the resolution, the higher the quality. Laser printers print at up to around 600 x 600dpi; your average mobile printer probably works at around 360 x 360dpi. This may sound wildly different, but you will find that the quality is fine for most applications.

WORKLOAD Mobile printers are not designed to take the same bashing as that endured by most office printers. They will have a lower maximum recommended monthly volume, so if this is a concern, ask about the recommended workload before you buy.

WEIGHT AND DIMENSIONS Some mobile printers are smaller than others. Citizen's PN60, Hewlett Packard's DeskJet 340 and Canon's BJ-30 are all extremely compact, and can be carried around with relative ease. The Star SJ-144 is bigger than the others and is mains powered only (the others also have standard or optional battery packs); this makes the SJ-144 more suitable for occasional transportation.

want to connect it to your personal computer at home or in the office. When using the printer on the move with your Psion, you simply replace the colour thermal ribbon or ink cartridge with a high-capacity black version that is sold by the manufacturers for monochrome-only printing. Some printers even have a dual-cartridge facility, which houses the colour and monochrome cartridges together.

Above we give details of four mobile printers which all connect to your Psion with ease. Three of the four models are colour capable, but also offer high-capacity consumables for monochrome-only printing. Canon's BJ-30 only prints in black-and-white, and would suit buyers who are sure that they will never require the colour option.

There's never been a better time to buy a mobile printer. Machines are lighter and better value than ever before, and yet they still manage to pack in the full functionality of an office-sized machine. And as infrared technology takes hold, printing on the move will become easier still. So what are you waiting for? Grab your Psion, pick up a printer and get moving.

Contacts

Canon and Hewlett Packard: these manufacturers have offices and distributors worldwide.
 Citizen Systems & Peripherals Europe: Tél: +44 1753 584111. Fax: +44 1753 582442.
 Star Micronics UK: Tél: +44 1494 471111. Fax: +44 1494 473333.



Starting *grid*

Whether it's racing car lap times or your monthly outgoings that need calculating, Sheet is truly a 'killer application'. Mark Whitehorn shows how to master its number-crunching abilities

Illustration by Paul Allen

The Crusaders sought the Holy Grail; software designers seek the 'Killer App', an application so irresistible that every user must have it. The difference between them is that killer applications are known to exist.

The first was the spreadsheet – indeed an early one, VisiCalc, was so successful that it was a major factor in the runaway success of the personal computer. But forget PCs – your very own Psion comes equipped with a spreadsheet which boasts all of the functionality of a monster killer application.

The worksheet is to the spreadsheet what a document is to a word processor. When you open a new worksheet, you will see lots of blank cells – these are the intersections of alphabetically labelled columns and numbered rows. Each cell can be uniquely identified by these labels; cell A1,

for example, is found at the top left of the worksheet. There are some 250 columns, so after you reach Z the next is AA followed by AB, right up to IV. There are around 8,000 rows, so the worksheet has... well, we can use the spreadsheet to work how many cells there are. Open a new worksheet by pressing the Sheet application button, press *Psion N* to create a new file, type in a name and press Enter.

Now type the word 'Columns' (without the inverted commas) and the letters will appear at the top of the screen. Press Enter and the word will appear in cell A1 (which is where the cursor was by default when the worksheet was opened). Press the down arrow key, and the 'cell cursor' on screen will move down to cell A2. Type in the word 'Rows' and this time press the down arrow key without pressing the Enter key. This will enter the data into the correct cell and move the cell cursor down to A3 (saving you a whole keystroke).

Type in 'Total' and move the cell cursor back up to B1. Type 250 and 8000 into B1 and B2 respectively. Finally, type the rather odd-looking '=B1*B2' (again, without the inverted commas) into cell B3.

	A	B	C	D
1	Columns	250		
2	Rows	8000		
3	Total	2000000		
4				
5				
6				
7				

Screenshot 1: This worksheet shows a simple calculation. Note the cell cursor is on cell B3 and is displaying the formula for this cell at the top of the screen

	A	B	C	D
1	Columns	256		
2	Rows	8192		
3	Total	2097152		
4				
5		25165824		
6				
7				

Screenshot 2: The worksheet after the numbers have been updated. I have also added a formula which manipulates a value which is already the result of a formula. Formulae can be 'chained' in this way indefinitely

Voila! The answer is that each worksheet has two million cells. These should keep us occupied for a while (see screenshot 1).

Labels, numbers, formulae

Tiny as this worksheet is, it neatly illustrates the three entities you can put on a worksheet: labels (A1, A2 and A3); numbers (cells B1 and B2); and formulae (B3). The functions of the first two are reasonably self evident, although it is worth noting that labels aren't necessary for the worksheet to function, they are simply there to help the humans who have to use it.

The formulae manipulate the data in cells by virtue of their 'identifier', not of their specific value. In other words, the formulae above can be translated into pseudo human speak as: 'Make the cell B3 equal to the contents of cell B1 multiplied by the contents of cell B2.'

In that single fact – that formulae refer to cell locations not contents – the power of a spreadsheet is encapsulated. Not convinced? Suppose that I tell you that the exact numbers of columns and rows is

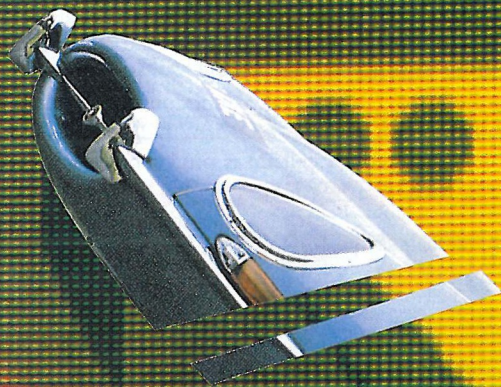
actually 256 and 8192?

You don't have to alter the formula; you simply change the figures I gave you earlier and the formula will automatically recalculate the answer to give the exact figure of 2,097,152 (see screenshot 2). Note that the formula stays in existence as a formula (if you move the cell

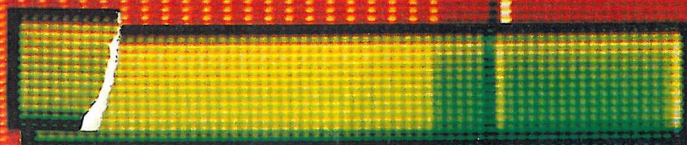
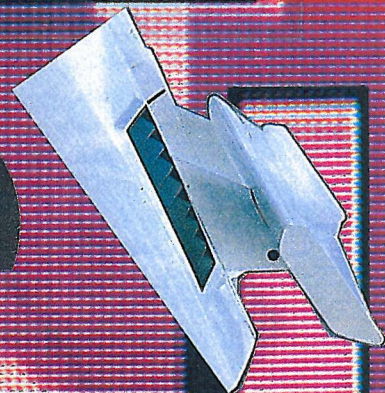
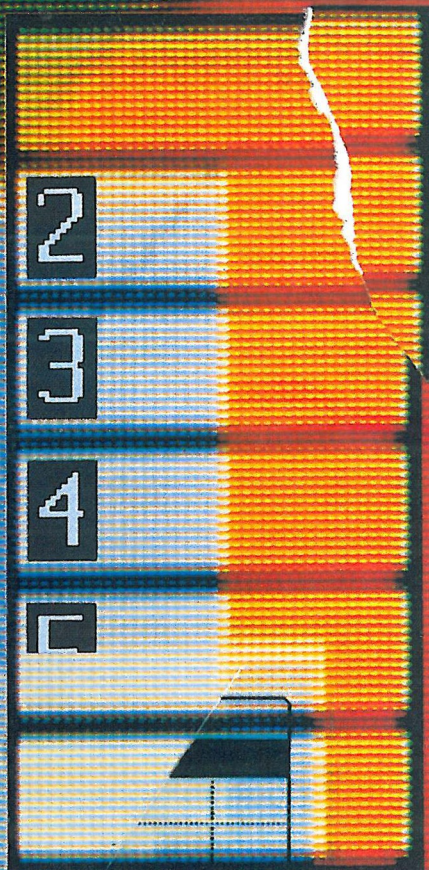
cursor on to cell B3, you can see the formula at the top of the screen) but the cell itself shows the numerical answer. As you might expect, you can 'chain' calculations. So you can write another formula in another cell which picks up the value from B3 (which is already the result of a calculation) and performs further manipulations upon it. For example, if you move the cell cursor to B5 and type '=B3*12', you can see the result of multiplying the number of cells by 12 (screenshot 2, again).

Now turn the page for the racing example.

D E F G



F2	F-SUB	Lap1	Lap2
1	Cars		
2	GT6	53	
3	Spitfire	56	
4	Mk. VI	58	
5	E Type	51	
6	D Type	51	
7	Dino	48	



Fast track

We'll build another worksheet to demonstrate some more of the Psion's capabilities. You can save the current worksheet using *Psion S*, and then open a new one by typing *Psion N* and entering a name. Or you can delete the current entries by moving to cell A1, holding down the Shift key, using the cursor keys to highlight cells which have been used, and pressing Delete.

Suppose that one of your hobbies is racing cars and you want to keep track of lap times. Write the names of the cars as labels down the left-hand side of the worksheet, and the lap numbers along the top. The numbers are the time in seconds to complete a single lap (it's a very short track).

I have kept the number of rows and columns to a minimum to ensure that it all fits on to one screen, but you can have many more if you wish.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Cars	Lap1	Lap2	Lap3	Total		
2	GT6	53	52	51	156		
3	Spitfire	56	57	56			
4	Mk.VI	58	59	57			
5	E Type	51	53	52			
6	D Type	51	49	50			
7	Dino	48	51	50			

Screenshot 3: The start of the racing worksheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Cars	Lap1	Lap2	Lap3	Total		
2	GT6	53	52	51	156		
3	Spitfire	56	57	56			
4	Mk.VI	58	59	57			
5	E Type	51	53	52			
6	D Type	51	49	50			
7	Dino	48	51	50			

Screenshot 4: Copying the formula to multiple cells...

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Cars	Lap1	Lap2	Lap3	Total		
2	GT6	53	52	51	156		
3	Spitfire	56	57	56	169		
4	Mk.VI	58	59	57	174		
5	E Type	51	53	52	156		
6	D Type	51	49	50	150		
7	Dino	48	51	50	149		

Screenshot 5: ...and press Psion I (for insert)

Ranges and functions

You will frequently want to perform an operation on a collection of cells, such as the formula which adds up the lap times for each car. To make it easier for us to reference a 'range' of cells like this, we can refer to them by means of the 'start' and 'end' cells. So B2:B6 refers to the cells B2,B3,B4,B5 and B6. These ranges can span both columns and rows, so A1:B4 refers to eight cells in all: A1,A2,A3,A4,B1,B2,B3 and B4.

Ranges make it very easy to address large numbers of cells very efficiently - the range A1:Z200, for example, refers to 5,200 cells. You often need to show the spreadsheet a range of cells so that it 'knows' the cells in which we are interested (for graphing, perhaps). This is done by holding down Shift and using the cursor keys to outline the range.

Functions perform mathematical calculations for you. The formula =A1+A2+A3+A4+A5 will add the contents of the first five cells in column A. The equivalent formula for the first 500 cells in column A would be incredibly tedious to write, so instead we can use a function to 'sum' or add up the numbers.

The form of a simple function is as follows: an equals sign, followed by the name of the function, followed by a range in brackets. So =SUM(A1:A5) is the equivalent of =A1+A2+A3+A4+A5. The range here is small, so the saving in terms of keystrokes is relatively minor, but the gain with =SUM(A1:A500) is huge.

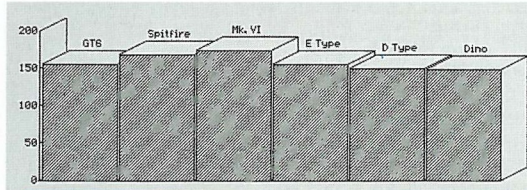
labels and numbers in place, together with the first of the formulae (cell E2). This formula, which calculates the total race time for the first car, could read as =B2+C2+D2, and that would work. However, in a 30-lap race the formula would become very long and tedious, so I have used a function and a range (see panel) which reads as =SUM(B2:D2). Clearly, the formula required for cell E3 is similar but not identical, =SUM(B3:D3). Wouldn't it be wonderful if the spreadsheet could work this out for itself? Well, it can.

With the cell cursor on cell E2, press *Psion C* (for Copy). Then move the cell cursor to cell E3, hold down Shift, and move the cell cursor to E7 (screenshot 4). This will highlight

the five cells, and all you have to do is to press *Psion I* (Insert). Lo and behold, the correct formulae have been copied to the correct locations (screenshot 5). This works for copying formulae in a horizontal direction as well.

In addition to the SUM function, the help system lists a host of other useful ones. You could use =MIN(B2:D2) in cell F2 and =AVG(B2:D2) in G2 to calculate the fastest and average lap times for the GT6.

Rather than copying these formulae one at a time to rows 3-7, you can copy both simultaneously by outlining cells F2 and G2 (using Shift Cursor key), pressing *Psion C*, outlining the target range F3:G7 and pressing *Psion I*.



Screenshot 6: A graphical representation, complete with labels for each car, as well as total race times

Added value

Once the results have been collected, you'll obviously want to see them graphically. Highlight cells E2:E7 (Shift Cursor keys) and press the diamond key which switches the spreadsheet to graphic view. It would be more useful to see the names of the cars as well as the total race times, so press *Psion B*, set Enabled to Yes, and type in the range as A2:A7. The graph will then show the names of the cars as labels (screenshot 6).

There is one more feature I'm keen to show you. This graph, and the data in general, would make more sense if, after the final results are in, we can sort the cars in finishing order. Press diamond to return to the data, and select the range A2:E7, press *Shift Psion S* (for Sort) and choose E as the 1st key (col). Column E contains the total race time, so we are telling the spreadsheet to sort by that value. Not only does the data look more sensible in this order, but pressing diamond shows that the graph has automatically updated.

Finally, remember that spreadsheets can also be used to create text-based tables such as train timetables and price lists, with cells formatted in 'Time' or 'Currency' as appropriate.

Anything can be done with your Psion's killer app!





SOFTWARE REVIEWS

We've expanded the software review section in this issue – but we've still got room only for Psion's forthcoming releases, in a very busy period for the company

PsiMail Internet

The world on your Psion



The Internet is rarely out of the news these days, as more and more individuals and organisations log in to the benefits of global electronic mail and World Wide Web pages. Now, as promised, Psion is shortly to launch PsiMail Internet, a product designed to bring all these benefits to the

able to exchange messages using your Psion when out of the office.

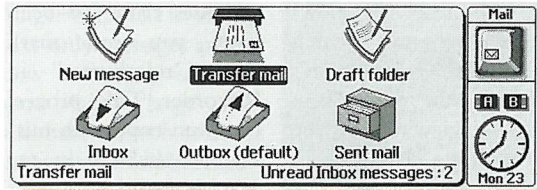
You don't need technical expertise to get hooked up to the Internet. For those that want it, Psion will be offering an Internet account with the product, which will take you through the process of signing up with an Internet service provider,

provider to send the mail. At the same time, received mail is automatically downloaded and stored in your 'in box'.

You can set a 'ceiling' on the size of a file that can be received, so you won't run out of space.

PsiMail Internet is easy to install and configure. Scripts to automate logins to Internet service providers are included.

The product also includes an Internet Web browser. This allows you to surf the millions of pages of information available on the World Wide Web. Initially, this feature will have limited graphics capability, but



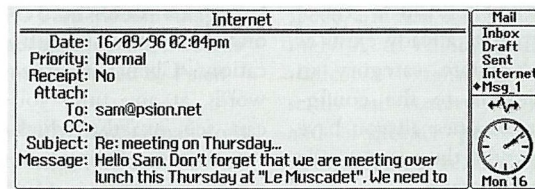
Post office: all you need to manage your Internet mail

Series 3a/3c user.

With PsiMail Internet installed, and with the aid of a modem, you can send and receive Internet email to anyone with an Internet address. They could be family and friends in far-away places, or even in the next street: with PsiMail Internet you'll be able to keep abreast of events without running up a large telephone bill, and without the worry about missing something really important.

Messages sent over the Internet are delivered very quickly and can be written and read at times that suit you best.

And if your workplace uses the Internet, you'll



Composing a message for Internet delivery

and configuring your Psion to go on-line. The company is also looking at additional benefits, such as sending software updates and new product information to users who take up this option.

PsiMail Internet works like this. Outgoing mail is created using a text editor, and the mail (plus any attachments) is stored in your 'out box'. You then make a connection to your Internet service

expect to see enhancements to Web support, as well as other features, delivered in future versions of PsiMail Internet.

Roger Gann
PsiMail Internet runs best on a 1MB or 2MB Series 3a/3c, and can also run on a 512KB model (you may have to exit some applications). You can use the 3Fax modem, but for faster results use the PC Card Modem Adaptor and suitable modem (see p25).

Technical talk

The TCP/IP protocol is the driving force of the Internet. Psion's own implementation comes with the usual range of essential tools. For example, it's sometimes difficult to tell if you're actually connected through to your eventual destination – the Ping utility lets you 'bounce' a packet of data back from your destination address. A successful result is indicated by a sonar-like 'ping' sound on your Psion.

You can also check, using Trace, the 'hops' your connection is taking from node to node around the world. Other tools include Finger and DNS Lookup, and the Time 'applet', which lets you connect to an Internet time server, normally a super-accurate atomic clock at a university, and then automatically adjust your Psion's time to that of the server's.

Expense Tracker

Staking an expense claim

If you're one of those people who stuff their receipts in an old envelope – and then lose one or two – Expense Tracker could pay for itself very soon. The package lives up to its name and will ensure you get your full reimbursement – but how does it work?

Expense Tracker comprises two programs. Recorder runs on the Psion and is used to record the expenses as they occur and then to generate claims. Reporter runs on a PC and prints out your expenses. Reporter's main strength

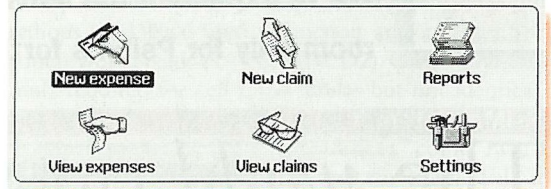
expenses, and this is fine if your expenses are all dealt with in one lot. If, on the other hand, you need to allocate expenses in different ways, then it is best to spend a couple of minutes configuring the program.

Suppose that your expenses fall into four types – hotel, entertaining, equipment hire and books. You simply use the menu to select 'Setting' and 'Categorisation' and enter these four types, or more if needed. Once these have been set up, you can then enter your expenses, and at the same time select the type to which they belong.

For some people, expenses are more complex than this, because an expense can be classified not only by type, but also perhaps by different clients. In total, Recorder allows up to three levels of classification, all configurable. And a Travel category already exists as a separate category in addition to the configurable ones: all you have to add is the rate per mile or kilometre.

I have set up the examples shown below to classify by Type, Client and Class of work performed. You are still free to leave expenses unclassified, of course, or to classify an expense under two or more headings if needed.

Once your expenses



The icon screen from which Recorder is controlled

New expense	
Date	12/01/1996
Description	1 night - Blacks Hotel
Reimbursable	Yes
Currency	Pounds (Bpd)
Amount	140
Rate	
Equivalent (Bpd)	
VAT percentage	

Entering an expense: currency and VAT can be handled

are entered, you can use the diamond key to move between different 'views', or subsets.

For example, in my case, the first view shows those expenses which belong to Type 'books'. Pressing the cursor keys flips the view to show the other Type classifications – entertaining, equipment hire and so on.

Pressing the diamond key moves on to the second of my three classifications, Client. In other words, at any time you can see exactly which expenses are falling into which categories.

You can also generate reports using your categorisations. So if you select 'books', you can see the total spent on books; if you select 'books' and 'Bendon' (one of the clients) you see only those books bought in the service of that client.

At some point, you will want to generate an expenses claim. All you have to do to build a claim is to give it a name and choose the items which need to be on it.

Your expenses files can

be moved to the PC (via PsiWin) and there you can use Reporter to generate printed output.

Then, when your expenses claim has been paid, you can mark it as 'reimbursed' in Recorder. This process can even cope with mismatches (which, in my experience usually means underpaying) and will allow you to log the action taken to deal with the mismatch.

Tracker also boasts instant currency conversion – simply supply the conversion rate for the specified currency – and automatic VAT tracking.

Mark Whitehorn

Expense Tracker will be in the shops by the end of 1996, or early 1997. It is supplied on floppy disk and can be installed from a PC using the new Psion installer, PsiSetup. Recorder runs on 256KB or higher Series 3/3a/3c models (a Siena version will follow), while Reporter runs on Windows 3.1 or 95, and needs PsiWin to link to the Psion. The package will be available in English, French, German and Dutch.



is that its reporting facilities are versatile enough to produce hard copy that mimics your company's expenses forms, at least in terms of layout.

Recorder presents the user with a set of icons. You might be tempted to dash in and start entering

Date	Description	Type	Client	Class	Amount	Claim	
17/07/96	2 nights Inn At The Mar...	Hotels	Bengal	Consult	\$ 250.00		
18/08/96	1 night at the Meridian	Hotels	Bendon	Coding	120.00		
18/08/96	Home to client ret.	Travel			124.00		
18/08/96	Database Design - Acc...	Books			23.35		
18/08/96	Hotel to Client ret.	Travel	Bengal		12.00		
18/08/96	Meal with clients	Entertai...			120.00		
21/08/96	3 nights - hotel	Hotels	Bendon	Coding	\$ 240.00		
01/09/96	Urnica with King Broth...	Entertai...			3.34		
02/09/96	Meal	Meals	Bendon		18.45		
04/09/96	Meal	Meals	Bendon		12.35		
02/09/96	Thonpk...	Meals			25.45		
04/10/96	Java for the Psion	Books	Bendon	Coding	24.39		
12/10/96	1 night - Blacks Hotel	Hotels			140.00		
					Unallocated 1097.28	Allocated 6.88	Total 1097.28

A list of expenses showing three classifications

Communications

Adapting to a faster world

A couple of these products aren't software - but we thought we'd review them here as they provide an improved way of using software such as PsiMail. In total, three new products have been announced: a PC Card Modem Adaptor, a Travel Modem and PsiFax software. All three products address the growing need for ever faster modem speeds.

If the Psion Series 3a/3c is to be considered a serious corporate tool, then it needs to be able to hook into corporate email systems. Thanks to PsiMail, this is now possible. However, email is no longer confined to short, text-only messages and is now commonly used to send fairly large file attachments, such as documents or worksheets. As a result, the size of the average email message has ballooned, making modem speed an issue for users wishing to retrieve mail remotely - the faster the modem, the quicker they can send or receive messages.

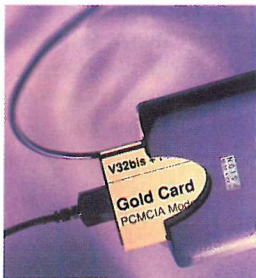
Psion is now introducing two new solutions for mobile users looking for faster data transfer: the Travel Modem, and PC Card Modem Adaptor.

PC Card Modem Adaptor

Laptop computer users will already be familiar with the PC (formerly PCMCIA) card. A laptop's PC card slot effectively acts as an expansion slot, permitting the easy installation of a wide variety of PC card types including modems, network cards and so on.

The Psion PC Card Modem Adaptor allows much of this functionality to be transferred to the Series 3a/3c. It's available in two versions, one for the Series 3c and the other for the 3a; these have different connectors and aren't interchangeable. Both plug into the Psion's serial port and allow you to use a standard PC card modem.

You can't use other types of PC card with the adaptor: it is designed to work only with modems. It is possible to plug in a GSM data card, however,



Adapting for speed: the PC Card Modem Adaptor accepts leading modems recommended by Psion

which allows email communication using certain GSM mobile phones.

The big advantage of the adaptor is that it allows you to use the very fastest PC card modems with your Psion. If you have a Series 3c, you'll be able to plug in V34 28.8kbits/s PC card modems, thanks to the fast RS232 port on both new models. Series 3a users are constrained to using V.32bis 14.4kbits/s modems owing to the 19.2kbits/s ceiling on the 3a's serial port. A 3Link cable is no longer

required, and the basic Terminal comms program that it contains has now been integrated into the 3c.

The PC Card Modem Adaptor is a tiny device, not much larger than the PC cards it holds. It weighs next to nothing - a mere 125g with batteries and card - and is about the size of a folded wallet. Two side panels conceal the battery compartments. Each takes a pair of AA-sized batteries which provide 4.5 hours continuous use with a V.34 modem, rising to more than nine hours with a V.32bis modem.

The device is very easy to use - you simply plug it into your Psion and slide in the PC card modem. The PC Card Modem Adaptor then bleeps to indicate recognition of the modem, determines the modem's maximum possible line speed and sets it accordingly. A tri-colour LED indicates transmission status and battery level, and a speaker provides you with those reassuring dial tones and modem handshaking noises.

Psion is certifying PC card modems for use with the PC Card Modem Adaptor and at present the list includes the market-leading Psion Dacom Gold Cards, as well as others.

Travel Modem

The new Travel Modem may look like the familiar 3Fax, but that's just about all they have in common. Developed by Psion's modem subsidiary, Psion Dacom, it's a V.32bis



14.4kbits/s data and fax modem and connects to the RS232 serial port on the Series 3c. The Travel Modem is just that; it lacks the software found in the 3Fax.

PsiFax

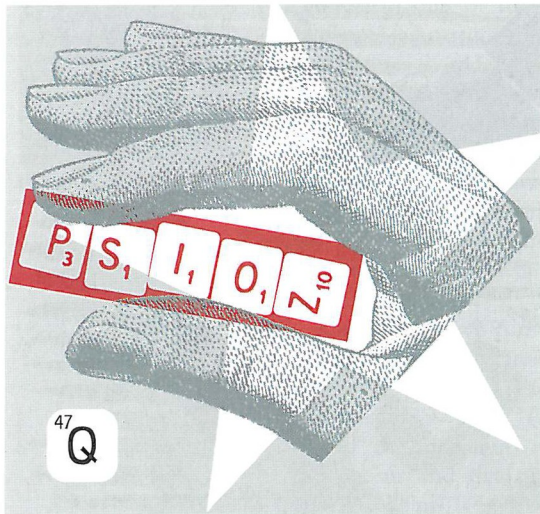
So how do you send faxes now that you can use ordinary modems with the Series 3a/3c? The answer is PsiFax, which is based on the 3Fax software normally stored in the 3Fax's memory. Its functionality is identical to that of 3Fax, but it can also work with other fax modems, such as the Travel Modem and the PC card modems on Psion's list.

Roger Gann

The PC Card Modem Adaptor will be in shops by the end of 1996 or early 1997. PsiFax is supplied on SSD and requires a Series 3a/3c with at least 512KB memory; a 3Link cable (for the Series 3a) or a modem cable (for the Series 3c); and a Class 2 or 2.0 fax-modem. Your modem's instruction manual will tell you whether you have the correct type.

Psion Scrabble

A winning way with words



Psion Scrabble is based on the bestselling US Gold Scrabble for the PC, but completely redesigned. It is as good as – and in many respects better – than the original, with a novel opponent rating system and superior game analysis, for starters.

As well as ten Scrabble opponents, graded from 0 to 9 (level 9 uses the full Official Scrabble Words) there are 40 'human style' players, ranging from Joseph Tort the barrister, with a national rating of 185, to Homer Gates the computer operator, with a rating of 20 (an average player would have a rating of about 140). The idea is that they have a vocabulary related to their lifestyle.

Most Scrabble players will find the level at which they are most comfortable and stick with that. It is even possible to have two (or more) humans playing each other, with the computer refereeing, or to set Scrabble to play itself.

You can then choose

the type of game: tournament (rated, recorded and timed but with no hint or look-up facility); practice (with full hint, replay and look-up); set-up (set up and play board positions); or Rainbow (a version of Junior Scrabble). After choosing your game, you can customise the presentation.

There are four sizes of board. The size of the Psion screen does allow the whole playing area to be shown but this view is rather hard on the eyes. It is easier on the larger sizes, although this means having to scroll up or down to view the board. This takes a bit of getting used to but it hardly mat-

to toggle across or down, then press Enter. If the word is disallowed in tournament mode, your move is forfeited; in practice mode you can just try again. If you are stuck while playing a practice game, you can show the top 20 hints or just get a clue, such as 'start letter' or 'word length'.

Another feature is 'undo move'. By combining this with the 'change player' option you can play a serious tournament game and then have a post mortem. As well as trying different endings you can even allow the computer to play your moves for you. The order of tile drawing

useful in post-game analysis at tournaments. For me, this is one of the most useful features of the program (that is, apart from playing a mean game of Scrabble).

For example, to get an eight letter word ending in 'nth', key in '?????nth' and back comes amaranth, eleventh, helminth, hyacinth, hydranth and perianth. You can also get anagrams and check the validity of words.

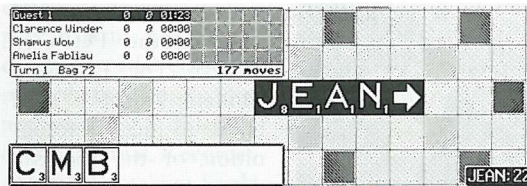
The Psion program plays a very good game of Scrabble, certainly as good as the PC version. It takes about 15 seconds a move, which is perfectly acceptable (longer if it has a blank). If you set it to play against itself it completes the game in about 5-8 minutes at the top level. It is entertaining (and educational) to just watch it playing.

There are some disadvantages, but they are hardly serious. The blank tiles are hard to tell apart from empty squares (Spears insisted that blanks remain blank) but once you know about it, it's not a major problem.

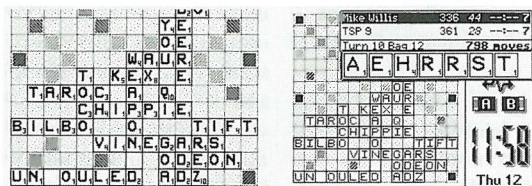
There is nothing else like Psion Scrabble on the market. And who knows: there may be a future Scrabble champion who has learnt the game using this program.

Mike Willis

Mike Willis is the current UK Scrabble Champion. Psion Scrabble is available in English and will be in shops by the end of 1996, or early 1997. The SSD version includes a dictionary of more than 140,000 words. It runs on all Series 3/3a/3c 256KB and above models.



Starting off, with the board view zoomed in



Different board views in mid-game

ters because the controls are well thought out.

I use an overview and a medium board on the screen, as in the screenshot above. The rack and score sheet (including timers) are also customisable and can be hidden at the touch of a key.

Placing words on the board is easy: you move the pointer to where the word starts, type in the letters, press the space bar

is preserved so you can pretend that the other endings could have happened – real tiles in the bag would not be as obedient... It's a good way to practice, if only to marvel at some of the words you could have played.

You can use the 'setup' option to solve Scrabble puzzles or analyse real game positions. There is also a powerful look-up facility which I find very

Monopoly

It's not *real* money...

What do a boot, a racing car, a hat, a dog, an iron and a ship have in common? The answer – as millions of people know – is that they are all playing tokens for Monopoly, the board game that's taught many a youngster about the ups and downs of property speculation.

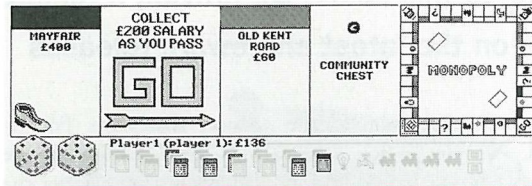
Now all the tokens, title deeds, money and Chance and Community Chest cards come ready for action on your Psion, in an excellent adaptation of the game.

The design of the screen is the key to making Psion Monopoly so well presented. On view are a full display of the board; a close-up of the squares where a player lands; icons showing all the properties bought; the dice; and of course, the all-important sum of money that players have at their disposal. If all that seems like it might make

Then select the number of players: it's easy to set up a two-player game between yourself and your Psion. Or other players – human or computer – can be brought into the maximum of six.

Then, if you want, you can change some rules, such as 'Must go round once before buying' or 'even-build for houses' (you can't whack a hotel up before building on others in the set). You can also set a time limit. Then choose Go! and the game – and the fun – begins.

You press the space bar to roll the dice, and the Psion does the rest, showing your progress across both the full board and blown up portion. As you proceed, you can buy and sell houses, propose deals, mortgage properties – and even sell your 'get out of jail free' card. You can use the cursor keys to 'roam' around the board, checking up on



The board in play: everything for a player is on display



The trading options available before each go

buy a property it offers it for auction – and you have to bid to buy it. The Psion will sometimes bid against you just to force the price up – and if you don't move quickly the opportunity is lost. Similarly, the Psion may offer a trade of title deeds it holds, at any time.

You can, of course, offer your own trades as you move round the board, which shows your progress on both the whole board and the blown-up portion. Icons are highlighted at the bottom of the screen as you buy properties – the sets of streets are displayed in order, and there's also icons for the stations, utilities and any cards you hold.

The diamond key allows you to switch to two other views: there is a 'wealth' display of the current property holdings and finances of all players, and a 'sites' display of all the property names and title deeds, again with those of a particular player highlighted. The cursor keys allow you to display more

detail in these views.

Psion Monopoly is faithful to the battered version you've probably got somewhere at home. As a child, I played the game with my siblings, and someone would end up in tears as others ganged up on a hapless hat or irresponsible iron. Now you can get your revenge – but remember, it's not real money...

Marc Beishon

Psion Monopoly runs on a 512KB Series 3a/3c, and will be available by the end of 1996/early 1997. A single version comprises all five country choices.



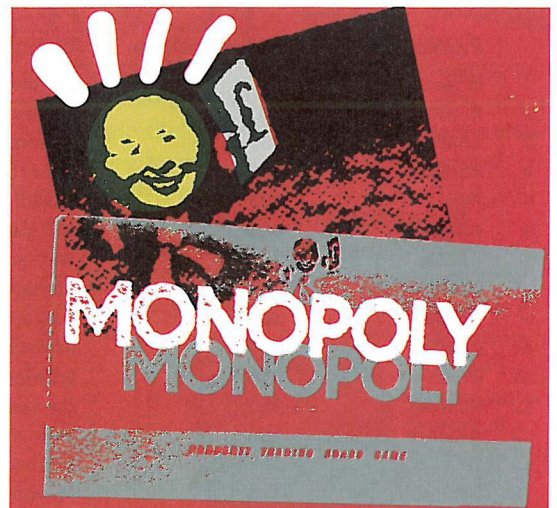
Buying up a street: the decision is yours

the screen too cluttered, check out the screenshot for clarity – you even get your chosen playing token displayed on the current square.

Setting up the game is easy. The first choice is which board to choose: there's the classic London version, plus versions for the US, Germany, France and the Netherlands. Currencies and languages change automatically.

properties you're about to land on. The Psion also acts as the bank, asking you if you want to buy a property, and prompting you to roll the dice.

What makes playing Monopoly against your Psion a bit of a challenge is that events can happen quickly – and you have to react fast or risk being bankrupted at an early stage. For example, if the computer doesn't want to





Shareware report

Starting in this issue, we provide a regular update on the latest shareware releases

New shareware for the Series 3 just keeps on coming – in addition to new versions of existing shareware packages, indicating that more people are registering with the developers. Indeed, in this issue we have the definitive ‘top 15’ registra-

tion list, courtesy of Steve Litchfield, who runs the 3-Lib shareware library. You can find an even bigger list at his Web site, as well as a host of reviews and tips on the world of

Psion shareware. For 3-Lib details, and Web site addresses for some of the packages, see below. Several shareware packages have been upgraded recently, not least Steve Litchfield’s own Mapper, which takes pride of place at the top of the hit parade (modesty at first prevented Steve from including his own software in the list, but others rightly said it would be incomplete otherwise). Mapper-3a/GB v4.4 and Ireland v1.5 cover the UK and Ireland.

Hot from Hong Kong comes HTMLView, an off-line Web browser. This is being upgraded to give on-line Web access and to speed up graphics display. Shopping addicts will be delighted with Hugh Matthews’ ShopList program, designed to make grocery shopping more fun – and more organised. As well as managing a shopping list, it provides a list of regularly-bought items, keeps track of

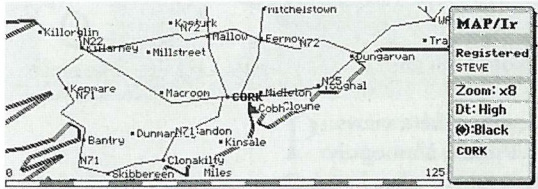
prices – and can even ‘learn’ the aisle layout of your local supermarket.

ReadCIX 4.9a is said to be a much more capable version of this off-line email-reader for those who use the CIX on-line service. It can be downloaded from the ‘readcix’ conference. Also available on CIX is FacsMan, a facilities manager that allows you to manage any kind of resource or facility (conference room, workstation, swimming pool and so on). It can be downloaded from the CIX Psion conference, and it’s also on the CompuServe Palmtop forum.

MonthVu 1.01u is the latest version of this month-at-a-glance utility, and GoldMonk 1.0 is a ‘banana-grabbing strategy game’ – whatever that is...

Finally, there is Mecca v1.1, which developer Stephen Potts says is for ‘the mobile Moslem who finds himself in a strange city and wishes to know when a prayer time is – and which way to face for Mecca’. You just point your Psion at the Psun, and an arrow points to Mecca.

Remember, you have to register to use shareware, but prices for some packages start at just a few dollars.



Mapper for Ireland complements the British version



HTMLView, an off-line Web browser for easy psurfing

Where it's at

All this shareware – and much more – is available from Steve Litchfield’s 3-Lib library. A free catalogue is available by sending an A4/A5 stamped self-addressed envelope with an extra loose first-class stamp to: Steve Litchfield, 22 Grays Crescent, Woodley, Reading RG5 3EN, UK. If you are outside the UK, include a self-addressed envelope and an ‘IRC’ – an international reply coupon.

Steve’s own Web site is at: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/slitchfield>

Addresses for some of the packages described are:

HTMLView: <http://www.hkstar.com/~micro/htmlview/htmlview.htm>

ShopList: <http://www.geocities.com/siliconvalley/park/3275/index.html>

MonthVu: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/cesd>

GoldMonk: <http://www.volftp.vol.it/IT/IT/ITALIANI/AICARDI/index.htm>

Mecca: Stephen Potts, Continental School, PO Box 6453, Jeddah 21442, Saudi Arabia

Package	Registrations	Description
1 Mapper-3a/GB	1,851	Mapping system for Great Britain
2 ReadCIS	1,125	Access package for CompuServe
3 S3aBank	939	Personal accounts suite
4 Notepad	860	Ideas/project organiser/scheduler
5 Plan	832	Project management system
6 Fairway	621	Golf game
7 Reader	349	Text reader (including compressed files)
8 Backgammon	334	Backgammon game
9 Con3a	321	Unit and currency conversions
10 Calc3a	250	Scientific calculator/graph plotter
11 Draw	235	Drawing and painting package
12 S3aFuel	202	Car economy
13 S3aTask	186	To-do manager/prioritiser
14 WebCIS	182	Text access to the Web through ReadCIS
15 S3aInvest	143	Investment management

Aisle	#	Name	Price	Shoplist
1	1.25	Carrots	0.19	Pick
1	0.56	Green peppers	0.69	List
2	1	Turkey, stir fru	2.99	Shop
2	1	Rice, brown	0.99	Tally
2	1	Mustard, whole grain	0.49	
3	1	Salami, German	1.15	AB
3	1	Chillies, crushed	0.81	
4	2	Paper tissues	0.55	
4	1	Toothpaste	1.49	
6	2	Bread, wholemeal	0.51	
Safeway Remaining: 10			Cost: 10.53	Wed 4

ShopList: a perfect recipe for the supermarket addict



Monkey business: an intriguing banana-grabbing game

BUSINESS USER

More on <http://www.pSION.com>



BELGIUM

A perfect repair job

With 130 mechanics attending over 700 breakdowns throughout Belgium every day, the VAB (the Flemish Automobile Club) needs a failsafe and efficient method of two-way communication between its call centre and drivers.

Until recently, the VAB used a private radio network to contact drivers, who carried laptop computers. 'The trouble with this way of working,' says Jo Engelen, operations manager at the VAB, 'was

that the laptops weren't connected to our central system and data could only be uploaded every two or three weeks.'

After examining several alternative solutions, the organisation decided to equip all 130 vehicles with a Psion Workabout, a process which is almost complete. Each Workabout is linked to a radio modem for fast data transfer.

When a call comes into the call centre, job details are downloaded immedi-

ately to the appropriate driver, who can access the central system to check whether a client is covered and to request further details. Drivers also upload job status information when the callout is completed.

The VAB is delighted with the new system, which was developed by Belgian distributor Micro Connection, and may extend it to incorporate in-car printers, possibly connected to credit-card readers. This would allow

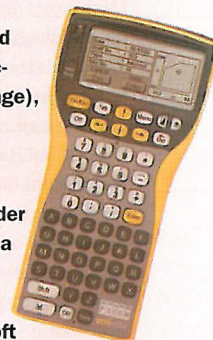
Above: VAB drivers attend more than 700 breakdowns daily throughout Belgium

drivers to enrol new members on the spot.

Explains Engelen: 'We looked at seven different handheld computers, and Psion emerged as the winner in terms of size, price and software design. The drivers find the new system easy to use, and those who are still to receive their Workabout keep calling me to ask when it will be fitted.'

Psion Workabout

The Workabout now supports OVAL (Object-based Visual Application Language), a complete development environment that runs under Windows on a PC. This is compatible with Microsoft Visual Basic, but the Windows-specific features of Visual Basic are not supported. Users can generally develop applications much faster using OVAL than is possible with either C or OPL. OVAL is also supported on the Series 3c.



Psion HC

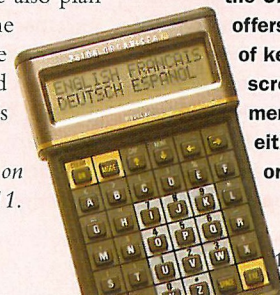
The HC is a robust, modular range of multi-tasking computers, supporting a wide range of peripherals. Memory choices range from 128KB to 512KB; and file formats are DOS-compatible.

Weatherproof versions are available, and units with a built-in radio modem allow remote data transfer.



Organiser II

Designed for entry-level commercial applications, the Organiser II offers a choice of keyboards, screens and a memory of either 32KB or 64KB.



SWITZERLAND

Ascom carries the Series 3a

Northern Telecom's Swiss distributor, Ascom, has increased sales of its telephone systems by offering a compatible product centred around the Series 3a.

Designed for corporate applications, the Ascom Carry comprises a Series 3a, software and a docking station; it is compatible with Ascom's Ascotel and Nortel's Meridian 1 phone systems. The Psion is locked into the dock-

ing station and connected to a phone extension via a simple adaptor. Staff can then store and access telephone directories on the Series 3a, and autodial numbers on the Psion's screen at the touch of a button.

'Most phones have a limited number of memory speed dials - but with the Carry, you are limited only by the number of contacts stored in your database,' says Ascom's



Ascom Carry: adding value to corporate phone systems

Marc Schaedler. The Series 3a also logs incoming calls and displays callers' phone numbers.

After receiving an enthusiastic welcome in Switzerland, the Carry has been adopted by Northern Telecom subsidiaries in Germany and Austria; it is distributed in the UK by Dacon Electronics. 'We also plan to distribute the Carry in the US, Asia and Australia,' adds Schaedler.

Contact Ascom on +41 65 24 2111.

Dutch MoD adopts HC

Psion in the Netherlands and systems integrator Asset Facility Management have developed a system to help the Dutch Ministry of Defence with its buildings maintenance. The Ministry is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of more than 16,000 military buildings throughout the Netherlands and Germany. This major feat of organisation entails regular inspections by a team of 150 staff, who walk around the buildings and note what needs doing, when the job will be done and when it will need redoing.



Inspectors would traditionally record these details on paper and pass them to a central office for inputting into a mainframe computer.

Now, over a third of the inspectors use a Psion HC running software developed by Uden-based Asset Facility Management, which specialises in solutions for facilities management.

Says Walter Scheffers, IT manager at Asset: 'Workers now log the results in the HC and download them to a standard, networked computer in the office running specialist software for buildings maintenance. It's a much more efficient way of working, because the same data is not inputted twice - that also means that there is less scope for mistakes.'

UNITED STATES

Making light of fieldwork

Leading US manufacturer Ashtech has adopted the Workabout as the standard data-logging platform for its Reliance product range, which is shipped to GIS (geographical information systems) professionals worldwide.

Ashtech manufactures satellite navigation systems using the US Global Positioning System and the Russian GLONASS system. The company incorporates these into field survey and field asset management equipment.

Launched earlier this year, the Reliance systems provide field asset managers with reliable, accurate positioning for cost-effective control of their assets. Standard to all versions are the GPS



Power pack: handhelds are the way forward in this new market

receiver, backpack carrying system, rechargeable batteries, charger and system controller (a computer used to control the GPS mapping system).

The Reliance systems originally shipped with a

handheld computer made by one of Psion's competitors. But Ashtech has now decided to adopt the Workabout as its standard data logger for the Reliance product line, and GIS marketing man-

ager Charles Branch is enthusiastic that the new solution will gain wider acceptance. Says Branch: 'The Workabout is lighter, less expensive and easier to use. As for outdoor use, the Workabout is more weather resistant than its human operator!'

Ashtech may extend the Workabout to other survey products in the future.

The market for GIS products using GPS is a new one, says Branch, and is growing at a vigorous rate. According to the US GPS Industry Council, sales worth \$50 million were made in 1995, and this figure is expected to rise to \$650 million in the year 2000.

Ashtech: +1 408 524 1400, or visit the firm's Web site at www.ashtech.com

UNITED KINGDOM

Just what the doctor ordered

UniChem, the UK's leading supplier to independent pharmacies, has revolutionised the way in which 3,000 of its 6,000 pharmacies order stock. A new handheld ordering system based on the Psion HC120 has brought with it many benefits including fast data transfer - vital in a busy retail environment - portability, and two-way communications. But the biggest advantage to pharmacists is the HC's unique ability to store a directory of more than 18,000 UniChem products on two RAM SSDs.

Pharmacists can order stock by simply scanning



The HC stores a directory of more than 18,000 products

barcodes into the HC using the attached barcode reader, entering product codes or searching the internal directory. Data is then downloaded to the UniChem central system, which has been redeveloped to interface with the new system.

In addition, the directory stores details of new products and special offers, and is updated regularly over the telephone by UniChem. It can even be customised by pharmacies to contain only details of items which are regularly ordered.

'Previously, paper directories were mailed to stores,' explains David Farrow, general manager of UniChem's management services commercial department. 'By the time they came into circulation, the information was at least three weeks out of date.'

Staff at the Coliseum Pharmacy in Doncaster

have now been using the new system for several months. 'The system intelligently checks for duplicate orders, which is crucial when you have 10 staff,' says manager David Sharp. 'It has made life much easier in terms of ordering and stock control - it's magic.'

Unichem plans to extend the use of the Psion HC to other areas. 'Eventually, we plan to use it in our warehouses, and to transmit invoices and statements,' says Farrow. 'Our old ordering system was 18 years old - these new terminals have brought it into the 20th century.'

NETHERLANDS

Logging our behaviour

From food selection by grasshoppers to human road rage, animal behaviour can be studied according to certain universal rules. Dutch company Noldus Information Technology has developed a worldwide reputation based on its tools for behavioural researchers, which use Psion computers as the standard platform.

Lucas Noldus, managing director, founded his company in 1989 to develop and market software which he had first devised while researching a PhD on animal behaviour. The software, called The Observer, has since evolved into a general-purpose line of products for the collection, management and analysis of observational data.

'Over the years, we have released versions of Observer for the whole Psion range: the HC, Organiser, Series 3 and, most recently, the

Workabout.' This latest version has quickly become the most popular, says Noldus, 'because the Workabout is waterproof, shockproof – and inexpensive'.

There are now 1,000 Observer sites in over 60 countries, with up to 4,000 individual users. These include biologists, psychologists and medical staff in universities, hospitals, industrial laboratories and government research labs. Their subjects are both animal and human, and the Noldus package helps them to log all the data they need to derive quantitative conclusions about behavioural processes. Says Noldus: 'We have sold this Psion-based package for use in some spectacular applications. People are using the Organiser to study elephant seals in Antarctica and wild horses in Mongolia.' Visit the Web site at: <http://www.diva.nl/noldus>

A field worker using Observer for supermarket buying research



The 42 ambulances attend 60,000 emergency calls annually

GERMANY

First-class aid

These days, cost saving in the public health sector is a topical issue. Health service providers everywhere are keen to adopt new systems which can improve service at an affordable price.

In just such a move, the West Saxony Association of Ambulance Services is using a communications package based on the HC110, which aims to reduce costs while sustaining the highest level of patient care.

Dresden-based company Schneider Funk- und Datentechnik developed the solution, which has now been in use for several months. Ambulance drivers use the HC to register callouts, take down patients' details on the spot, communicate with control centres, and notify hospitals of imminent arrivals. The package enables a fast flow of information and has already been installed in 36 of the 42 ambulances.

Thomas Heyn, managing director of the association, explains that the old system had several drawbacks, including a higher potential for mistakes. 'Drivers previously had to complete paper-based forms for each call-out. In an emergency, it was inevitable that details were sometimes taken down wrongly or were illegible,' says Heyn. 'This led to problems when insurers received inaccurate job reports.'

Increased accuracy isn't the package's only benefit. Says Bernd Schneider, managing director of the developer: 'Any mobile solution used in ambulances must be completely reliable. The HC fully meets this key requirement.'

The association plans to purchase more units, and eventually to introduce a facility which enables drivers to download data from their vehicles to the control room.

Piano forte

Czech piano manufacturer PETROF is using Psion Organisers running special software to control various parts of the production process. The company owns the largest piano factory in Europe, exporting to more than 50 countries worldwide.

'The production of pianos is a special art,' says Dr Josef Nosek at PETROF, 'but technology still plays a vital role, and the Organiser II is central to our manufacturing methods.' The Organisers are connected to the controlling system of machinery. 'We use it to control the tools which assemble and wind the piano strings,' explains Nosek, 'as well as the automatic sawing machine.'

Talking shop

Swiss Cooperative, among the largest retail chains in Switzerland, is using Psion equipment in two important price verification and inventory control applications.

In a new development, staff working in stores will use the Workabout for stock control. Half of the Coop superstores already use the HC110 with barcode reader to check pricing information in the warehouses. 'The other stores are investigating whether they could use the Workabout for both applications,' says Manfred Heid of Excom, Psion's Swiss distributor.

Lucien Moser, project manager for the Coop, says the Workabout is ideal: 'Some handhelds need a separate scanner and thus both hands to operate, but the Workabout is a single, integrated unit, enabling staff to keep one hand free.'

Cars by disk

European car dealers and private buyers can now view detailed pricing information on the Series 3a. The Vienna office of Eurotax, which is one of the biggest vehicle price list suppliers in Europe, now offers its Austrian used car and motorbike price list on a Psion Flash SSD; after making the initial purchase, customers receive updates monthly on disk.

'Monthly updates are a necessary part of the package,' says Nicolaus Engel at Eurotax, 'and the easiest way to distribute these is on a Flash SSD.'

Eurotax has 18 European offices and supplies pricing information on cars, motorbikes and plant equipment, as well as the cost of repairs. Other European offices of Eurotax are also planning to distribute their pricing information on SSD. Contact Eurotax on: +41 55 415 8100.

PSION CONTACTS

AUSTRIA Hayward Computer-Peripherie

Tel: +43 662 858 70

BELGIUM Micro Connection

Tel: +32 3 232 3468

CZECH REPUBLIC

Point X spol sro

Tel: +42 2 231 9395

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

SIS Survey

Tel: +353 1 4568 650

GERMANY Psion GmbH

Tel: +49 6172 6630

HUNGARY

Psion Magyarorszag KFT

Tel: +36 11 851 722

NETHERLANDS Psion BV

Tel: +31 20 446 9444

SWITZERLAND Excom AG

Tel: +41 1 782 2111

UNITED KINGDOM Psion UK

Tel: +44 171 317 4100

UNITED STATES Psion Inc

Tel: +1 508 371 0310



Eamonn O'Cathain uses a Series 3a and Nokia 2110 GSM phone to get culinary inspiration

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

A taste for technology

Celebrity chef Eamonn O'Cathain relies on more than his tastebuds when dreaming up gourmet creations. The Irish 'cyberchef' swears by the powerful combination of his 2MB Series 3a and Nokia 2110 GSM phone. These are used to contact friends and colleagues and to keep abreast of the latest foodie news. Says O'Cathain: 'I wear the phone in a shoulder holster and my Psion on my belt, so that I can whip them out at

any time. I present BBC Ulster's *Global Gourmet* radio show, which combines world music and food. On the train to the studios, I use my Series 3a to work on the script; on the way home, I work on menus.

'Many people don't realise what you can do with your Psion linked to a GSM phone. Its power can easily be unleashed with just a little learning.'

The communications facilities are the Psion's main benefit, says O'Cat-

hain. 'I use Telenote Link to send SMS messages and email to phone users worldwide, including a paediatric psychiatrist in Palermo who has become a great cyberfriend. He tells me about local beers and wines, and gives me recipes for regional dishes. I also use ReadCIS to access food forums on the Internet. If I discover a new ingredient, I only have to broadcast a general enquiry to receive dozens of recipes and cooking tips.'

GERMANY

Vorsprung durch Psion

Sales director Klaus-Peter Pyck of Audi dealer Delta in Cologne-Porz remembers the days before the introduction of Psion-ALF. 'All customers ask lots of questions about the car they are interested in. I used to have to wade through model and price lists while they waited,' he explains.

Today Audi dealers use computer program ALF

to deal efficiently with customers' questions on an individual basis. And for even greater convenience, the program has now been tailored to run on the Series 3a.

Developed by Audi AG, Audi-Bank, Audi-Leasing and Data-Plus Datentechnik GmbH, Psion-ALF calculates the total cost of any order instantly, and can also be used to work out finance

details. 'Psion-ALF allows me to view the finance options,' says Pyck, 'and to make a tailored offer to the customer.'

The Series 3a can also be linked to a central PC so that data compiled during the sales consultation can be downloaded and updated as necessary.

Wolfgang Schlierf, director of brand management, marketing service and systems at Audi AG,

HUNGARY

Party piece

There is a trend sweeping through the Hungarian Parliament which has nothing to do with politics. In 1994, over 150 Series 3a's were sold to members of the governing party, and since then at least 50 other MPs have got in on the act. Says Tamás Dés at Psion Hungary: 'The 3a is popular among our MPs because a Hungarian version is available, and it is easy to use. Feedback indicates that they also value the long battery life, portability and connectivity.'

The MPs use the Series 3a's primarily to store parliamentary and party data, which is downloaded using a modem or direct computer link.

Vote of confidence in Psion



has actively supported the introduction of Psion-ALF to dealers. He says that the Series 3a has proved popular among the salesforce, and that its use ties in with Audi's motto: *Vorsprung durch Technik* (*Progress through technology*). 'This application for the Series 3a shows our customers that we are making full use of the latest advances in technology,' says Schlierf.

PHOTOGRAPHY: TONY GAVINSUNDAY INDEPENDENT

Medical matters

In the first of a regular feature looking at Psion's involvement in different industry sectors, we show how the Series 3a is aiding diabetic patients as well as healthcare professionals

Illustration by Brian Cairns

Judging by most GPs' indecipherable scrawl and paper-strewn desks, one could be forgiven for thinking that doctors and technology do not mix. However, the signs are that the Series 3a is making everyone's life easier. Several systems – such as LK Global Healthcare's Infolog – have been developed for healthcare professionals, who increasingly need to capture and access data on their rounds (see also panel, left). And in the last issue, we wrote about a UK hospital using 3a's to record the activities of clinical pharmacists, and a child oral health service in New Zealand using 3a's to store patient records and log staff activity.

But one of the most inspiring new applications for the Series 3a is aimed at the patient.

Developed by Psion reseller SKAND, Control 3 addresses the problems faced by insulin-dependent diabetics. The system is undergoing UK trials and has attracted the support of two leading companies within the diabetics marketplace.

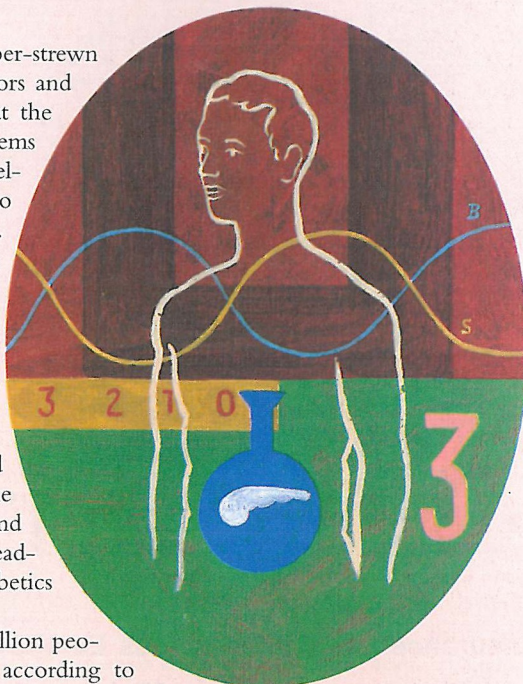
There are an estimated 30 million people with diabetes in Europe, according to the International Diabetes Federation. Insulin-dependent diabetes, which affects up to 25% of diabetics, develops when there is a severe lack of insulin in the body. This type of diabetes requires regular monitoring to ensure that blood glucose levels are kept as near to normal as possible. If levels are shown to be consistently too high or too low, treatment can be adjusted accordingly without delay.

It is with this monitoring process that Control 3 proves so invaluable. The program allows diabetics to record their insulin intake and blood glucose readings taken from a meter. This data can be stored by date or time, and users can create weekly and monthly graphs which provide accurate historical information for analysis.

'The analysis side of Control 3 is its main benefit,' says Susan Johnson, director at SKAND. 'It is simple enough for diabetics to record data in a diary or logbook, but it's much easier to identify trends when the information is recorded and displayed electronically.'

Control 3 was inspired by Control Manager, a PC version of the same package. There are several PC applications for diabetics on the market, but Control 3 is the only such program designed for use on a palmtop. 'The Series 3a is a perfect partner for the program,' says Johnson. 'Diabetics may need to take four or five readings a day, often on the move. Being able to use the program at any time gives the diabetic user that extra degree of flexibility and control.'

For further information on Control 3 or Infolog, and for details of other Psion-based medical solutions, call Psion Corporate Business Sales on +44 990 502205.



Mediman

Just out in the US is Mediman, a portable office for physicians and medical practitioners which runs on the Series 3a. Available in several versions, the system allows healthcare professionals to enter, store and access patient data while on the move. Patient or referral data can be keyed directly into the 3a or retrieved from existing computer systems. Mediman handles patient demographics, medical history, vital statistics, lab results, referrals and visit management. In addition, users can tailor the system to suit their area of specialisation. An optional fax/modem hook-up allows users to send medical history for referrals to other physicians or hospitals, and to send prescriptions to local pharmacies via fax, or lab requests to any designated lab with the push of a button.

Contact: Publistix Inc: Tel: +1
908 536 3954. Fax: +1
908 536 9640.



A Prudent policy

Insurance companies across Europe have adopted the Series 3a to streamline sales procedures and remain competitive. Nick Langley finds one UK insurer that is leading the field in a big way

Illustration by Andy White

First of January, 1995 – for most people, the dawn of the new year probably brought a large hangover and descending gloom at the prospect of returning to work after the Christmas break. But for the financial services industry in the UK, this was the ‘crunch’ – the deadline when the government’s new disclosure regulations came into effect. Companies were now required to provide detailed information on the likely performance and costs of a policy, based on the client’s circumstances, before any documents could be signed.

This tighter regulation inevitably imposed huge overheads on the industry, and required a major logistical rethink of how salesforces operated in the field.

The Prudential, Britain’s biggest life insurance company, was one of only two companies fully operational with disclosure on 1 Jan-

uary, by giving salespeople mobile phones and establishing a dedicated call centre to handle quotations. Now, some 18 months later, the Pru has switched to equipping its entire 6,500-strong salesforce with Series 3a’s, which are playing a far more cost-effective part in keeping the customer at the centre of the business process.

Weighing the options

Early in 1994, the Pru became concerned about the impact of disclosure on the way its salesforce worked. In extreme cases, more than 90 actuarial calculations could be involved in providing the necessary details. ‘The issue for us was our large salesforce, and the fact that we had no significant degree of point-of-sale automation,’ says Richard Deighton, strategic development manager with Prudential sales.

Deighton was project manager for the planning and trial phase during 1994. There were several options. The do-nothing option was ‘multi-call’ selling, where the agent takes down the details, returns to a branch office, works out the quote on a desktop PC, and then takes the figures back to the customer. This is time consuming, and runs the risk of the customer losing interest.

‘Second was the option most of our competitors took: to equip our salespeople with laptop computers. That would have cost us around £25 million. But more to the point, we would have incurred maintenance costs, plus running costs of between £6 million and £10 million a year, depending on how comfortable the salesforce turned out to be with the equipment. The experience in the US is that you need one support person for every 70 to 120 users. For 6,500 salespeople,

that would have meant around 70 support staff at a cost of up to £30,000 each. Also, previous trials of laptops had convinced us that we would only be able to get a minority of salespeople to use a PC. People need to be trained, and it can take a considerable time before they become productive.'

With just six months to the launch of disclosure, the Pru needed a system that was intuitive, and straightforward to use. The salesforce had their own Organiser IIs, which were used to provide general insurance quotes and basic illustrations. 'But when you are talking about serious calculations which take a 386 PC several minutes, the old Organiser clearly wouldn't do. We looked at the Series 3a, which had just come out. But our initial conclusion was that it could not be configured in the time available. We were also concerned about its speed. Psion set up a demonstration using our actuarial calculations, but it took seven minutes. If you're in a point-of-sale situation, that's no use.'

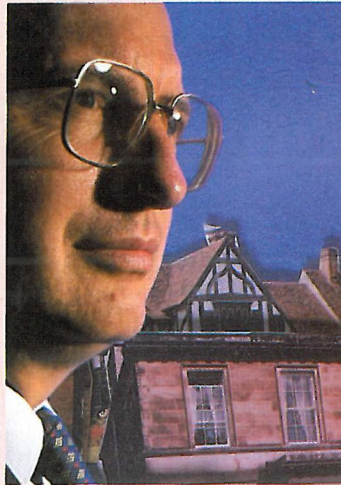
Quoteline

That left one option, which the Pru called Quoteline. 'We set up a dedicated call centre with 150 operators sitting in front of PCs running the existing quote software,' says Deighton. 'Each salesperson had a mobile phone – their only interaction with technology. They called Quoteline, got the disclosure numbers, and wrote them in by hand. It took four or five minutes, but it worked, and we were confident that we could get all our salesforce to use it.'

By the deadline at the beginning of 1995, the Quoteline system was up and running. It worked quite well, but was costing £3.5 million a year to run. Some £2 million of that was the rental and line costs of the mobile phones. 'And the salesforce were never very comfortable with Quoteline,' says Deighton. 'It was noticeable after six months that the number of quotes being produced was declining, as more and more people went back to multi-call sales, which was precisely what we didn't want them to do.'

A perfect fit

Deighton was still convinced that the Series 3a could provide the solution Prudential needed. 'It had several advantages compared with a PC for our applications. And it would be much cheaper to operate than Quoteline.' By now Deighton had his own 3a. 'Playing with it led me to a re-examination of the maths behind the actuarial calculations. Why did they take as long as they did? I got to the bottom of the actuarial maths, and realised it was possible to simplify it considerably.



'Instead of taking several minutes, during which any rapport with customers can be lost, the Series 3a provides 95% of quotes in about 10 seconds'

Richard Deighton,
project manager

'After lots of work, we found ways of calculating results in a much more effective way. One extreme case, a particular kind of pension, would take six minutes on a 386 PC; on a Psion, using the new calculations, we were getting answers in 35 seconds.' Rewriting the calculations also made the programs much more compact. In place of the 12MB of PC software, the condensed program occupied just 700KB, which could easily fit on a 2MB Series 3a.

Psion provided support with software development. 'But its main task was delivering the customised machines we wanted in the timescale we wanted. We gave them the contract last December, and had the first 2,000 machines delivered just after Christmas.' These carry the Pru logo, and have customised membranes and screens. In addition to the 2MB on the machine, they

have a 1MB flash SSD so that salespeople can store diaries and telephone lists.

The Pru commissioned a computer-based training module, which was installed on each 3a. 'This was a major factor in our being able to roll 6,500 machines out over a three-month period. If we'd been relying on conventional training, we'd have had armies of trainers, hotels booked around the country and all the rest of it.' The Pru gave Deighton's team an award for getting the project finished on time, under budget, and with extra functionality. The team was also commended for achieving better cost savings than planned. The project costs were comfortably covered by savings on the Quoteline call centre which, because of near universal take-up of the new system, was closed in April this year.

Instead of taking several minutes, during which rapport with customers can be lost, the Series 3a provides 95% of quotes in about 10 seconds. And instead of turning their backs while they call Quoteline, agents can get customers involved in showing the outcome of different premium figures. Says Deighton: 'I accompanied one salesman on a call where the customer reached across the table and said: "This is nice, how do I change the premium?" and started playing with it.'

Looking ahead

The Pru is now running email pilots in Northern Ireland and Scotland, using PsiMail. 'Ideally, we want a version of that software that's absolutely automated and requires no finger-pressing. We want our people to be able to come home at night, plug their machines in, go to bed, and in the morning, the machine will have automatically phoned up, logged on, uploaded and downloaded any stuff, and switched itself off, so the next time they switch on, a screen comes up telling them about any messages. We want something that the most technophobic salesperson could use.'

Not without reason – one agent complained to the helpdesk that he'd been unable to buy a replacement battery for his Series 3a. It turned out that he'd been showing baffled shop assistants his flash SSD.

'We know that other insurers are considering this sort of solution,' adds Deighton. 'Whether they will be as decisive as we have been, I don't know. For us, the system is a great success because it's been well received, and we know from information coming into our processing centre that it's used by almost all our salesforce.'

For further details on this and other insurance applications, call Psion Corporate Business Sales on +44 990 502205.

Young master mind

At just 12 years old, Luke McShane looks set to become a chess grandmaster in his teens. Amy Wislocki meets a young star who's rising above the rank and file

Sitting in front of a chess board for hours must seem like one of the most boring things in the world,' says Luke McShane when I caught up with him at the British Chess Championships in Nottingham. 'But it's not boring at all when you know what it's like.'

Few 12-year-olds would be happy to spend most of their weekends and holidays playing chess for up to seven hours at a time. But Luke McShane manages to combine a flourishing chess career with all the usual activities of a boy his age. 'It's hard sometimes to balance it all,' he admits. 'I do most of my chess at the weekends, and not that much during the week when I just do my homework and play with my brother.'

During the week, Luke lives with his mother, step-father, half-brother Henry (age eight) and half-sister Amelia (age two). At the weekend he stays with his father Rod, who acts as Luke's minder and manager. It is Rod who organises all of Luke's fixtures, and most weekends include a chess tournament. Says Luke modestly: 'I occasionally win these when there's no-one amazing there.'

Luke patiently explains the rudiments of chess, and laughs infectiously when I look mystified at his reading matter: *Beating the Anti-Sicilians*. This isn't, apparently, a history book, but a work on the finer points of chess. 'The best thing about chess is winning, of course, but I also like meeting friends from other tournaments. The worst bit is losing to someone you should never lose to and feeling sick about it.' He needn't lose sleep over his losses to Kasparov, whom he has played twice – once over the Internet. When asked what the world champion was like, Luke replies without hesitation: 'Better than me.'

So what does Luke do when he's not playing chess? 'I like football, but I'm useless at sport,' he confesses. 'Table tennis I'm quite good

Check list

1989: Learns the moves from his grandfather at the age of five
1991: British Under-9 Champion
1992: World Under-10 Champion; youngest player ever to be awarded title of FIDE (Fédération Internationale des Échecs) Master
1993: Youngest player in the world on the international rating list at Lloyds Bank Masters
1995: Youngest British player ever to defeat a grandmaster
1996: Close to an International Master 'norm' at British Chess Championships

at, but that's not really sport. My ideal day would be to go putting, play table tennis, sit around doing nothing and eat a nice meal in the evening – chicken, chips or steak maybe.'

The most unusual hobby he enjoys though, including chess, is collecting sugar sachets. 'I've got an album where I keep them all,' he explains. So does he have any with him? Luke fishes around in his pocket and pulls out a wrinkled sachet which he examines carefully. 'Hey, this must be rare,' he exclaims with delight. 'It says "Official British Olympic Team Sponsor" on it.'

Psion has been sponsoring Luke's career since January 1995. The company provides financial support for computer technology, coaching by two grandmasters, and tournament expenses.

'Luke is extremely lucky to have this support, which is crucial at his age,' says father Rod. 'Coaching is especially expensive – the sessions last between three and six hours and cost between £35 and £50 per hour.'

Rod is convinced that computers are invaluable in chess. 'We've bought a PC and laptop, and we've recently invested in an Internet connection so that Luke can download chess shareware and exchange games with other players.' Luke has one of the biggest databases of games in the country, and before a match he prepares himself by playing through his opponent's games.

A Series 3a stores details of Luke's chess schedule and contacts, and Luke himself uses it to play Purple Software's Chess and Chinese Chess. He says he's eagerly awaiting a version of Japanese Chess for the Psion (developers take note).

But Luke's favourite function seems to be Record. He plays me his latest efforts: a cackling laugh and a chicken clucking. 'I've been tempted to smuggle the Psion into a game and press play...' he says mischievously.



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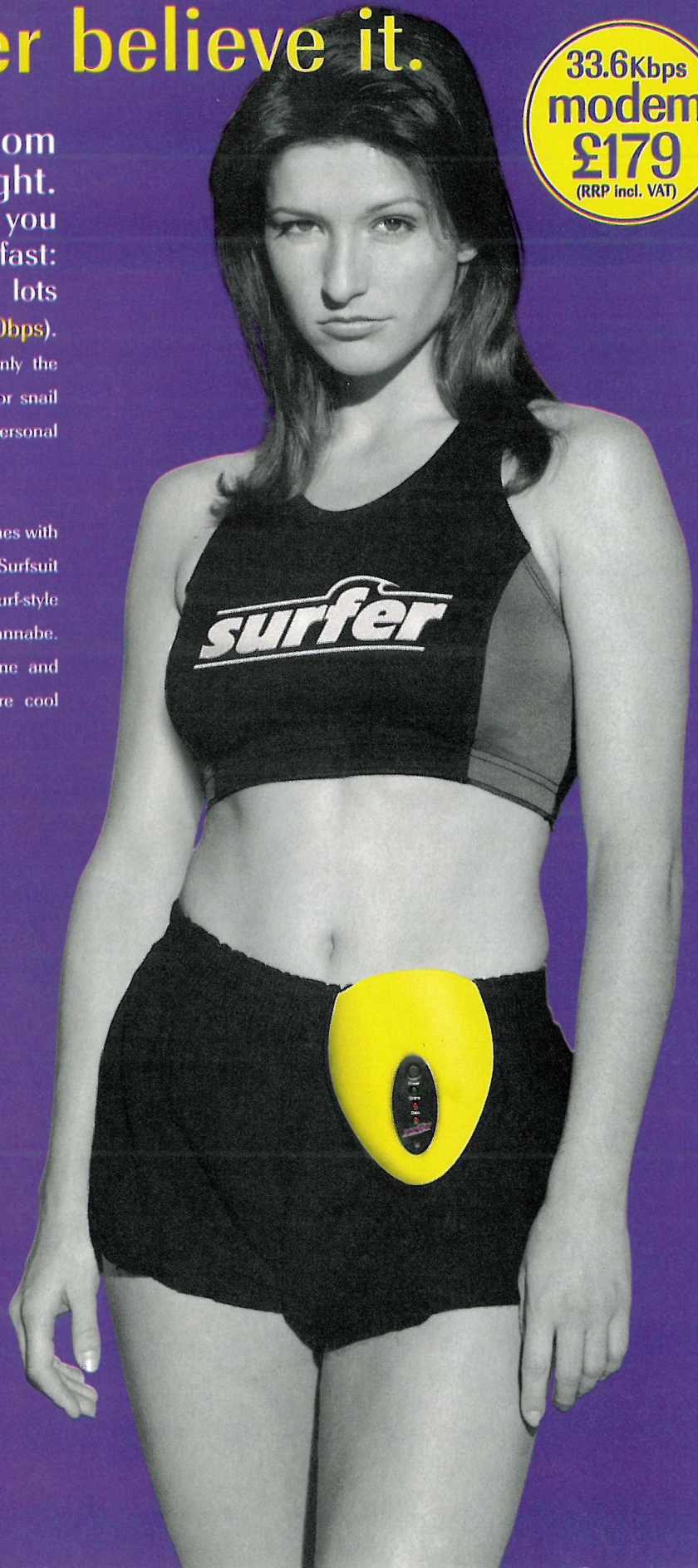
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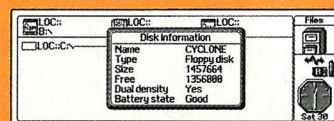


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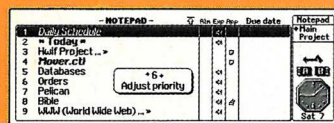
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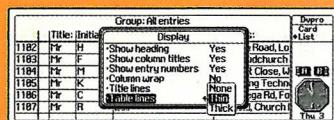
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