



HP Handheld Personal Digital Assistants - Pilot Implementation with 6th Graders in Sterling Elementary School

Allan became a huge fan of the Palm Pilot when he was a high school administrator from 2000-2004. That was a time when cell phones were still a fantasy but slowly computer technology was finding its way into our hands and pockets through the PDA (personal digital assistant revolution). So when he took a few years off from administration to get reconnected with teaching and the classroom - the Palm Pilot came with him and as part of a Toyota Tapestry research project that had his students collecting lots of field data (water quality, fish and macroinvertebrate counts, etc) he convinced the local HP rep that it would be an interesting experiment to put a set of their newest PDA's - the Axim, into their hands to see how they took to the technology.

The two year project was a huge success - students took to the onscreen handwriting far quicker than they did with any computer keyboard. This was the era of the early Imacs and we found that they were very able to input the data into the pda and then upload into our master data files on the imac. Since the data was all part of an Alaska Fish and Game research project this gave a simple way to avoid reams of waterlogged paper in illegible 6th grade scribbles but instead produce a clean data file for them every week. This was before apps - so there were just a few simple windows based programs available, but all in all the project was a success both in terms of the learning but also for HP to see how this evolving mobile technology might have a place in education.

