tools of the trade

palmOne LifeDrive

Mobile Manager

The **LifeDrive™** is described by its maker, **palmOne™**, as a mobile manager, and it's one step away from the ultimate pocket computer. It has a large (480 x 320 pixels), bright screen and an impressive 4GB hard drive, enough memory to take some of your work and 300 songs, 1,000 photos, and two and a half hours of video along with you. If that's not enough space, you can bring along the rest on SD, SDIO, and MultiMedia Cards because there's an expansion slot. Wireless connectivity is achieved with built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth technologies, providing access to e-mail and the Internet. There are the usual Palm apps (Note Pad, Memos, Calculator, Calendar, Contacts, Tasks) as well as World Clock, Handmark Solitaire, voice recorder, and MP3 player. File types supported include Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Acrobat. Programs available include the now almost unending list of Palm OS applications. Smart File management lets you drag and drop files from your PC. You choose the files you want to keep in sync—these will be automatically updated during synchronization with your PC. The only thing missing is a live television/satellite radio feed. www.palmOne.com

Sleek and Chic

Flash memory cards and drives have just about guaranteed the extinction of the floppy disk. The drives are connected via USB ports, which have moved to the front of PCs and multiplied to allow numerous connections. Called flash drives, thumb drives, or just USB drives, they are a pack-of-gum-shaped stick with a protruding USB plug and a light to indicate that it's on. The light flashes when data is being transferred. The capacity of these memory devices ranges from 32MB to gigabyte size, and many offer software to add passwords, encryption, and even file backup utilities. The two drives shown here stand out from a fairly crowded field because of their distinctive styling, the unique cap covers, and the way they feel in your hand. Both the **SanDisk®**

Cruzer® Titanium and the **JumpDrive® Expression** from **Lexar®** offer excellent performance with a difference. First, the specifications for each. The Lexar JumpDrive Expression is available in 256MB, 512MB, and 1GB sizes. The Secure Software program can be downloaded, and it will let you partition a secure section on the drive that is password protected. Both drives use the faster 2.0 USB, fit on a keychain, and are PC and Mac compatible. The SanDisk Cruzer Titanium is available in 512MB, 1GB, and 2GB

Cruzer Titanium and JumpDrive Expression

An Apple for the Prof—An iPod for the Frosh ◆ Michael Castelluccio, Editor

■ MOST RECENT NEWS ABOUT iPODS ON CAMPUS has been about peer-to-peer music downloads that strain university networks and bring legal threats from the recorded music industry. But not at Duke University in Durham, N.C. There the pocket-size digital audio players from Apple were handed out to all members of the incoming class of 2008 in an experiment in technology-delivered education.

Why in the world would the administration and faculty encourage this kind of distraction from serious study? That the 20GB iPods went for $300 per and were given away free also caught the attention of people around the country. What was the university's provost thinking?

Peter Lange, the provost, wrote in a memo to his faculty that the iPods were part of the program "to consider new ways of using the technology in fields from engineering to foreign languages." The program *continued on next page*

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versions. It offers very fast transfers (minimum 15MB/sec. read speed and minimum 13MB/sec. write speed). The Cruzer drive comes with Cruzer-Lock2 security application, CruzerSync to sync with Outlook, and Pocket-Cache for file backups. Now the differences that cut these two out of the herd. First, their cases. The brush-polished case of the Cruzer is made of a titanium alloy commonly used in aerospace and medical devices. The alloy is 2.5 times stronger than titanium, providing a hardness and high corrosion and wear resistance (can survive a force of up to 2,000 pounds). The finish is laser etched. The Expression comes with three flexible covers that fit snugly around the case. The material is soft, and, besides protecting the inner case, you have three colors that are easily switched. The USB plug is protected in unique ways
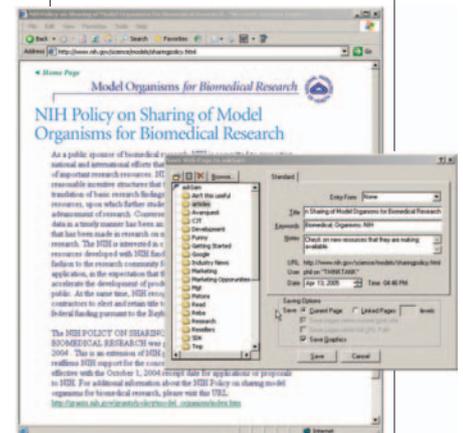
in both of these drives. The Cruzer has a slide panel that lets you retract the plug back into the titanium body when it's out of your computer. The Expression has a cap that is held in place by the flexible color sleeve, and the cap stays attached to the cover even when the drive is plugged in. The sleeve stretches to let you snap the cap back on. And then there's the feel of the drives in your hand. Most thumb drives are plastic and feel light and flimsy. Not these two. The Cruzer feels like something that has been precision machined, and the case on the Expression is not only distinctive and whimsical, but it doesn't slip around in your hand. If you've already packed away all your 3.5s in a shoebox and you want something that doesn't look and feel like one of those promotional plastic pens, you might want to look at a Cruzer or Expression.

Go to www.sandisk.com and www.lexar.com and click on the flash drive area.

Creating Databases

The **askSam™** program from **askSam Systems** is now in version 6. A free-form database application, askSam lets you organize, search, and analyze both structured and unstructured information as you create a searchable database. Information such as e-mail, word-processing documents, spreadsheets, Web pages, text, Adobe, and HTML files can be imported into a database you design—without programming skills. And you don't need to learn a query language to search the results. Searches include full-text searches for any word or phrase, wildcard searches (with * and ?), Boolean (AND, OR, and NOT), proximity

searches, numeric, date, and fuzzy searches. You can use the Entry Form Wizard to set up your

askSam Database

own form, and the built-in Report Writer guides you in a drag-and-drop procedure for creating the report. You can publish the final databases on the Internet or share them on a network. A fully functional 30-day trial version is available at www.asksam.com. The website also has a demo and stories from users explaining how they use the program.

is a five-year strategic plan adopted in 2001. Called *Building on Excellence*, it "included the goal of intensifying the use of information technology (IT) at Duke and incorporating IT into all appropriate aspects of university life."

On August 19, 2004, more than 1,600 freshmen were given an iPod preloaded with content welcoming them to the university. There were audio messages from the president and provost, files about dorm life and campus activities, the iPod calendar had Duke's academic calendar, and there was also the Blue Devils' fight song. The iPods had an audio recording feature (enabled with Belkin voice recorders), and students were instructed in how to download course content from a Duke page on iTunes as well as a location on the university's Web.

So, How Did It Go?

After one year, the university has decided to keep the program but pare down the distribution. Peter Lange wrote, "The iPod will continue to serve as the core technology to enable digital audio, and, beginning in fall '05, the Duke Digital Initiative will shift the iPod program from a class-based (i.e., all freshmen) to a course-based distribution method." This change will actually widen the distribution of iPods because juniors and seniors will be given the devices if they enroll in a CIT-coordinated class. (CIT is the university's Center for Instruction Technology, and it is responsible for the distribution.) It's unknown if this means there will be more or fewer iPods given out, but officials said "favorable preliminary findings guided the decision to continue to explore uses for iPods in an academic setting."

CIT set up distribution in 11 courses in the fall and 17 in the spring for this academic year, and it reported many more ad hoc applications. The specific courses can be found at the CIT website at http://cit.duke.edu/about/ipod_faculty_projects.do for the fall listings and http://cit.duke.edu/about/ipod_faculty_projects_spring05.do for the spring.

If you look at the course listings, there are a few obvious conclusions. Some courses, naturally, are better suited for this kind of technology.

Consequently, there are music, language, and computer courses on both lists. But there's also a course in economics. Lori Leachman, an economics professor, used the iPods to record her lectures, "which students can access and review on their computers or iPods." She called the players "an accessory to the learning process."

There's a greater diversity in the spring courses, indicating a growth as people became aware of the technology. An example is Daniel Foster's theater studies class. The curriculum was set before he knew about the program, but he quickly made it a part of the performance aspect of the class.

The preliminary findings of Duke's iPod First Year Experience are listed on the school's website pages with the same name. In brief, the findings included:

Audio recording—The audio recording feature was the most useful function, according to students. The ability to record in a lecture hall, however, wasn't as good as close-range recording, so Duke will be implementing a new project called iLecture to solve the problem.

Faculty use—Those disciplines "in which audio content is a primary medium" were most successful and most interested in finding new uses for the iPods.

Ease of use—The intuitive, easy-to-use qualities that made iPod such a commercial success also broke down potential technology-aversive reactions on campus.

Course enhancement—Students used their iPods to record lectures, to study using flash-card techniques, in language classes, and to download class schedules. They also expressed feelings that the devices were underutilized and had greater potential than what was already being done. (There's a page on Duke's website where students can propose uses and content.)

Mobility—Students were able to improve time management by taking class-related content with them to review around and off campus.

Student engagement—Faculty reported greater student engagement and better quality work due to the iPods.

Shortcomings—These include lack of specific ideas for academic uses, relatively short battery life when recording, difficulty using the Duke Page on iTunes, inability to share files between iPods, and difficulties obtaining copyright permissions.

The general tone of the report of Duke's first year with the iPods is optimistic. It's a first step, and, according to the provost, it's only one part of a general strategy to import new technologies into traditional academic practices and settings. ■