

USING A PALM PDA FOR FIELD TESTING AND DATA COLLECTION

The Palm PDA has revolutionized the data processing world. Never before has so much computing power been available in such a compact package, at such an affordable price. The number of applications where the pocket-sized PDA can take the place of a laptop or desktop boggles the mind.

Whether you are a field technician accessing an industrial automation system, a service mechanic diagnosing a diesel truck, or a route manager downloading sales data from a vending machine, you can probably use a PDA to do it.

B&B Electronics aims to be on the leading edge as Palm usage expands in serial communication. Here are some of the applications we offer now:

New Palm PDA to RS-422/485 Converter

A new Model P485BTB Palm converter from B&B Electronics, along with your Palm PDA, provides a pocket-size replacement for that heavy laptop. It connects your Palm PDA to any RS-485 or RS-422 serial device or network.

Switches are provided to select RS-485 or RS-422 operation and to turn echo on or off. Automatic Send Data Control eliminates the need for software revisions or special drivers.

The converter module is just 3.6 x 2.6 x 1.1in (9 x 6.5 x 2.8 cm). The adapter can be powered by two AAA batteries (not included) or an external 12VDC power supply.

The RS-422/485 connections are terminal blocks to connect easily to a standard DB cable or a specialized test connector. Three models are offered, depending on the cable needed, to connect the converter to your Palm PDA.

Specialized Application: Access On-Board Computers of Heavy Duty Vehicles

If you service trucks, busses or other heavy duty equipment using the SAE J1708 protocol, there is no need to carry a laptop or string cable to your desktop PC to pull up diagnostic data. A Palm PDA can access that data and you can carry the whole works in your pocket, with a new B&B Electronics Model P1708D15 converter module.

These converters are ideal for anyone trouble shooting or developing vehicle applications using SAE specifications. The CTS line provides a method for the host software to monitor network activity. By checking the CTS line before transmitting, the host software can avoid network collisions. A setup jumper allows either Priority 1 or Priority 8 bus timing to be selected. The vehicle's DC supply powers the adapter.

Free PalmTerm Software with Source Code

PalmTerm is a basic Palm operating system software tool that allows you to transmit and receive data from the Palm serial port. Source code is provided to make writing your own Palm application easy. It may be downloaded free from the B&B Electronics' website: www.bb-elec.com/Palm.

Teach Yourself Palm Programming by Gavin Maxwell

We offer this as one of the best books we've seen for beginning or experienced Palm programmers. Use this book two ways. If you have a programming question, it has a comprehensive directory to provide the answer quickly. If you want a thorough grounding in Palm programs, it has a series of 24 one-hour lessons, accompanied by a CD, that will get you up and programming like an expert.