

## **Product Review: a PDA like the Palm Tungsten E2 brings out the executive in you**

Franklin Covey planners maintain a niche among personal planners, even outperforming PDA devices in some ways. How can this be? Read on. You will find many benefits to owning a PDA but also discover what limits electronics from monopolizing over paper.

I chose a PalmOne Tungsten E2 as my personal planner. It was stylish, and oh yeah, I thought my life was getting too busy not to schedule it better; however, it wasn't quite that busy right off. It turned out that if I could keep track of it in my mind than it wasn't worth taking the time to write the plan down. That is until I became an executive secretary. When you have your own life to plan and a number of other peoples, and meetings, and interviews to schedule, you find yourself too busy to remember much of anything that isn't recorded. You may have read how many of the Tungsten E2 models stopped turning on, a glitch that doesn't have any real resolution. Yes, that is a concern worth noting; I had that worry that my palm planner, when it had known the off position for so long might not even turn on at all. Paper doesn't do that.

Phew! Thank goodness for me, it worked. It can turn on and off on command. Hooray! I realize this is a big downside in all the reviews I've read about the PalmOne Tungsten E2, and that is why I made mention of it. It seems that a significant percentage of people find their PDA obsolete by this malfunction. It is a little bit of a gamble to purchase it at all, so make sure there is a guarantee that you will at least receive one in working order, or that it can be held to a return policy. Anyway, if mine ever does go out, I feel that I've been able to get plenty of great use out of it to this point.

So for you busy people out there who feel like you are scheduling multiple lives, I would suggest at least getting some sort of a planner. From my experience with the PalmOne Tungsten E2, it is a good option. I think the electronic option is a good way to go. But if you stick with the basic Franklin Covey type paper planner, it can actually be the most efficient item to access. You don't have to worry about battery power, and it is the most affordable. These reasons allow the paper planner to flourish in a market that is oversaturated by electronic devices. No one device therefore, can monopolize over the others.

Sure, Apple's iPhone seems to be able to do it all, combining many other functions with phone, media, and other capabilities, but the average person doesn't need an all-in-one device. It becomes a bulky phone, much too small in comparison to your home theater, and too impersonal to be your next stereo system (besides iPods kind of rule as the personal music players these days). The point isn't that you or I would not like to have an iPhone. But for the regular monthly payments to keep up the best little electronic device you could ever own and keep on your person, we sacrifice what we could afford in better more specialized treatment of each of those areas. You could turn to an iPod, as it incorporates all of these features without bringing in a phone bill. But if you have an iPhone or an iPod, you don't have much reason to be reading a product review about a Tungsten E2 PDA, anyway. If you are considering between these, you have to take into

account the monthly upkeep of an Apple iPhone as opposed to no monthly payments with a standard electronic PDA device. An electronic planner for a one-time price is high-end compared to paper planners, but is specialized to focus on being the best at what it is. And while the iPhone will bring in a few more features, is its upfront cost worth the extras it affords, when you may just be looking for an electronic planner?

You will find reviews for the Tungsten E2 that are good and bad. There are improvements that could be made. The industry is moving away from focusing on electronic PDAs as stand-alone devices, so they won't likely get the best upgrades and may have topped off entirely. But I would recommend a PalmOne Tungsten E2 without hesitation, based on mine, and no it is not for sale. I found it served my purposes well and will likely do so again. I am not tech-savvy. And yet, I prefer electronics when they prove to exceed other methods as this PDA does. In fact, I actually find that hang-ups unique to this or that person's electronic device are all too common with anything computerized. In my case, it takes too long to resolve these things (long phone calls to foreign computer support or researching advice from computer geeks on the web should not be common practice) for the common person to have to rely solely on electronics without complaint. For example, the Internet was extremely slow and undependable in 1995, but rather than telling me the consumer to just deal with it or telling me to get wise to computer technologies that will be outdated as soon as you turn out a better product was not an amenable solution for the Internet, nor will it ever be suitable for competing in the electronic industry. One area that I struggled with was downloading and uploading. On my work computer, where I shouldn't be playing with my PDA, it actually works, but on my home computer it does not. To this day I can't figure out how to load the proper software there. Since I don't use my PDA as my primary media device, this too, was not a big deal.

Now that I've covered the few negatives; there are several strengths to leave you thinking about. The Palm Tungsten E2 is easy to navigate. It has a readable screen and a great menu and interface. The design is spectacular. It is lightweight and stores well in an upper suit pocket. It is highly professional, with its intent as an electronic scheduler, above any other feature. It is also quickly accessible to enter new notes, re-organize a schedule, or otherwise review your plans. Mine was priceless for scheduling appointments and keeping track of my busiest days.