

HP iPAQ 214 Enterprise PDA

Will this phone-free PDA meet your needs?

by Stephen Patrick published on 16 April 2008

In this age where being able to communicate with others is often top of the list of priorities, it seems a little strange that HP should continue to roll out unconnected PDAs. However the HP iPAQ 214 Enterprise is the latest update of the line aimed at IT professionals and those users who place versatility above connectivity.

The design is a standard PDA, so you'll find a 4-inch touchscreen that has an impressive 640 x 480-pixel resolution and an ambient light sensor, so the screen is always at optimum brightness without impacting on battery life. Below this are four function buttons and a multi-directional button for navigating the screen.

The build quality is solid and due to the large screen it feels bulky in the hand. Weighing 190g, this isn't something you'll want to carry around in your shirt pocket too often.

When it comes to processing power, there is the Marvell 624MHz PXA310 Processor, which proved a little sluggish at times but once applications are open we found it ran smoothly. With 128MB of RAM and 256MB of ROM, there is space for your extra programs and files to be stored.

In a number of ways you can tell this device is intended for business use. It's not just the fact that many of the features seem to belong to an older age - does anyone ever use the voice recorder button on the side of their PDA for instance? Then there is the insistence on two memory card slots. You'll find Secure Digital for adding memory and more modern cards but there is also a CompactFlash slot for older attachments, such as a barcode scanner.

Add to this the continued use of a synchronisation cable that should have been upgraded to mini



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-USB and you have a device that IT managers can buy knowing full well it will work with their legacy kit.

These may sound like negatives but you'll soon overcome them when you start to actually use the device. The screen's high resolution display is great for viewing files and for watching movies. However, it is the tweaks that HP has made to the standard Windows Mobile 6 operating system that really make this a joy to use.

In the past, getting connected has been a tiresome experience on a handheld, however, 802.11g wireless LAN and Bluetooth are built-in as standard and you can switch these on with a click of the main screen. It found our network instantly and once we'd entered the password we were up and running: it's that simple.

VERDICT

The HP iPaq 214 Enterprise may seem like a device from another time and there is little here that would lure the first-time buyer away from opting for a connected device. However, if you're looking for an upgrade, HP has upgraded the device without ruining the core elements of what is essentially a great PDA.

At a glance

What is it?

PDA

Good

Big, bright screen, enhanced software

Bad

Unconnected, bulky

Verdict

The smartphone may have all but killed off the unconnected PDA but this is a great tool for those who need Wi-Fi access

Price £225

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10