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Published Saturday
June 23, 2001

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Free Hand-Held Computers to Be Used in Study at 3 Schools

BY ANGIE BRUNKOW
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Students at three Omaha schools could have lighter backpacks this fall.

They will be using Palm Pilots, hand-held devices that could take the place of calendars, notebooks, calculators and even textbooks.

"This becomes your backpack," said Roni Huerta, the technology coordinator at South High School. "You wouldn't have to have a separate calculator or a separate day planner."

Nearly 300 students in the Omaha Public Schools will be getting the Palm Pilots as part of a study of whether the technology can be useful for students.

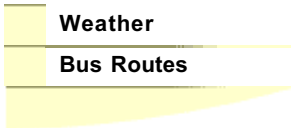
The devices are free - the result of a grant from the company that makes them. The schools will get to keep the computers when the study is finished next year.

Three schools are participating in the study: North High School, King Science Center and South. The schools are getting enough Palm Pilots for 10 classes to use the technology.

Each school will be using the devices in a different way.

Middle school students at King Science Center will conduct tests for a long-term water-quality study and record data on the Palm Pilots.





For them, the hand-held computers will take the place of test kits and paper worksheets that the students have used to collect data at the Missouri River and area lakes.

At North, the devices will be used in the school's marketing program. The Palm Pilot, which can access the Internet, will become students' textbooks in "paperless" classes.

South High students will use the Palm Pilots in computer programming. The students will study the operating system used on the devices and try to develop programs for students at the other schools.

All the students will use the Palm Pilots for scheduling, tracking assignments, logging expenses and e-mailing notes.

"We're getting them into the students' hands to see how they can further expand and use the technology," Huerta said.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID...

- [Well, we'll certain be seeing test scores...](#) - Skeptical
- [I'm certainLY glad I had a good English...](#) - I'm certainLY glad
- ...
- [I think the Palm is comming to a utter end...](#) - Mr Cruise
- [If you have a hand held computer you must...](#) - TJ
- [this is great. one more thing for people to...](#) - JJ

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