

from May Cheung:

First of all, Happy Birthday, Trip Boss! May there be many more! And thanks to PDA247, PalmAddict and Creative Algorithms for offering this amazing contest!

Sorry for the lengthy entry but I wanted to ensure that all the things that I do are included in it. I can't claim to be a seasoned or frequent traveler but I have traveled enough times to come up with my own ways and tips that work for me. As discussed in this lengthy entry, I do spend a great deal of time (almost overwhelming and possibly considered overboard for most people) planning, making sure that I'm prepared for emergencies or unexpected situations. That is because I've experienced my share of unexpected situations, sleeping at the airport, etc that I want to make the best of any unexpected situation and at least be somewhat prepared. We can never be prepared for everything, but hopefully I'm in a better situation.

Here are the Palm applications that I mention in this article:

[RepliGo](#)

[Plucker](#)

[Sunrise](#)

[Datebk5](#)

[Dataviz Docs To Go](#)

[Earthcomber](#)

[Mapopolis](#)

[Easy Address](#)

[Audible](#)

[TCPMP](#)

[Aeroplayer](#)

[PocketTunes](#)

[Palm Movie Maker](#)

[Resco Viewer](#)

[Acid Image](#)

BEFORE THE TRIP

For me, traveling involves using not only my Palm, but also my computer so that I can get all the tasks and planning done, *especially before the trip* so that I am as prepared as I can be, utilizing my limited time there to maximize my enjoyment. Depending on the length of the trip, I may also be bringing along a laptop, although nowadays, I try to avoid lugging an extra few pounds plus adapters and cables and spare batteries. The Palm offers me a lot of capabilities that I think for a week or two of vacation I can survive without my laptop. So, I try to just bring my Palm and Palm accessories when I travel as they offer me most of what I need.

Before I even begin to discuss the applications I use during the trip, I should discuss the applications I use **BEFORE** the trip. **Planning is crucial** for me when it comes to traveling because it allows me to have *practically everything at my disposal should whatever need arises, especially in emergency situations*. I have had my share of things going wrong and, I try to plan as much as I can, so as to be better prepared.

Online research and trip planning

My planning usually starts online checking out tourism bureau website, visitor centers and requesting for brochures, pamphlets, maps, etc. Then I continue doing more research online, checking out web sites like TripAdvisor, Epinions, Concierge, etc to get a better idea of hotels, sights, attractions. Usually, I make the planning many months in advance, so I have enough time to determine and plan what places, sights I want to visit as well as waiting for the brochures to arrive. I start doing my planning, sorting and categorizing each day's activities according to what I consider are within the vicinity of that day's trip and allocating the time I think I will most likely spend at each attraction. This allows me the ability to maximize my time so that I'm not wasting it getting from one attraction to another.

I find that the hardest part is limiting and deciding on what attractions I can squeeze into my trip so I must determine which attractions are must see for me and plan accordingly. I have to take into account the various transportation methods (subway, taxi, bus, accessible roads for rental cars and autos) available, the transportation time, and their costs as well as how close the attraction is to the stop. Also I have to take into account the restaurants I will probably try, based on the reviews I've obtained in my research from various websites like Frommers, DineSite, etc.

Online trip planning and mapping services



Earthcomber program and map of Las Vegas

To somewhat help me in the planning and decision making, I also check out **Earthcomber**, which offers a free service of maps, and tourist information for the Palm. They also offer various tourist guides for specific metropolitan cities, offering services that other well known sites like Vindigo offers.

I register for a free account there and go through their wizard to input my interests. Once done, I download and install the free **Earthcomber** program on the Palm. Then I download the maps that I want and now I have a collection of free maps on the Palm. Depending on my interests as I've specified, points of interest to me may show up in the map. I can also create specific points of interest in my personal account to help in my trip planning. In addition, I can also go into the community area of **Earthcomber's** web site and either create a group for the other parties of my trip, or join a group. Many of the groups are private but there are some public groups where I can view specific saved points of interest on a map based on a specific shared interest, etc. This is a great way to find many gem spots that most travel sites may not discuss. For a free service, this truly offers a very helpful travel aid. **Earthcomber** also supports GPS devices so that it can greatly enhance the **Earthcomber** program.

Loadings free maps onto the Palm

To make things somewhat easier when I travel, I try to load as many maps onto the Palm. There are many ways to do that. Besides getting them from **Earthcomber**, I also get them from various online mapping websites. I convert web page maps over to the Palm so that they can be viewed on the device. I use document converter software called **RepliGo** that works very well at converting any document for viewing on the Palm. With **RepliGo**, if you can “Print” any document, web page, drawing, image, etc in Windows, you can convert the document over to be viewed on the **RepliGo** viewer in Palm. Simply click “Print” and the conversion will proceed and the resultant file will be ready to be transferred over to the Palm via Hotsync.



Maps from MapQuest

The free maps are obtained from places like **GoogleMaps**, **YahooMaps**, **MapBlast**, **MapQuest**, etc and then I convert them using **RepliGo**. Or, I can try to save the images directly but I need to do a few workarounds in order to save them. To view it on the Palm, I use an image viewer like **Resco Viewer** or **Acid Image**. Depending on the image results, I may try a variety of ways to get the best maps. I'm usually willing to do some extra work to be able to view maps and directions for free, rather than paying.

Or, if you already have a Windows mapping software like Microsoft's **Mappoint** or the **Street & Trips** software, you can easily save the maps or convert them using **RepliGo** for viewing on the Palm.

Purchase maps online

Aside from going through the hoops I've discussed, it's possible to just purchase the maps and then load them in without any work. **Mapopolis**, a mapping software that supports the Palm, can easily be purchased online and loaded into the Palm. **Mapopolis'** voice direction feature in its software supports a GPS device and can provide directions to get to a specific destination. Other mapping software includes **Handmark's Rand McNally Road Atlas**, **PDAStrictFinder**, **ExpressMaps**, and **HandMap**.

Airport terminal layout maps

Along the same lines as having road maps is also having airport terminal layout map. Why? Sometimes depending on the circumstances, (delayed flights, bad weather, etc) I may end up only having *mere minutes* to get to my gate for the next connection. If I don't know which gate or area I'm arriving at and where I need to go, I could easily waste valuable time searching around. Having the various airport terminal maps on hand is very important to me. With it on my Palm, I have a better idea of where to go. Some flights actually announce which gate the plane is arriving at as well as the gates for connections. With the terminal map on the Palm, I know exactly where to go. I've experienced enough times of rushing

from one gate to the other to catch my next connection and believe me, every minute counts. I've had my share of running down the concourse, gasping for air to reach the gate, just as they're ready to close it. Talk about last minute.

During one trip to Charleston SC, before I added the virtual map idea to my planning, I had lots of trouble navigating around Pearson International Airport in Toronto. At the time, Pearson was undergoing renovations at Terminal 2 and it was horrible figuring out where to go. There were shuttle buses to get from one gate to another, going up and down flights of stairs. It was like a maze. We had limited time to figure out how to get to our luggage, go through customs and worrying about making our connection on time.

This ended up being somewhat of a travel horror story as we ended up being stuck in Terminal 2 for 12 hours not knowing where our luggage was, whether we would make it to our destination at all due to a flight being cancelled. We had to find a different flight on Air Canada and assumed that the United Airlines people have everything done. Apparently, what shows up on UA's computer system even though they show us as being on a flight didn't necessarily translate to having it on Air Canada's system. Our luggage was in limbo as no one knew where it was. We ended up arriving at Charleston SC at midnight, when the airport was practically closed and there weren't any personnel around. As I said, this taught me a lesson to be prepared. And that's why I go through so much preparation in my trips nowadays ensuring that I have as much information as I can to hopefully lessen any problems I encounter.

Loading Driving Directions on the Palm

Continuing on the planning theme, the next part with respect to maps is preparing the driving directions. I rely a lot on the driving directions for my trip because most times, the rental car company's directions aren't as precise or as accurate as I'd like it to be. So, I usually create a list of driving directions of places I need to go, especially from the parking lot of the rental car company to the hotel, for instance. And I also prepare and transfer the directions of the various attractions from the hotel. And all this is put into the Palm without any extra physical bulk. Having the directions from my car rental to my hotel is at least one that I find essential. Most times I don't always arrive at my destination during the day when street signs are easily visible. Without good driving directions, it can be quite stressful trying to find your hotel.

I remembered fumbling around downtown Charleston looking for our hotel, driving around, with these horrible, vague directions from the car rental company. And it was midnight and the streets were empty, the street signs didn't have block numbers and I could see some interesting people lurking around the street corners. Needless to say, I was quite nervous. After doing some loops, I finally caught sight of the fountain of the hotel that I recalled from the hotel's web site at an alley and drove around.

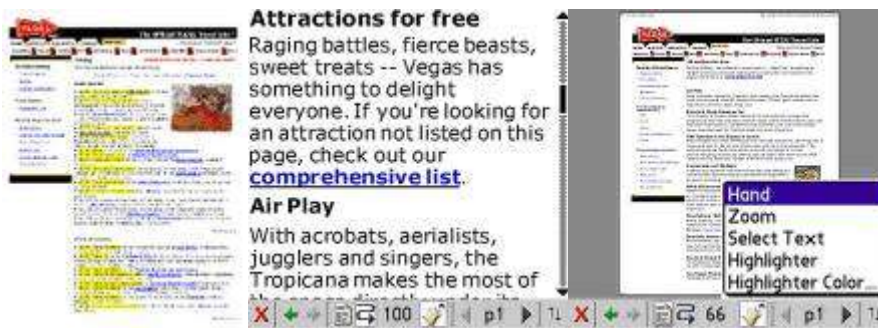
Nowadays, I get myself as prepared as I can. I get the driving directions and the map of the route from the online map sites like Google Maps, etc. I put in the starting and destination addresses and they will provide me with driving directions and a route map. I either convert or save the page of driving directions to the Palm and I'm set. Especially with a recent trip to Philadelphia downtown where most streets are one way, and very narrow, having the directions really help in navigating around downtown. Without it, it would have taken an extra few more minutes (although traffic downtown can be quite bad on some streets) to make the big loop around.

Another site I check out is A9 (Amazon)'s new innovative online maps (**maps.a9.com**). Not only do they provide the usual birds' eye view of the map, they also show **digital snapshots of the streets from the street level**. This is quite nice as the maps now become much more helpful when I wanted to get a better idea of the area on the map, rather than just as a spot, or lines. I can actually see the stores, vendors as they actually look. This helps a lot when trying to find out where my hotel is located and how it looks when I get there. If necessary, I may save the street level images to my Palm to help me better navigate when I get

there, just like what happened at Charleston. Had I been better prepared, I would have figured out exactly how to get to the hotel with all the driving directions, maps, street level images of the surrounding areas, etc. But we learn from our experiences, especially the bad ones.

Transferring and converting documents over to the Palm

Depending on the amount of information I need with respect to an attraction, I may have to resort to transferring a specific web page(s) worth of tips, info, restaurant reviews, suggestions, etc to my Palm so that I have a reference with me when I'm there. For example, on a previous trip to Las Vegas, (and we know that there's tons of tips on where to go, dine, where the cheap food are, etc), I had to transfer and convert a lot of web pages of information that I needed to my Palm so that I can refer to it when I'm there in Vegas.



Web Pages converted by RepliGo for viewing on the Palm

There are several ways to do it. I use **RepliGo** to convert a web page to a viewable format on the Palm. To view it on the Palm, I run **RepliGo** in the Palm and can open the documents in the original page layout, or have it displayed in a handheld view, which allows only up and down scrolling and doesn't show images so that it's easier to navigate around the document. For specific areas of an article, I **highlight them**, highlighting either the passage or text so that I can easily look for what's important. As well, I can **zoom** into the document to view the text better or zoom out for an overall page view. There's also the ability to autoscroll the document but I find that my eyes get a bit funny after reading with autoscroll.



United Airlines e-ticket confirmation and Alamo reservation

Now, again when booking my airline tickets, car rentals, hotels, I do it online because it's fast, and in many cases, I find the best deals. I go through the various online ticket searches like Travelocity, Expedia, etc. After booking all my reservations, I use **RepliGo** again to convert the confirmation emails and the web page screens so that I have a handy reference to it should I need to refer back to them at the time of check in. You can never be too careful, especially when traveling and it's always best to have your confirmation numbers and a hard copy somewhere because things can go wrong. Should an airline's computer network be down at the airport or wherever, I can still show my confirmation to the ticket counter to verify the details of my ticket and purchase.

Of course, the other alternative is to actually print a hard copy (paper) of all the confirmations (which I also do) in addition to what I've converted for the Palm. Again, I can never be too careful.

Web page retrieval and converting for offline viewing

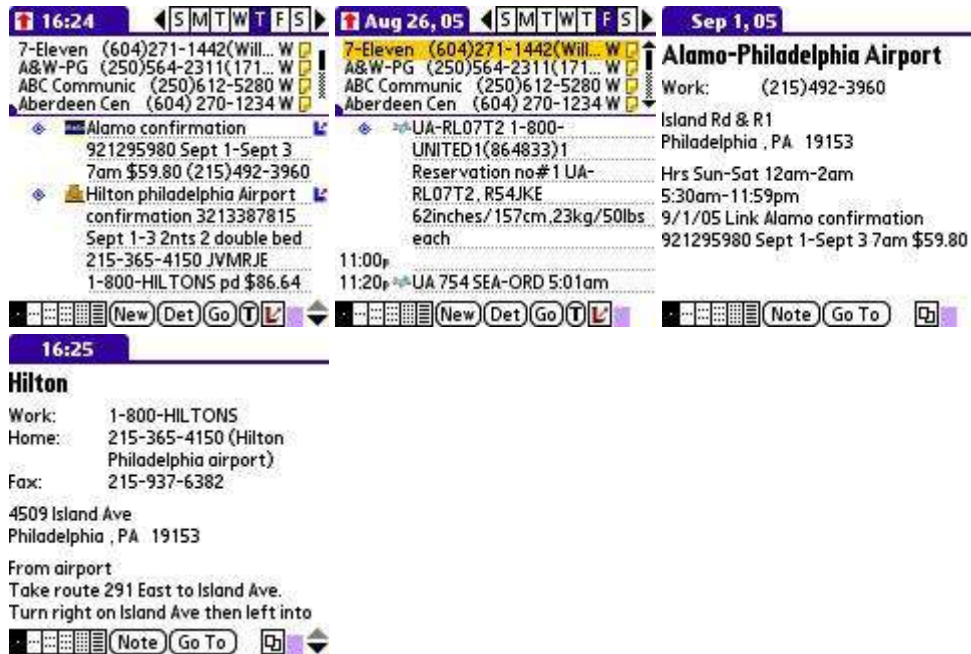


Globetechology web page converted by Sunrise and displayed by Plucker viewer

Although I do some web page conversion by **RepliGo**, depending on the site and the page, I may use a different method. I usually use **RepliGo** to convert a specific page or document that I've saved onto my computer, like a hotel or car rental confirmation page. If I want to retrieve and convert web pages of news sites, weather, blogs, I tend to use **Sunrise** to do the retrieval and convert it to **Plucker** format and view it with the **Plucker** viewer on the Palm. The great thing about **Sunrise** is that it can even retrieve password protected personalized sites like Wall Street Journal, My Yahoo, rss or xml feed sites. Doing this allows me enough reading material to keep me occupied on a flight, or at any time during my travel. Both **Sunrise** and **Plucker** are free and they work very well together. There are many other document viewers and converters out there that can do the same task as I've described but you'll need to do the research yourself.

With all the little maps, driving directions, web pages on attractions, etc it's turning out to be my little virtual tourist guide that I can refer to at any time. Needless to say, it's extremely handy. During my previous Las Vegas trip, I was able to determine the closest eatery that gives me the best value for my money. Or figure out what time certain attractions will have their special effects or shows so that I'm ready for it. All, just by taking a bit of time to convert specific web pages over to the Palm and highlight the important stuff so that I can easily find them. The best thing about it all is that there's no additional bulk added. I can store so much information, pages, images, maps, etc without adding any extra weight or bulk. That's why I continue to be amazed and marvel at this little device that can do so much.

Inputting Confirmation and reservation numbers into my Palm



Datebk5 screenshot of the confirmation, contact numbers and the [linked address book entries 'L'](#)

The next part of my travel preparation involves the important stuff like recording and inputting all the [reservation and confirmation numbers into my Palm](#). I enter the confirmation numbers into my **Datebk5** application, providing the times, the flight numbers, ticket confirmation info of all legs of the trip. That way, I know when I'm at one leg of the trip which flight number to look up for the next connection. I input the hotel reservation confirmation numbers and details and the car rental details too, at the time of arrival and [link](#) the Date Book entry to the address of the hotel or car rental company should I need to call them up for whatever reason. This link feature of **Datebk5** is very nice. By having a direct link to an entry in another application such as Address Book, Memo Pad, To Do list, etc, it makes it so much easier to go directly to the linked information. Again, things can happen and I've experienced it enough times to know I need all relevant information at my fingertips just in case. For example, if a flight gets cancelled, I can easily look up my reservation in **Datebk5**, go to the address book entry via the link and make a phone call to reservations to have them find an alternative flight, rather than waiting in line with everyone else to re-book my flight. **Datebk5** is extremely helpful in many ways. The linking ability really helps save time otherwise spent on searching for the address book and phone number. With the copy of the actual email or web page of the confirmations via **RepliGo** and/or in hard copy, I have provided myself with extra back up copies.

Entering local attractions, emergency numbers into the Address Book



Easy Address with an attached picture

Being someone who always wants to be prepared, I take the time to enter the addresses, phone numbers of most of the attractions, places, and emergency services of my destination that I will most likely visit or possibly visit. That way, I can be prepared. I can look them up, call them to enquire about any special events or other info. In my **Easy Address** program, I've even imported a picture of the attraction if I am able to obtain a picture to attach so that I can easily figure out what it looks like. Especially when looking for the entrance of my hotel, having a picture of it in the address book can help a lot. I enter in relevant info such as hours of business, admission, restrictions and other notes. I know that sometimes things don't happen the way you planned and it's always nice to be able to change the itinerary easily just by having access to alternative attractions, destinations. And I've done that many times in my previous trips, when I've discovered that the attraction was closed, or things or circumstances have changed, so for me, the extra time spent inputting all these addresses is well worth it.

Travel checklist



*My travel checklist using **Sheets To Go***

After all that, next comes the packing. Rather than using some kind of a special travel database application, I simply open up my **Sheet To Go** (from **Dataviz's DocsToGo** application) and start creating my own travel checklist. I love the spreadsheet because I can do so much with it and very easily. Of course, compared to many database applications that have been created for the traveler or specifically for a particular task, the boring looking spreadsheet doesn't offer the customized look, but for me, it works. It may not look very nice, but I can customize it the way I want it.

I set up the workbook with several sheets: one for the packing list, another for things to do at home before I leave, and then one for important numbers and information in case of emergency.

In my checklist, the first column is the list of things to pack. The next column is for the check off 'x' for the list (to indicate when something has been packed). The next column is to indicate which items are 'NA' (Non Applicable) or not to be packed for this trip. I sort the database so that all the 'NA' entries are at the bottom and I disregard them for the trip. And the last column is the check off 'x' list for the return trip, to ensure that everything gets packed back for home and not left at the hotel. When the trip is over, I clear all the 'x's and N/As out so that the list is ready for the next trip.

The best thing about using a spreadsheet as a travel checklist or any kind of database is that it can be easily customized the way I want. I can easily remove an item from the list, or sort them in alphabetical order or whichever order I want. When I'm close to finishing the packing, I can easily sort to have all the non "x" checked items show up at the top so that I don't need to wade through the entire list. I also make a point of setting items in **bold** for those that are still not packed in the suitcase yet so that I know which ones are still not packed

When it's time, usually the night before, I check over the list and make sure that everything is in the suitcase. If for whatever reason it can't be in the suitcase until the last minute, I set up an alarm the next morning to remind me. It's **Datebk5** to the rescue.

Digital books

Although I don't read many digital text-based ebooks, I still load a book or two onto the SD card just in case I wanted something to read. There are a variety of document viewers available like **Palm eReader**, **Mobipocket**, **TomeRaider**, etc. They can be purchased and downloaded for viewing on the Palm. Some places like Project Gutenberg, Memoware, offer free classic books for download and viewing.

There are also many places that offer reference information like area codes, airport codes, etc that can be viewed on a Palm. **Town Compass' Dataviewer** offers many free reference databases that can be downloaded and viewed on the Palm. Rather than spending time compiling your own database of reference materials in the spreadsheet, just get them for free. Having these reference databases can be helpful.



Audible

Rather than reading a text based digital book, I prefer to listen to an audio book or really, an audio periodical instead and subscribe to **Audible**. I get the daily edition of Wall Street Journal and New York Times and have purchased **Audible** books from time to time. Now that there's the new **Audible Air**, the capability to download the latest **Audible** periodicals is as simple as going online. I no longer need to have a computer to download the **Audible** files and then transfer it to my Palm. It can be downloaded directly to my Palm wirelessly. I may have to look into this for my next trip.

For the trip, I usually load the latest periodicals and an audio book or two onto my Palm. This is a great way to drown out the background noise on the plane, or help me sleep on the plane, since I tend to have trouble sleeping on the plane. I really love being able to do anything while listening to my Audible news cast or audio book and usually most nights, I listen to them when I go to sleep.

Music players

It's almost impossible to travel anywhere without mentioning some kind of a music player or at least listen to some music. Most times, the music offerings on the plane can be quite boring and they only last for 2 hours at most before looping back and repeating again. I usually have my selection of songs loaded onto my SD cards long before I take the trip.

I have both **AeroPlayer** and **PocketTunes** installed. I tend to rip and encode my music CDs using a Windows program called **CDex** into the open source ogg vorbis format, rather than the popular mp3 format so that I can use both players without paying for a license. And the other reason for having the files in ogg format, is that it has a variable bitrate. I can encode files with a much lower overall bitrate than mp3 and still get very unnoticeable audio quality from the file. In other words, I can fit more songs for less storage space and the songs still sound great. These two players offer background playing, screen blanking, bass and volume boost, equalizer and lots of other features that make them popular mp3 players for the Palm. Having these music players are a great distraction either during flight, or while I'm waiting at the gate for my next connection, or just trying to sleep.

Movies and video



The movie Unbreakable shown on TCPMP

There's no way that I can discuss music players without discussing a video player. For that, **TCPMP** is the best video player available for free. It can play most video file formats so smoothly, even on older devices that normally couldn't handle video playing. This is quite an amazing program. The picture looks great. The video is smooth and you can even play it in stereo without experiencing any loss in quality or frame dropping.

There are various ways in which you can convert a DVD movie onto your Palm so that you can play and view it. The easiest but most expensive way is to purchase an all-in-one software like **Pocket DVD Studio for Palm** or **Pocket DVD Wizard**, or other similar software which will do everything for you. Or, if you like to do it without paying and using various freeware softwares, there are various guides all over the internet that teaches you how to do so. But that can be a bit overwhelming for the newbie since there's a lot of processes involved (ripping, encoding, re-sizing, etc). But, you do learn much more about the entire

process and have a better control of how to tweak your video file to the way you want, unlike being stuck with the default settings of these all-in-one programs.

Once the movie is in the Palm, there's nothing better than watching the movie during flight at times when you're bored. And it's always nice to get those "looks" from people when they notice what you've got. On my previous trip to Las Vegas, I got to watch Spy Games as well as Oceans Twelve and Unbreakable. Now, I can watch whatever movie I want, rather than being forced to watch whatever the plane is showing. And I can stop it whenever I want, or go back and watch specific parts, something that I can't do with the in-flight movie.

DURING THE TRIP

First of all, during the trip, I try to set myself ready for the time change. That means, setting the watch and Palm time to the local time of the destination, or at least the local time of the connection destination. On my **Datebk5** application, I set up a local (destination) time and my home time so that I have a good idea of the time zone differences. This also helps me get ready at least mentally if not physically, for the difference in time shift.

Wi-Fi

With the **Sandisk Wi-Fi card (SDWSDB-000-A10M)**, the only **Sandisk Wi-Fi card** with drivers that can work on a Palm, specifically only for the Zire 71, I am able to surf the internet at hotspots and other places where free wireless internet is available. It is quite convenient to be able to do some internet surfing while waiting for your flight connection (especially if you're stuck there for a few hours with nothing to do and at the gate). Most airports now offer wireless access, usually for a fee, although if you wish to view the airport information, that access is free. I can easily purchase some access time by providing my credit card. If you travel a lot, having a Wi-Fi card, or a Palm with Wi-Fi capabilities, it really can be quite useful. Now that many airlines offer wireless access, it can be so convenient, albeit costly. But, it certainly can cure boredom if nothing else.

Photo and video capturing

With my Zire 71, of course I can't resist the temptation to take pictures. I bought the Zire 71 mainly for the digital camera, although it isn't the best quality. I carry my Zire 71 everywhere with me, and having it offers me the ability to snap a photo at a moment's notice, something I might not be able to do without it. And I do use it a lot during my trips even though I do have a camcorder and a digital and film camera because it's so convenient and it's always on me.



Photo of the Charleston Place Hotel logo imprinted butter



Photo of the bread basket offered at Charleston Place Hotel

The Zire 71 camera is great for just a quick pic or when I'm souvenir shopping or checking out attractions just so that I can refer back to the photo later on. That's the handy part of having a digital camera on a PDA. And most times, especially with respect to those cute souvenirs and stuffed animals and whatever, even if I don't buy it, I still have a picture of it. And I'm one of those people who love to take pictures of my hotel room, dinner menu (especially whatever entries I've ordered). They make for great memories. And unlike a digital camera, my Zire 71's camera is almost undetected most times so that I can take a pic of the bread basket somewhat discretely. I really love having the date stamp on the pictures so that I have a record of when it was taken.



Every time I rent a car, I take a moment to snap a few pictures of the rental car. Why? I want to make a record of the condition of the car, including scratches, dents, etc so that I have a back up should the rental car agency decide that I was responsible for causing the scratch, dent, etc. And, also, I take a picture of the license plate. Being that it's not my car, I do have a tendency to forget what my rental car looks like. Of course, there's the license plate on the car keys, but just in case, I even lose the keys, I still have the license plate available.

Having the Zire 71 can also be handy when I'm parked at a parking lot. As many people know, it's very easy to get lost or forget where we parked, especially in a parking lot that you've just visited and had forgotten the color and license plate of your rental car. I take a picture of where I'm parked as well as the concrete pillars where most lots have their own distinctive location color coded lettering and numbers. Even if I've forgotten where I parked, I can look back at the picture and hopefully find my way.

Should the picture not turn out as well as I'd like it to be, I can easily manipulate it by altering the brightness, contrast and other settings using an image viewer program like **Resco Viewer** or **Acid Image** or other similar programs. I use **Resco Viewer** and love the capability to enhance my Zire 71 photos (although most times I don't feel the need to do so).

And with the **Palm Movie Maker program**, I can also take short video clips, making my Zire 71 a mini-camcorder of sorts and store them on the expansion SD card. Although the quality isn't the best, it's still nice to be able to quickly take some clips without having to open up my camcorder. The program allows me to keep adding to the file and allow me to edit out (delete) parts that I don't want. The only gripe about it is that every few seconds or so, depending on the amount of free RAM available, the program will have to offload the data from RAM to process it on the SD card. So, I can't continually record clips without a

break, but at least I can keep everything appended on one file. Again, it's really for convenience sake but I love having this capability.

Keeping Track of expenses, tips, mileage



*My Tip Calculator and Expense spreadsheets using **Sheet To Go** program*

During the trip, I try to keep tabs on the spending. Usually, I will just enter it in my **Sheets To Go** to keep track of how much has been spent and on what so that I don't go over budget. The great thing about using **Sheets To Go** is that I can create as many fields and sheets as I want so that I can easily figure out how much was spent on food on a certain day, or on souvenirs, or the entire total spent for the trip. I've set up a sheet for calculating the tips and when sharing dinner with others how much we each pay for our share. And it's very easy to sort the database, according to the criteria I've set once I've set up headers. It really helps in keeping me within my budget as well as tracking what I've spent things on. This is also very helpful when I'm doing the declarations sheet for Customs because I have all the totals with me. I just have to find the receipts. This can be quite a time saver.

Most of my travel is within North America. If I were traveling overseas in a different country where English isn't spoken, I'm sure I'll be packing along some language translation, language learning software from Beiks or others to help me communicate in the foreign country. Hopefully they will help me "try" to pronounce in the language. Most language and translation software nowadays actually "speak" the words or phrases so it's much easier to learn by repeating what's heard. Or make it easier and just play it aloud.

Backup program for Palm

But after listing all the programs, files that I've discussed, there's nothing more important than a backup for all these precautionary measures and planning I've made. For that, I rely on **BackupMan**, a Palm backup software that will automatically schedule a daily back up of everything (including preferences files) onto my SD card so that in case something happens, I can easily restore everything that was backed up in an archive (hopefully a day ago) back to the Palm and get everything working again. I usually keep an archive of weekly backups and the last previous 7 days of backup. Palms have a tendency to crash at the most inappropriate times and having a backup program like **BackupMan** or other similar back up programs really help get you back to working again.

Palm accessories

What's also related to the PDA are the accessories that I need to bring along. I try to avoid taking my laptop with me so that takes out the extra 8 pounds plus cords and adapters. In its place, I do bring along my **Power To Go battery sled**, a **Belkin 9 Volt emergency charger** with a spare 9 Volt battery, my **Palm USB charging cable** which allows me to charge via a USB port and the included **car adapter** and a **Zip Linq USB adapter** which allows me to plug in my **Palm USB charging cable** to the wall socket, eliminating the need for the bulky cradle. Although it's still a bit of accessories, it sure doesn't take nearly as much space or weighs anywhere near what my laptop weighs. If I really want to add something, I may even bring my **iRock FM transmitter** so that I can listen to my music in the rental car but most times I don't bring it along.



In addition, I bring my Wi-Fi card with all my SD cards in my Altoids mints tin box (it fits everything so well), my **Palm universal infrared wireless keyboard** and my **headphones**.

Now, I'm set.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Write out your itinerary and contact numbers of the hotels you will be staying and attach it to your luggage tag or at least close to it just in case your luggage gets lost. That way, the airport personnel can contact you to make arrangements to drop off your suitcases at your hotel.



- I personally keep pictures of my luggage taken by my Zire 71 stored in my Palm so that I can provide airport officials of what it looks like, in case my luggage gets lost. A picture is worth a thousand words. As well, with my checklist in **Sheets to Go**, I should have a good list of what's in my luggage should I need to make a claim.
- Make your luggage much more distinctive and different from others. Unfortunately, most luggage are now in black color and they all look very similar. The best way to easily be able to distinguish your luggage from all other luggage on the conveyer belt is to make it different looking. How do you do that? I have stickers stuck on my hard shell Samsonite that I'm sure no

one else does. You can easily use a special luggage tag, and not something that other people will likely use. And many attractions offer luggage tags.

- Keep a copy of your passport and other important documents with you somewhere. Either you photocopy them, take a digital picture of them, or whatever, just make sure you have some extra copy of it somewhere. It's also a good idea to leave a copy with family back home so that if you do lose your passport that they can easily fax a copy of it to your local consulate or passport office or arrange to get a replacement as early as possible.
- Leave your contact numbers of hotels, car rentals and other numbers of places where you will be going with your family back home or with friends so that if there is an emergency that they can contact you.
- Bring along something that can help you sleep better. For the longest time for me, sleeping on the plane was something I had a lot of difficulty. I always ended up suffering until I got to the destination and then crashing. Not anymore. I found something called the 1st Class sleeper air cushion that really helped me feel very supported and comfortable in my seat so that I can fall asleep and in the last few trips, I had no problems sleeping. That was well worth the money for me and it's now something I make sure I pack with me on trips. It's so portable and light and feels very comfortable. You never know where you may end up sleeping, so pack something that is portable, light that can help you sleep comfortably. Some people bring pillows, blankets. I do bring a light blanket in case I need it.
- Keep a set of extra set of change of clothes with you as well as some necessary items in your carry on just in case your luggage didn't make it to your destination. Things happen and if it's important, don't put it in the luggage.
- Keep some ready to eat snacks like granola bars, cereal bars with you. Sometimes the airline runs out of food (yes, that's happened to me) so if you don't have any food with you, there's nothing that can be done.
- Drink water to keep yourself hydrated as the flight tends to dry you out, especially if you have the air blasting away at you. It's also a good idea to bring a travel pack of Vaseline to moisturize your nose, as I always find my nose gets too dry during a long flight.
- To prevent catching a cold or virus or other nasty stuff, pack along a small bottle of Purell or hand sanitizer. They are very handy and portable, allowing you to "clean" or sanitize your hand even when you don't have access to water. Make sure to sanitize your hand before eating, or periodically to prevent catching any viruses or bacteria that may ruin your trip.
- Try to select your airline seats for your flights when booking. Most airlines have that capability. Choose the seat that you would feel most comfortable in depending on what you prefer. Seatguru has a listing of the seating arrangements for most airlines. If in a group, try to find a set of seats together that will suit everyone.
- Get to the airport several hours before departure time. In the old days pre-9/11, it was still possible to show up 45 minutes and still make your flight. Nowadays, with all the extra security measures, you could be stuck at security or customs for a lot longer than originally planned. We discovered this on one trip when we were stuck literally 45 minutes to go through customs for an international flight. And that's after I don't know how many minutes of being in line for the check in. Again, this was another one of those moments when we were running to our gate, just catching it a minute before they were closing the gates.

- Check in early to avoid losing your seat. If you arrive late, they may assign you a different one than what you've booked.
- When going through the security check points, be prepared in advance. Check out what's required of the people in front of you, whether it's to remove your shoes, etc. While lining up, remove all keys, change and metal objects and put them in your coat pockets, or in the pockets of your carry on and running them through the x-ray machine. Some people mention using Zip loc bags and putting them there and putting them in the carry on. This lessens having to deal with delays caused if you forgot to remove your change from your pockets. This way, I only have to worry about putting my jacket and my bags, rather than having all sorts of stuff to deal with and possibly leaving them behind.

In closing, I hope that I've provided some details of my travel experience and how I use my Palm to help me when I travel. And, by no means is what I've provided even scratching the surface of what anyone else can discover they can do with their Palm when traveling or just in everyday life. The limit of the Palm is our imagination and what ideas we can come up with for solutions. I can't say that I travel extensively but I have traveled enough times and learn from past mistakes to discover tips and tricks that I've found works for me.

I'm sure that this long extensive list of things I use my Palm for as well as my personal tips for travel almost seem too overwhelming but my goal is to minimize any potential problems when traveling. I know that things will happen regardless, but I hope these precautionary measures and planning help me a lot at a time when I need the help.

Thanks very much for reading.