Chapter 1

Welcome to CLIÉ
Imagine this—Stephen King novels, the entire *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtrack, a dozen different solitaire games, a collegiate dictionary, your entire appointment calendar, a guide to more than 10,000 wines, an address book with pictures of every person, episodes of *The Simpsons*—all in your pocket.

It sounds like technology you might see on an episode of *Star Trek*, but you can have it right here in the 21st century. Thanks to remarkable strides in handheld computing, every item in the preceding list can be stored in a single device—a Sony Clie handheld PC. And that’s just the tip of the iceberg. These amazing devices can send and receive e-mail, take digital photos, control your home stereo, open and edit Word and Excel files, and a lot more.

In the pages and chapters to come, you’ll learn the history of handheld PCs like the Clie, the differences between models in the Clie line, and, of course, everything you need to know about using them.

**A Brief History of Handhelds**

It all started with a block of wood. In 1994, Jeff Hawkins, founder of a little-known company called Palm Computing, envisioned a pocket-sized computer that would organize calendars and contacts, and maybe let travelers retrieve their e-mail from the road. This idea of a personal digital assistant, or PDA, was by no means new, but previous attempts—like Apple’s highly publicized Newton MessagePad—had failed to catch on with consumers.

Hawkins knew he’d have a tough time selling the concept, so he decided to convince himself before trying to convince investors. His device would be roughly the size of a deck of cards—much smaller and lighter than the Newton—and fit in a shirt pocket. But would it be practical at that size? Would it be comfortable to carry around? Hawkins decided to find out. Before a single piece of plastic was molded, before a single circuit board was designed, the Palm Computing Pilot existed solely as a block of wood.

Hawkins cut a piece of balsa wood to the size he’d envisioned for his handheld device, put it in his shirt pocket, and left it there—for several months. He even took it out from time to time and pretended to take notes, just to see if the size and shape felt right. Though he quickly came to realize that such a form factor made perfect sense, doors slammed whenever he showed his “product” to potential investors. “The handheld market is dead” was the mantra at the time.

Fortunately, modem-maker U.S. Robotics didn’t think so, and liked the idea of the Pilot so much that it bought Palm Computing outright. In March, 1996, the company unveiled the Pilot 1000, and the rest is history.

Flash forward six years. The Pilot—which would eventually be renamed PalmPilot and then just Palm—had become the fastest-growing computer platform in history, reaching the million-sold mark faster than the IBM PC or Apple Macintosh. In the interim, U.S. Robotics had been assimilated into networking giant 3Com, and Palm, Inc. along with it. The Palm line had grown to include a variety of models, and companies like Handspring, IBM, and Sony had adopted the Palm operating system for their own handheld devices.

Today, the *Palm platform* (an umbrella term used to describe not only the actual hardware, but the operating system that drives it) is dominant in the explosive handheld market. The Sony Clie series falls under that umbrella. It’s a family of handheld PCs that run the Palm Operating System (OS)—the same OS used in handhelds made by Palm, Handspring, and other companies.
What’s an Operating System?

Windows is an operating system. Mac OS X is an operating system. The core software that drives any computer is an operating system. Hence, when we refer to the Clié’s Palm OS, we’re talking about the software built into the device—the brains behind the brawn. The Palm OS itself not only controls the Clié’s fundamental operations, such as what happens when you press a button or tap the screen, but also supplies the built-in applications (the Address Book, Memo Pad, Date Book and so on—all of which we discuss in detail in later chapters).

The Palm OS is the key ingredient that links the various Palm devices, whether they’re manufactured by Palm, Handspring, Sony or one of the other companies licensed to use the Palm OS.

These “licensees” have been granted permission by Palm, Inc. to use the Palm OS in hardware of their own design. It’s kind of like the way you can get PCs from a hundred different companies, yet they all run Windows.

You can see that a Palm m100 looks quite a bit different from a Sony Clié N760C (see Figure 1-1), but on the inside they’re fundamentally the same. They both use the Palm Operating System, and therefore operate in a similar fashion, each capable of running almost all the same software.

NOTE

FIGURE 1-1  Palm OS devices don’t all look the same, and, in fact, can look quite different, but they all use the same core operating system.
What Makes Handheld PCs so Great?

Why all the fuss? What makes Palm OS devices like the Clié so special? To answer these questions, we'll first need to look at what a handheld PC actually is. Put simply, it's a pocket-sized electronic organizer that enables you to manage addresses, appointments, expenses, tasks and memos. If you've ever used a Franklin Planner or any similar paper-bound organizer, you get the idea.

However, because a handheld PC is electronic, there's no paper or ink involved. Instead, you write directly on the device's screen, using a small plastic stylus in place of a pen. A key advantage here, of course, is that you're able to store all of your important personal and business information on a device that's much smaller and lighter than a paper planner.

What's more, you can easily share that information with your Macintosh or Windows-based computer. Handheld PCs are not self-contained: they can synchronize with a desktop computer and keep information current on both sides. This is an important advantage, as it effectively turns your handheld into an extension of the computer you use every day. Changes and additions made to your desktop data are reflected in the device, and vice versa (see Figure 1-2).

What's the Difference Between a CLIÉ and a Palm?

It's easy to get confused between Palm, Clié, Palm OS, and other terms we use frequently in this book. Therefore, here’s a lexicon to help you understand the basic terminology.

- **Handheld PC**  
  A portable, pocket-sized computer like the Palm m505, Handspring Treo, and Sony Clié.

- **Operating System**  
  The core software that makes a handheld PC function.

- **Palm, Inc.**  
  The company that makes handheld PCs which run the Palm Operating System (OS).

- **Palm OS**  
  The operating system used in Palm, Handspring, HandEra, Sony, and many other handheld PCs.

- **Palm Powered**  
  Denotes a handheld PC that runs the Palm OS. *Palm Powered* is a registered trademark of Palm, Inc.

- **PalmSource**  
  The division of Palm, Inc. responsible for developing the Palm OS.

- **PDA**  
  Short for Personal Digital Assistant, a generic term used to describe any handheld PC.

- **Pocket PC**  
  Microsoft's Windows-like operating system for handheld PCs. Found in devices from Casio, Compaq, Hewlett-Packard, and other vendors.

- **Sony**  
  Makers of the Clié series of handheld PCs.
parties other than Palm, Inc., and those parties (known as software developers) now number in the tens of thousands. There are literally thousands of programs and databases that extend your Clie’s capabilities, from spreadsheet managers and expense trackers to electronic-book readers and web browsers. Got five minutes to kill? You can play a quick game of Bejeweled. Need to check your e-mail while traveling? Snap on a modem and dial your Internet service provider.

While the first several chapters of this book are devoted to the Clie’s core capabilities—the things it can do right out of the box—the majority of it focuses on Clie’s extended capabilities: the things that have elevated the device from a basic electronic organizer to a full-fledged handheld PC.

Above all else, simplicity is a major key to the platform’s success. The devices are amazingly easy to use, requiring no more than a few taps of the stylus to access your data and a little memorization to master the handwriting-recognition software. Most users, even those who have little or no computer experience (like Dave), find themselves tapping and writing productively within 20 minutes of opening the box.

An Overview of the Different CLIÉ Models

Whether you’re still shopping for a Clie or you’ve been fiddling with one for a month, it’s good to have an understanding of the different models available. In Table 1-1, you can see that in a relatively short period of time, Sony released (and discontinued) quite a number of models. Fear
not—even if you own or purchased secondhand a discontinued Clié, much of the material in this book is applicable (and darn useful, if we do say so ourselves). And even if Sony has introduced half a dozen new models by the time you’re reading this, well, the same truth applies. A few features may change here and there, but the Palm OS remains.

If you live outside North America, you may encounter Clié models with slightly different numerical designations. In Japan, for instance, the T665C is known as the T650C.

### What’s Special about Sony’s Handhelds

We’re the first to admit it: Sony’s first stab at a Palm OS handheld—the PEG-S300—was as dull as dirt. It looked kind of ugly and offered little to distinguish it from Palm’s and Handspring’s handhelds. But the company rebounded big time with a series of models packed with innovative and exciting features. Among the highlights: high-resolution color screens, a Memory Stick expansion slot, the ability to play MP3 music files, a “Jog Dial” for one-handed operation, and enhanced audio.

In the spring of 2002, Sony really pushed the outside of the handheld envelope with the introduction of the NR70V. It boasts the highest screen resolution of any PDA currently on the market (including Pocket PC devices championed by Microsoft) and offers a wealth of cool features. We talk more about them in later chapters.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Status</th>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>Color</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
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<td>2002</td>
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*As of September 2002

\[TABLE 1-1\] Sony Clié Models at a Glance
Where to Find the Best Prices

Still shopping for your Clié? Everyone likes to save a buck, and with a little research you can do exactly that.

- If you’re comfortable shopping online, you can find some of the best deals on the Web. We recommend starting with a site called PriceGrabber (www.pricegrabber.com), which provides up-to-date price comparisons for most Palm devices and many accessories, drawn from a large number of web merchants. It even gives you shipping costs, so you know your out-the-door total before heading to the merchant’s site. But buyer beware: the best deals tend to come from small, lesser-known merchants, and people have been known to get burned. Investigate a company thoroughly before buying anything from it.

- Another worthwhile online destination: web auctions. eBay is a treasure trove of new, used, and refurbished Sony devices. Just remember to use common sense: sometimes people get caught in a bidding frenzy and wind up paying as much for a used model as they would for a new one.

- Check Sony’s web site for package deals. You may find bundles (like a handheld with a free case or memory module) that you won’t find anywhere else, and at discounted prices.

- Another great source for inexpensive refurbished handhelds is ReturnBuy (store.returnbuy.com). We found a Clié T415 (a discontinued model, but still a nice one) selling for $149.99—half of what it cost originally. Just be sure to investigate the warranty policy for any refurbished item you buy. While ReturnBuy guarantees the reconditioned units to be in perfect working order, you may have to pay extra if you want a warranty—or you may not be able to get one at all.
Auctions can also be a great way to sell your old Clie if you’re moving up to a newer one. You can also try a service like SellYourPalm.net (www.sellyourpalm.net), which will buy your old handheld outright.

### Decide Which Model to Buy

Sorry, we can’t help you with this one. So many great handhelds, so few hands. Virtually every Clie model available today has its merits. The key thing to remember is that right out of the box, every one offers the same great core capabilities: contact and calendar management, easy-to-learn handwriting recognition, seamless synchronization with your PC, and access to a wealth of third-party software. With that knowledge in mind, you can focus on other aspects you might find important: price, memory, screen quality (color or grayscale), multimedia features, and so on. In the end, you may just have to flip a coin. That’s what we do.

### Where to Find It

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web Site</th>
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<td><a href="http://www.ebay.com">www.ebay.com</a></td>
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