

Look out PDA, here comes TDA!

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**By Chris N. Fernando**

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First it was the Smart-phone that threatened to oust PDA. Now, the PDA is all set to take on the heat from next generation PDA the TDA.

Whats it all about?

Novinit a French company has developed the worlds first TDA or Tactile Digital Assistant. The TDA is based on touch-screen technology and relies entirely on your thumbs for input, which are harder to lose than a stylus. The TDA is named Jackito and comes with two simultaneous touch points so you can operate it with your thumbs at the same time and so no need for a stylus. Using the TDA is very easy, since you can search a database or a large address book, with just your thumbs. Using the device with your thumbs is actually much faster than a stylus well at least thats what the company claims. The device comes with a variety of features like finger-touch control, battery life, fast graphics, multitasking, real-time processing, interchangeable skins and much more. The idea of a device like Jackito was conceived from the fact that the worlds first touch screen based PDA was already developed by a US company called Litton in 1978 for the US and German armies. After some years Novinit pondered If theres a touch screen based PDA for the armies, why not for the gizmo lovers? Arnaud de la Fouchardire of Jackito says, The architecture chosen for Jackito focuses on user friendliness. Fingertips (as opposed to a stylus) are used as a natural device for touching the options displayed by the LCD touch screen. About 200 engineers from 10 countries for over 10 years, have worked on making this device better and \$50 million has been invested in these efforts.

Seven Processors and a larger screen

The Jackito runs on seven processors with full parallel-processing capabilities (two micro-controllers and five accompanying reconfigurable cores), a large 4.5 color QVGA LCD fingertip touch-screen that offers resolution of 320x240 dpi, display with landscape orientation and two SD/MMC card slots. The TDA runs on an operating system called 3ActiLOS, has 2.5 MB SRAM and 16 MB NOR Flash memory. The Jackito measures 140 x 80 x 16 mm and weighs just 150 g. It feeds on a single AA battery, which according to the company, can sustain for several weeks. Using the touch-screen with your thumbs or

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index fingers means that you don't have to carry or use a stylus, keyboard or any other input device. Also Novinit says that the finger's contact area is hundred times larger than that of a stylus and a stylus exerts hundred times more pressure on the screen than a finger. Arnaud goes on to say that The Jackito is not only an electronic device, but also a personal companion, supporting the three essential ingredients of a well-balanced lifestyle works productivity, personal life and edutainment. The Jackito will also come preloaded with about twenty applications, which includes games, puzzles, address book, clock, to-do list, synchronization feature, backup application, etc.

Want to buy it?

Novinit hasn't yet appointed any dealers for Jackito, though as of now they plan to make all the transactions through their website. The Jackito is available for sale on [www.jackito.com](http://www.jackito.com) at a list price of

600. Novinit says that if you are interested in buying the product, you will have to order it online through their website by remitting \$100 and then wait for about 90 days for the product to be delivered to you. However, you can choose the screen type (color or monochrome), user interface, removable front cover and changeable stick-on strips of your choice. The Jackito is entirely customizable you can choose between add-ons like internal MP3 player, FM radio, microphone, headset, Bluetooth, solar battery charger and much more at an extra cost. According to Arnaud, they will target at "early adopters" for this product, but the product is destined for everybody because the product has all the facilities that we lack as human beings gigantic memory, vast capabilities for computation, learning, games and communications.

TDA's the way to go (or is it not?)

The development of the TDA doesn't stop here in fact this is just the beginning. Novinit expects that by April 2005 it will be able to make available innovative accessories for the TDA you will be able to choose from WiFi modules, GPS, digital camera (CMOS based), micro-printer, micro-scanner, barcode reader, smart-card reader, TV module and much more. Though TDA seems to be an in thing with all the features it talks about, there are certain things that work against the very concept of digital assistant. The Jackito doesn't come with character recognition software built-in. It means that you will have to type through the virtual keyboard on the TDA's screen if you want to enter a few important data. This is far more tedious than just scribbling a few notes on a PDA screen with the stylus and leaving the conversion part to the handwriting recognition software. The TDA runs on an operating system called the ActiLOS, which no one has even heard of before. This means that there won't be any third party applications for the TDA, at least immediately. Moreover the product is similar to a PDA its just that the TDA can be used with the fingers / thumbs and supports landscape orientation too.

Though the TDA seems promising enough, time will only tell whether it remains stable in the market. So if you want to experience the magic of TDA, logon to the Jackito's website and click on buy!

Chris N. Fernando is a Sr. Staff Writer with Magazine 360 – an IT magazine published by ITNation, Mumbai (India). He has also worked as Technical Editor with Peer Technical Services and as Reporter for PCQuest and Living Digital magazines. He also writes for The Cheers.com. Get more of him at: [www.chrisfernando.tk](http://www.chrisfernando.tk)

## **Rediscovering The Wonders Of Accordions**

**By Jason Murphy**

There seems to be fewer and fewer bands which include accordion in the list of instruments they play. Typical modern bands use drums, electric guitar, bass guitar, and keyboards but accordions? No. It is no wonder Generations X and Y generally regard accordion as a thing of the past. Although there are still one or two modern bands which proudly incorporate accordions in their music, it would still take a lot of convincing before several people buy the idea of listening to accordion-accompanied music on a regular basis. But those who are interested to discover the wonders of accordion can listen to bands like Those Darn Accordions (TDA), a rock-and-roll band with an exciting twist. In their website, TDA members Susan Garramone and Susie Davis assure listeners that the band would try its best to revolutionize people's view of the said instrument.

Wait, what exactly are people's understanding of the squeezeboxes (another term for accordion) that needs to be rearranged in the first place? Well, for one, accordions are bulky and lack the sleek sophistication of modern instruments. Squeezeboxes look like a much more complicated, 'pleated' version of keyboards. Though dating back from the eighteenth century, squeezeboxes have newer models which are more refined in appearance but somehow, accordion is still seemingly outdated in today's band standards. As a matter of fact, squeezeboxes are often the subject of ridicule in cartoons and sitcoms. On the brighter side, though, squeezeboxes are the choice instrument of famous musicians John Linnell, Boozoo Chavis and Beau Jocques.

Music-wise, the sound produced by accordions is incomparable. To be specific, music is derived when the 'pleats' of the squeezeboxes are alternately compressed and expanded. Button accordion, an older version of keyboard-like squeezebox, have buttons that a musician press to create distinct and pleasant melody, especially when appropriately accompanied by other instruments such as guitar and drums. For instance, four members of TDA play accordions while the other two play drums and bass guitar. The result? Well, let's just say that people love it. Long before TDA, the Ulster-Scots have already discovered the wonders of squeezeboxes, whether played alone or as an accompaniment to flute or harp. Accordion, indeed, has a niche in the rich musical culture of the Scots. But Scots or no Scots, many can appreciate squeezeboxes only if they give these underrated instruments a much-deserved chance. The younger generation, adventurous as they are, should make it a point to listen to modern accordion-playing bands to enrich their musical senses and add variety to their playlists.

For more valuable information on Accordions, please visit

<http://www.accordion-store.com>

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