

THE TABLET FORM FACTOR

Although the tablet form factor has been available for years, it is receiving renewed attention for its combination of an easy-to-read display and keypad-free data entry and retrieval. Due to the widespread nature of smart phone technology, users are becoming more accustomed to touch-screen technology and developers becoming better skilled at writing applications to support this type of user interface. However,

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A standing worker can easily operate a tablet while holding it in one hand. Many utility and other field service personnel were among the first to recognize the advantages of a tablet versus a notebook, which requires that it be placed on a surface to use the keyboard.

Compared to notebooks, tablets are compact and take up less space when mounted in a vehicle. Emergency medical services have long preferred tablets in part because of the ease of mounting and storing devices in ambulances. A tablet is also easier to mount where it can be used without creating ergonomic problems. A notebook user typically has to twist to one side to use the keyboard.

In addition to being highly portable and better suited to vehicle-based operations, tablets offer the display size that works best for mobile employees. Handheld devices like smart phones provide a high degree of portability, but their displays are often too small for efficient field operations or for presenting complex information to the mobile worker. Handheld units work well with applications that are written for 1/4 VGA (320 x 240) displays. However, applications that have been written for the web or a notebook display are difficult to use with a small display because they require too much

scrolling – both up and down and left and right. A tablet's large display and standard aspect ratio allows standard applications to be made portable, without rewriting them.



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