



brightHand™

nothing but handhelds

- Home
- Palm
- Pocket PC
- Other Handhelds
- Smart Phones
- Learning Center
- Forums
- About Us

 [Email this story](#) |
  [Discuss this story](#) |
  [Printer-friendly version](#)

BrightHand's First Impressions of the PocketSurfer

By Ed Hardy | Editor-in-Chief
Apr 7, 2004

The PocketSurfer isn't a handheld or a smart phone; instead, it's an accessory for smart phones that brings a much improved web browsing experience.

I know, many of you are now thinking, "Just get a cellular-wireless handheld." But recent surveys have shown that a good number of people, maybe even a small majority, would rather carry two devices if each one does its job better than a combined device does.

The PocketSurfer does only one job, but it does it very well. Basically, DataWind has put a full version of Internet Explorer onto a portable device. The PocketSurfer can do almost anything the desktop version of IE can do, including rich HTML, frames, XML, Java applets, and pop-up windows.



Recent Reviews

Sony Clie TH55

Large screen
Small handheld



- Samsung i500
- Nokia 3650
- Samsung i330
- Samsung i700
- Handspring Treo 270

More Reviews

--Select--



Search



CNET Shopper.com

Find Pricing

Search by product, keyword, category

Product Name 

Find by Category

- ▶ Handhelds
- ▶ Cell phones
- ▶ Digital cameras
- ▶ Notebooks
- ▶ More...

There are many web sites these days that use Macromedia's Flash to handle navigation. I saw a demonstration of the PocketSurfer easily working its way around in one of these. Although it can handle games written with Flash, the performance isn't very good on fast-paced games.

Email

As I said, all this device does is surf the Web; it can't run any other applications, not even email software. However, it is quite capable of handling any of the web-based email systems. While I watched, a demonstrator used a PocketSurfer to go to Hotmail and check his messages.

At my last job, I had access to everything that was in my Microsoft Exchange account through a Web interface. I don't see any reason why the PocketSurfer wouldn't let you use this, if it's a service your company offers.

Hardware

While most smart phones have a web browser, they don't have a 640-by-240-pixel screen like the PocketSurfer. You still have to do some scrolling back and forth on especially wide sites, but not anything like you have to with a typical smart phone. The display is 5.3 inches when measured diagonally, which is bigger than any handheld screen I can think of.

This device does not include a touchscreen; you have to use a cursor controlled by a D-pad.



The PocketSurfer uses a clamshell design, with both its screen and keyboard oriented horizontally. This gives it enough room for a fairly good sized QWERTY keyboard, though you'll still be typing with your thumbs.

[Palm IIIc Recharger](#)

Dual voltage; case included. Only \$23.99
www.buymebuyme.com

[Hotsync Cradle](#)

Buy and Sell New and Used Items at eBay Canada, the Online Marketplace
www.ebay.ca

When closed, this device is 5.5 inches wide, 2.75 inches high, and .6 inches thick. It weighs 5.9 ounces.

The manufacturer says this device can go for four to six hours on a single battery charge.

Service

The PocketSurfer doesn't connect directly to the Internet. Instead, it uses Bluetooth to communicate with your mobile phone, which then handles the Internet access.

Naturally, this means you'll need a Bluetooth-enabled phone. DataWind offers some Bluetooth dongles that can be used to add Bluetooth to various phones, but you'd be much better off getting yourself a phone with it built in.

The PocketSurfer uses a proxy service that, among other things, reduces the file size of images on web pages. This speeds up your web access and reduces the amount you have to pay your cellular provider if you don't have a wireless service plan that includes unlimited data transfers. The down side is that you have to pay a service fee for using the proxy server, on top of your mobile phone bill.

The PocketSurfer is going to be available in the U.S. through CellStar starting the third quarter of this year. The price for the hardware is going to be about \$200, while the monthly service will be roughly \$10 a month.



Find the picture
that follows logically
and [learn](#) your IQ...



Submit ▶



[Email this story](#)



[Discuss this story](#)



[Printer-friendly version](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)
©1999-2004 Brighthand Consulting, Inc.
All rights reserved.