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About PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility

Overview

PDA Toolbox is an Interactive Development Environment (IDE) that enables users to quickly and easily develop complex stand-alone applications for Palm Pilot devices. All project development is done using the 'drag and drop' graphical interface. After the application is finished, it can be easily compiled into a stand-alone Palm OS executable (.PRC file) and downloaded to the Palm Pilot.

This Conversion utility allows users to easily convert databases created on the Palm Pilot (.PDB format) to Text files on the PC, where they can be imported and used by standard Windows platform programs.

Text files created on the PC can also be converted to Palm Pilot Database format (.PDB) and be installed and used on the Palm Pilot. This 2-way data transfer utility greatly enhances the usability of PDA Toolbox applications.

License

The PDA Toolbox Data Conversion utility © 2000 (PDATCONV.EXE) can be freely distributed with applications created by Registered users of PDA Toolbox for use with applications they create. It is not for use or distribution with files created with the Alpha, Freeware, or Trial versions of PDA Toolbox.

Getting Started

What is included

The PDA Toolbox Conversion utility consists of a Windows based User Interface program, and an associated resource file that is created for applications developed. The following files should be placed in your PDAToolbox directory

- PDATCONV.EXE - The Data Transfer program to convert text files to Palm databases (and visa versa).
- *.XDF - The Transfer Definition Resource files for applications created.

Installing PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility

PDATCONV.EXE and *.XDF should be copied to your PDA Toolbox 'working' directory. This is where the User Interface program will be run, and where it will look for it's resource files when you select to convert between Palm Databases and Text files. If you are developing applications to distribute, these files should be included, along with instructions to the user to install them in the working directory.

How it works

PDATCONV (the Transfer Facility) enables the user to select a Palm Database that has been backed up from their Palm Pilot via Hot Sync, and convert it into a Text file (.TXT or .CSV). They can then import this file into a spreadsheet or database for manipulation on the PC.

To convert from PC format to Palm Database the system uses a pre-defined Transfer Definition File (.XDF) to convert a Text file into a Palm Database. The user must export data into a Text file (.TXT or .CSV) with the columns in the same order as specified in the .XDF file. He then selects the XDF file, verifies the location of the Text file and target directory for the Palm Database, and converts the file. This Palm Database (.PDB) can then be installed on the Palm using the File Install routine on the Palm desktop.

Main Window

When the PDA Toolbox File Conversion utility is started this screen will be displayed. The user can select a pre-defined Transfer Definition file, which will 'pre-fill' the Text file and Database (.PDB) filenames to convert. These can be changed by the user to specify the path and filenames. He then will select the conversion direction (Import a Palm Database to a Text file, or Export a Text file to a Palm Database). When ready to convert the files, he can select the 'Convert It' button, and the desired file will be created.

PDA Toolbox [tm] Data Conversion Utility

Transfer Definition Information

XDF file (required for Text > Palm)

Select Transfer Def. File

XDF File Info

DB Name:

Creator ID: Type: Fields:

List Fields

Text File

Set Text File Name

Conversion Direction

>>>Text to PALM >>>

<<< PALM to Text <<<

Palm PDB File

Set PALM Database Name

Status:

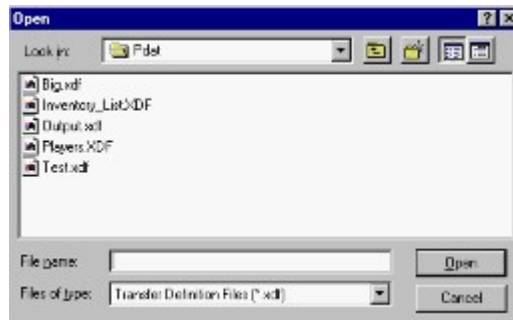
Help Convert It! Exit

PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility Tutorial (PDB to TXT)

The following is a step by step 'lesson' in converting a PDA Toolbox Database (.PDB) to a Text file that can be imported into a spreadsheet or database on the PC. Before a database can be converted, it must be 'backed up' from the Palm Pilot to the PC. This happens automatically on Hot Synch, and the file is usually placed in the user's 'Backup' directory. A Transfer Definition File (.XDF) must also be present to tell the system what order to place the fields in the Text file, as well as other information required for the transfer.

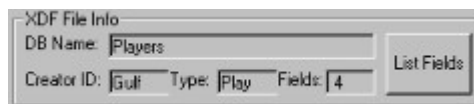
Selecting the Transfer Definition File

To load a Transfer Definition File, press the 'Select Transfer Def. File' button and the window to select the XDF file will become active. The user can now select an XDF file that contains information required to convert the file.



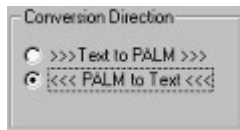
Displaying Information about an XDF file

Once an XDF file is selected, info contained can be displayed. This includes the Database info (Name, Creator, etc), as well as field info.



By pressing the 'Field List' button, a window listing field numbers, names and types will be displayed. Here information about 4 fields is being displayed, along with the Database name, Type, and Creator ID.

Selecting to Convert from PDA Toolbox Database to Text File



The 'Conversion Direction' box allows selection of the transfer direction via 2 radio buttons. Here we have selected to 'Import', or convert from Palm to Text format.

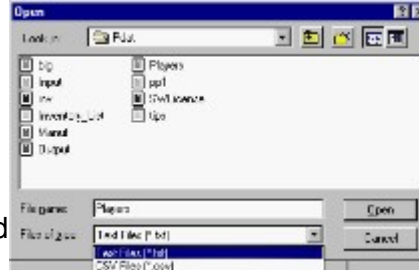
Selecting Source File location



Selecting an XDF file will pre-fill the directory and filename of the Palm Database to convert. This can be over-riden by the user if the files are in a different location. To do this press the 'Set Palm Database Name' button.

Selecting Directory for Text file

Selecting an XDF file will pre-fill the directory for the Text file to create. This can be over-riden by the user if the files are to be placed in a different location. By selecting the 'Files of Type' dropdown, you can define if a Text file (.TXT) or Comma Separated Value (.CSV) file should be created.



Converting the PDB file

To convert the PDB Database file to the Text file, press the 'Convert It' button. The system will convert the Palm Database and create the Text file in the desired location. This file can now be imported into a spreadsheet or database and manipulated as desired. If database locations were changed the system will prompt the user to save the Transfer Definition file with the new settings.



PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility Tutorial (TXT to PDB)

The following is a step by step 'lesson' in converting a comma delimited Text file (.TXT or .CSV) to a PDA Toolbox Database (.PDB) that can be installed on the Palm Pilot. A Transfer Definition File (.XDF) must be present to tell the system what order the fields are in the Text file, as well as database name, creator ID, and other information required for creation of the PDB database.

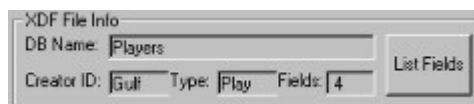
Selecting the Transfer Definition File

To load a Transfer Definition File, press the 'Select Transfer Def. File' button and the window to select the XDF file will become active. The user can now select an XDF file that contains information required to convert the file.



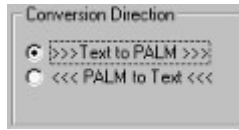
Displaying Information about an XDF file

Once an XDF file is selected, info contained can be displayed. This includes the Database info (Name, Creator, etc), as well as field info. For the .PDB database that will be created



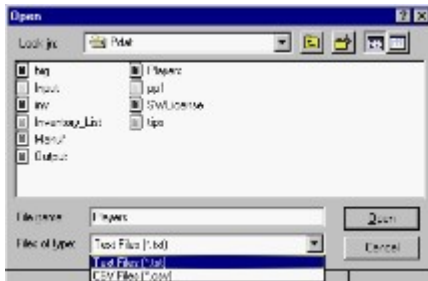
By pressing the 'Field List' button, a window listing field numbers, names and types will be displayed. Here information about 4 fields is being displayed, along with the Database name, Type, and Creator ID.

Selecting to Convert from Text File to PDA Toolbox Database



The 'Conversion Direction' box allows selection of the transfer direction via 2 radio buttons. Here we have selected to 'Export', or convert from Text to Palm format.

Selecting Source File location



Selecting an XDF file will pre-fill the directory and filename of the Text file to convert. This can be over-riden by the user if the files are in a different location. You can also choose to import Text (.TXT) or Comma Separated Value (.CSV) files by selecting the 'Files of Type' dropdown box.

Selecting Directory for Palm Database file

Selecting an XDF file will pre-fill the directory for the Palm Database to create. This can be over-riden by the user if the files are to be placed in a different location. The filename will be the same as the Text file with an extension of .PDB



Converting the Text file

To convert the Text file to the PDB Database file, press the 'Convert It' button. The system will convert the Text file and create the Palm Database in the desired location. This file can now be installed onto the Palm Pilot via the Palm install program. If database locations were changed the system will prompt the user to save the Transfer Definition file with the new settings.



Running Conversion Utility from Command Line

Command Line Overview

The PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility can also be run from the command line, which allows easy integration into existing processes. It can be called from another program, or via a batch file. It is important that the correct syntax be followed when calling the procedure.

Command Line - Palm to Text conversion

To convert from a Palm Database (.PDB) to a Text file (.TXT or .CSV) the conversion program should be called with the following parameters

PDATCONV /I [XDEFNAME.XDF]

The '/I' parameter tells the program to 'Import' a PDAToolbox Database.

The [XDEFNAME.XDF] parameter should be the name of a valid Transfer Definition File (.XDF)

The program will use the Database and Text file names and locations defined in the .XDF file for the conversion.

NOTE: You can call the conversion to Import a Palm Database without specifying an XDF file by using

PDATCONV /I [DATABASE.PDB]

Where [DATABASE.PDB] specifies a valid PDA Toolbox Database (.PDB) file. The program will convert the file and create a Text (.TXT) file in the same directory as the database. No .XDF file will be used or created.

Command Line - Text to Palm conversion

To convert from a Text file (.TXT or .CSV) to a Palm Database (.PDB) the conversion program should be called with the following parameters

PDATCONV /E [XDEFNAME.XDF]

The '/E' parameter tells the program to 'Export' the Text file to a PDAToolbox Database.

The [XDEFNAME.XDF] parameter should be the name of a valid Transfer Definition File (.XDF)

The program will use the Database and Text file names and locations defined in the .XDF file for the conversion. A Text file cannot be converted to a Palm Database without use of a Transfer Definition File.

