



## Palmtop Data Collection for Clinical Trials

**Clinical trials are conducted by pharmaceutical companies to test the effectiveness and safety of new drugs. Trials may involve thousands of patients, and are very expensive. The use of IT and communications techniques are offering the possibility of conducting these trials quicker than before. This offers large cost savings and even larger benefits from reduced time to market, and therefore longer patent protection.**

A handheld PC provides a convenient way to collect medical data from subjects in a clinical trial. Tessella designed a system using the Compaq iPAQ Pocket PC which enables investigators to complete complex questionnaires as they interview a patient in the ward. An easy-to-use graphical interface hides a powerful cross-validating framework, so that any inconsistencies in the different responses can be immediately brought to the attention of the investigator. As soon as a questionnaire has been completed, the results can be emailed directly to a central database server, either using a wireless card phone supplied as an accessory, or by plugging the iPAQ into a conventional telephone line.

The high quality of the iPAQ's colour display means that browsing the web is now viable on the move. The Tessella clinical trial system database receives the questionnaire data in real time, processes it, and returns an email to the handheld device with further instructions for the investigator. Investigators and trial administrators can immediately view graphs and tables summarising the data collected so far, using the web browser provided with the Pocket PC.

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