

# Computerized Time Management



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**D**uring the past 10 years computers have drastically changed the way we approach many common tasks. Time management is one area that has benefitted greatly from the computer age. The yellow notepad and pencil as a time management device has given way to computers in many instances. In this article we'll examine some of the computer software programs used in time management.

## Personal Information Managers

A whole new category of computer software identified as Personal Information Managers (PIM) has recently emerged. This software typically has the following functions:

**A. Appointment Scheduling** - Appointments up to a year in advance can be scheduled. Repeat appointments such as teacher meetings the first Monday of every month or bi-weekly FFA officer meetings can be entered once, and with a push of a function key, automatically be entered for the next several months. An alarm can be set in conjunction with an appointment and the computer will buzz when it is time for the appointment. The alarm can even sound if you are using another computer program.

**B. Task List** - An electronic "to-do" list allows the user to keep track of tasks that need to be done. Tasks can be prioritized in a variety of ways (due date, assigned importance, category of task). Every day the "to-do" list is automatically updated and the number of days remaining to complete the tasks is displayed. Some programs even allow a person to keep track of tasks delegated to others. As with the appointment schedule, repeating tasks such as preparing monthly reports, can be entered only once and told to automatically appear at the appropriate time.

**C. Note Management** - Most programs have some type of function to allow the user to record and retrieve information. This feature ranges from primitive to sophisticated, depending upon the specific program.

**D. Address and Phone Directory** - Most programs (but not all) have automatic phone dialers that will dial phone numbers at the push of a button, provided the computer is hooked to a modem and phone.

Lists of addresses or phone numbers can also be printed.

The PIM software can be extremely helpful as a time management tool. One desirable feature is that past records can be archived. If you need to retrieve a record of your appointments and completed tasks for a specific past date, this is easily done. A variety of reports, such as a weekly schedule, tasks to do, a listing of subordinates, and tasks delegated to each can easily be generated.

Most of the PIM programs can be run as "resident" programs. This means they can automatically be loaded every time the computer is turned on but are not visible unless the user chooses to access the program by touching a combination of "hot keys." A person can be in the middle of preparing a lesson plan using a word processing program and immediately switch to the PIM to list a task or schedule an appointment then switch back to word processing.

The PIMs range in price from \$69 to \$395 and can be simple or highly sophisticated with a bunch of "gee whiz" features. The primary disadvantage of PIMs is they are not portable. Most people don't carry computers around with them. If you are in a meeting away from your desk (and computer) and need to determine a date for a meeting, it might be difficult. As we move into the age of powerful, inexpensive notebook computers this disadvantage will diminish.

A partial listing of the lower cost PIMs follows, along with an approximate price:

- ON TIME** — \$69.96  
Campbell Services, Inc.  
21700 Northwestern Hwy., Suite 1070  
Southfield, MI 48075
- PRIMETIME PERSONAL** — \$99.95  
Primetime Software Inc.  
P.O. Box 27967  
Santa Ana, CA 92799-7967
- INSTANT RECALL** — \$99.95  
Chronologic Corp.  
5151 N. Oracle, No 210  
Tucson, AZ 85704
- WHO-WHAT-WHEN** — \$189.95  
Chronos Software Inc.  
555 DeHaro St., Suite 240  
San Francisco, CA 94107