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## Olympus R1000 Waterproof, Rugged, Tough Digital Assistant Review

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Friday March 11, 2005 3:44 PM EST

Reviewed by: [Fabrizio Pilato](#)

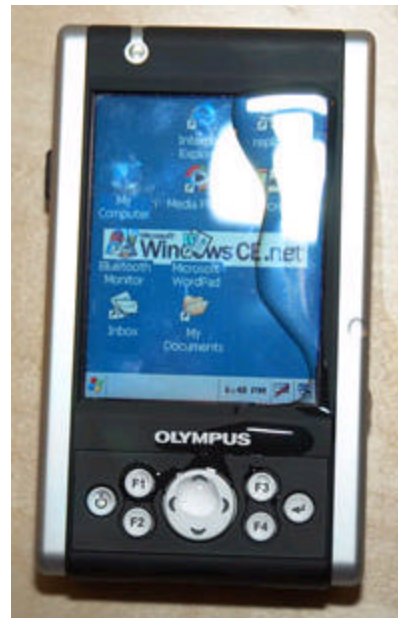
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- Interface & Design ▶ 98%
- Features & Functions ▶ 91%
- Performance ▶ 94%
- Bang for your Buck ▶ 88%
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You're in the casino playing a few rounds of black jack, you tap through the restaurant menu on the PDA the front desk provided when you first checked in, you double tap the prime rib, a bottle of 1987 Masi, and a rye and seven to start. You tap the "send meal to room" button, then "send drink to table 32" button. The orders are sent wirelessly to the kitchen and your prime rib will be ready in your room within 20 minutes, meanwhile your rye and seven are on the way to your table. While waiting you flip to



the game help menu for some black jack tips in a last bid of hope to change your luck before dinner.

In the same room another guest is using the same device, she is trying to find the gift shop, she taps on the hotel directory that brings up a map, it shows her the floor plan and the exact location of the gift shop, a simple and convenient solution for large establishments.

While over at the front desk across the hall a package has arrived, the delivery man hands the hotel clerk his PDA, he signs it, then heads back to the truck where it connects to the local system over Bluetooth then updates the delivery status to the central server over GPRS. The hotel clerk sends you a notice through your PDA notifying you of a delivery.

These are but only some of the possible scenarios that can be implemented with an extremely portable, rugged handheld device that maintains a high-level of security.

Until the release of the Olympus R1000 series tough digital assistant (TDA), there have been no rugged

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PDAs maintaining the compact size of consumer models. If you wanted something durable and reliable, it would have to be big and chunky! If you wanted something secure, it would have to be specifically designed to your hardware and application specs with custom modifications. The R1000 series is all that and more, right out of the box. It will offer complete portability and security that can be tailored to enterprise or industrial markets and adaptable to vertical and horizontal markets.

Not only is it impossible for the end-user to pull your data off the device, they will have a heck of a time even trying to break it. We dropped it from 4 feet, 5 feet and 6 feet, threw it, spilled drinks on it, Olympus even ran it over with an SUV (we didn't have the guts, or authorization to do so), but we'll take their word for it.



Why is it so tough? It's quite simple. The R1000 is housed in a polycarbonate plastic shell, this makes it next to bulletproof. In case you don't know about polycarbonate, it's currently used to make.. yep you guessed it, bulletproof glass. It can withstand operating temperatures from -10 to 50 degrees celcius. We dropped this on the ground a few times, slammed it on the desk, the r1000 just feels solid and will take a 4 foot drop onto concrete and more, you might get a scratch or two but nothing internal will be damaged.



The R1000 also sports the IP54 Category II specification, this was very re-assuring to us of it's ability to withstand damage from dust and water. For a product to achieve IP54 CII status it must be placed in a special test chamber and subjected to 8 hours of agitation with dust. Then in another chamber sprayed continuously with water for 10 minutes from 25 different spray nozzles. And I thought I was putting it to the test by spilling a glass of water on the LCD display, so instead I submersed it in a tank of water for 30 seconds and it still works fine!

The buttons on the keypad are soft and easy to press, they are made of rubber and have a good grip feel to them and are clearly waterproof. The smooth black finish and the silver painted polycarbonate makes it look super sleek. It measures 5.2 x 3.0 x 0.6 inches and weighs less than 6 ounces, very small and light. The display is a 3.5-inch 65K colour transfective TFT with LED backlighting capable of 320x240 resolution. A microphone is built-in on the one side with the IrDA port and audio connector and side button on the other, an internal speaker is situated on the back, this showed slight signs of leaking when submerged but did not cause any damage to the device.



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Inside is the DragonBall MXL processor, its architecture integrates system components to achieve the lowest possible power consumption for enterprise applications in a wireless environment. With this technology, and dual Varta PoLiFlex batteries, the R1000 will give you about 12 hours of run time. Rumour has it that Olympus may double the battery size, thus giving 24 hour run time but sacrificing an extra couple centimeters in thickness.

The R1000 we received was loaded with 128MB of RAM and 256MB of NAND flash. It comes with integrated Bluetooth, while the R1018 due out next month adds Wi-Fi 802.11b, this being the only difference between the two. Having this much memory on board is great, and definitely a well thought out approach considering there are no expansion slots. Some may think it's ridiculous not to have an expansion slot, but you have to look at it from an enterprise stand point, if there is no way to transfer data from the device via an SD or XD card, your data is in a relatively secure state.

As for software, it ships with your choice of Windows CE .NET 4.2 and Qtopia Linux v2.3.6. Offering these two operating systems only means one thing to us, this was built for mass markets at the enterprise level.

After the abuse the R1000 took, I would have to say it's definitely a product ready for some heavy deployment and customization. I would have never imagined any consumer PDA even withstanding a quarter of the beating we gave it, and at this size, it's very desirable to the mobile workforce.

The R1000 with Bluetooth lists for \$899 USD while the R1018 with Bluetooth and WiFi lists for \$1099 USD. Both are available in Linux Qtopia v2.3.6 or CE .NET 4.2 versions direct from [BuyToughPC.com](http://BuyToughPC.com) (mailto:20handhelds@buytoughpc.com), Olympus' official distributor.



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