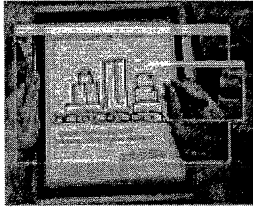


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Microsoft has announced availability of the Windows XP Tablet PC Edition 2005 operating system. The free upgrade is included as part of Windows XP Service Pack 2 and is claimed to offer Tablet PC users "deeper pen-and-ink support" including a redesigned input panel to create and enter text anywhere within Windows XP and familiar Windows XP-compatible applications.

The new features of Tablet PC Edition 2005 are said to include:

- **In-place tablet input panel (in-place TIP)** -- A user can tap on an input box with the stylus to see an orange TIP Access button. Tapping on the TIP Access button opens the Tablet PC input panel directly below the input area. Microsoft says this approach is more intuitive and enables more rapid text input with the stylus pen.
- **Real-time recognition** -- Uses Microsoft handwriting recognition technology to convert handwritten words to text, letting a user preview the conversion before it's sent and inserted into the text block. The input area also automatically adds space for an additional line when a user approaches the end of a text line, making the input of large amounts of text easier than before.
- **In-place correction** -- A user can manually correct any handwriting conversion mistakes before the text is inserted into the text block. A list of alternatives includes recommended alternate words, correct individual letters or numbers.
- **Contextual awareness** -- Rules can be added for how handwriting should be recognized in certain text fields. For example, a rule can stipulate that entering data in a postal code field will only generate numbers as an outcome. A user can quickly write a postal code, and the operating system will not confuse "Z" with "2" or "S" with "5." This feature can be applied to nearly any Windows XP-based application.
- **New platform for developers** -- Tablet PC Edition Software Development Kit 1.7 creates a "rich environment for developing new ink-enabled applications," according to Microsoft. Tablet PC SDK 1.7 extends context-sensitive support in tools that help users tag for context in specific fields for customized forms-based solutions. The kit also includes new ink support for Web-based applications, such as customer relationship management or timesheet systems that support handwriting for mobile users.
- **Better integration with Microsoft Office System programs** -- Users can

insert text and annotate anywhere in Microsoft Office 2003 applications.
Outlook 2003 supports sending handwritten email messages.