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Carry these with you

For on-the-road computing, bring along these adapters, storage cards and keyboards.

Computer Times

By Alfred Siew

22 Mar 2000

Road warriors, here are some things you must not forget to bring when going on the road.

Power adapters

Countries such as Germany use 230-volt power supplies, so you do not need to bring a transformer. If you are going to the US, you would need 115-volt power adapters and transformers. Plugging in the wrong adapter may damage your notebook.

Even if the voltage is similar to what is used here, consider also the type of socket. Australia, for example, needs unique three-pin jacks.

Phone adapters

Accessing the World Wide Web in the business centre of a hotel is expensive so set up Internet roaming on your notebook.

Many hotel rooms now have a data line and a phone line for you to connect to your notebook's modem. However, phone jacks differ from country to country. For example, we use the RJ11 phone jack here.

You may also want to bring along a line extension Ñ especially when it means you can check e-mail from your bed!

Internet roaming

Internet roaming allows you to use your Internet access account overseas, without paying costly IDD charges.

If you are in the US, for example, you simply connect to the Internet by dialing a US phone number instead of a Singapore number. Using Internet roaming software like GRIC or iPass, you log on to the Web using your Singnet, PacNet and StarHub username and password and access the Web locally from there.

Each of these Internet service providers have low auto-roaming rates. Singnet roaming charges range from \$0.10 to \$0.25 per minute.

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And once you have an Internet connection up and running, you may use Media-Ring's software to dial home via the Internet, rather than make an expensive IDD call. Just get a cheap microphone.

Other accessories

For the Palm user who needs to type on the Palm organiser, get the Palm portable Qwerty keyboard for \$179 which can be folded up when not needed.

Also check out Palm's auto/air rechargers (each \$75) which can charge up your Palm IIIc when you are driving or flying.

If you want handy, portable storage, you might want to try out Trek's Thumb Drive which will be available within the next few months. Weighing a mere 30g, this flash memory device stores up to 256MB of data and connects to any USB port.

Also, make sure you have brought enough flash memory cards - be it Smart Media or Compact Flash - when you intend to take lots of digital photos.

Finally, pack along a handy mouse in your notebook bag - you won't know when it will come into good use.

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