

pi-address FAQ

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Abstract

This document is the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) for *pi-address*, a GUI frontend for the address database of a *3Com Palm Pilot*.

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1. General

1.1. What is pi-address?

A GUI frontend to address databases from a *3Com Palm Pilot*. It can read/edit/save address database files in PDB-format. Those files can be read from or written to the pilot using `pilot-xfer` from the `pilot-link` package. Starting with V0.2.0 it can read your address data directly from the Pilot.

1.2. Can it be used standalone?

The program can also be used as a general address manager without a *3Com Palm Pilot*. Some of the record fields may not be very meaningful in this case.

1.3. Can it read direct from my Palm Pilot?

Starting with V0.2.0 the program can read the address data directly from the Palm Pilot. Put your Pilot in the cradle, connect the cable properly and select **Pilot / Read from Pilot** from the menu or by pressing the button in the toolbar.

You will be prompted for pressing the **Hotsync Key** and the data is read from the pilot. Afterwards you can save the data to a file in PDB-format, the format used by `pilot-xfer` from the `pilot-link` package.

An alternative way to get your address data is using `pilot-xfer` from the `pilot-link`-package.

To fetch the database from your Pilot use the following command:

```
pilot-xfer -f AddressDB
```

Yet another way is to backup all your files from the Pilot with the following command:

```
pilot-xfer -b(ackup) backup-dir
```

Afterwards `backup-dir` is populated with all files from your Pilot. One of them is `AddressDB.pdb`. You can directly read this file with `pi-address`.

1.4. Can it write direct to my Palm Pilot?

Starting with V0.2.1 the program can write the address data directly to the Palm Pilot. Put your Pilot in the cradle, connect the cable properly and select **Pilot / Write to Pilot** from the menu or by pressing the button in toolbar.

You will be prompted for pressing the **Hotsync Key** and the data is written into the pilot.

An alternative way to write your address data back to the Pilot is using `pilot-xfer` from the `pilot-link`-package.

```
pilot-xfer -d AddressDB
```

```
pilot-xfer -i AddressDB.pdb
```

Before writing your database back to the Pilot you have to delete the database on the Pilot first and then install the saved data file using the second command (otherwise you will get duplicate records).

1.5. Can it sync my database?

No, not yet. This maybe will be added in a future version. If you want to sync all your database files from your Palm Pilot watch out for `KPilot` or `gnome-pilot`.

2. Installation

2.1. Where to find?

You can always find the newest version of the software at <ftp://ftp.belug.org/pub/user/mw/pilot/>

2.2. Are there precompiled binaries?

Starting with *V0.2.11* there is a *ready to run* Solaris (Sparc) binary statically linked against `libpsock.a` and `libqt.a` at <ftp://ftp.belug.org/pub/user/mw/pilot/binaries/solaris/>. This binary should work on any Solaris version ≥ 2.5 .

Note: I cannot guarantee that there will always be a Solaris Sparc binary of the newest version! Usually the binaries can be found at the above mentioned location only after a short delay of several days.

From time to time users ask for precompiled binaries, so if you are willing to provide a precompiled binary for any platform this would be very appreciated. Please contact the author.

2.3. Prebuilt packages

2.3.1. Is there a Debian package?

Beginning from *V0.3.1* the author will provide an *unofficial* Debian package at:

<ftp://ftp.belug.org/pub/user/mw/pilot/packages/debian/>.

This package depends on the following packages:

- `libc6`
- `libpsock3`
- `libqt1g`
- `libstdc++2.10`
- `xlib6g`

Treat this package as *experimental* only and please report any problems in using this package to the author only and do *not* submit bug reports to the Debian bug tracking system!

2.3.2. Is there an RPM package?

Beginning with *V0.4.0* Matthias Kranz maintains an RPM package which will be distributed on the master ftp server at:

<ftp://ftp.belug.org/pub/user/mw/pilot/packages/rpm/>

This RPM package should run on SuSE and Redhat systems.

Note: I cannot guarantee that there will always be an RPM package of the newest version! Usually the RPM can be found at the above mentioned location only after a short delay of several days.

2.3.3. Is there a Solaris (Sparc) package?

Beginning from V0.3.1 the author will provide an *unofficial* Solaris (Sparc) package at

<ftp://ftp.belug.org/pub/user/mw/pilot/packages/solaris/>.

2.3.4. Is there a Solaris (X86) package?

Not supported anymore :(

2.4. How to build?

As of V0.4.0 the build process has changed to GNU `autoconf` and it should be quite easy to build the program on any Unix like system.

A combination of

```
./configure
```

```
make
```

should build the binary and

```
make install
```

as root installs the binary and the documentation.

For some time the old Makefile will be distributed as `Makefile.old` with the package as a fallback method if the new GNU `autoconf` based installation process fails for some reason. Let me know if you have any problems using `autoconf` (please submit exact information about your system and the problem you encountered).

2.4.1. Prerequisites

QT 1.3X-1.45 have been tested and are known to work. Note however that QT v2.x currently is *not* supported!

`pilot-link.0.8.9`, `0.8.11`, `0.8.13`, `0.9.0` and `0.9.3` have been tested and are known to work.

`gcc 2.7.2` and `2.8.1` have been tested on *Linux* and *Solaris*

`egcs-1.03`, `egcs-1.1.1` and `gcc-2.9.5` have been tested on *Linux* and are known to work.

2.5. Where to install?

In general *pi-address* does not rely on a specific directory.

Just copy the binary to any directory which is appropriate for your system. There is a `install` target in the `Makefile`, check the variable `$prefix` in the `Makefile`, change if necessary and run `make install`. Depending on the directory where you want to install you may need root privileges.

2.6. Where to put the online FAQ files?

The *FAQ* files can be accessed online by choosing `Help / FAQ` from the menubar.

There is an `install-doc` target in the `Makefile`, check the variable `$doc_prefix` in the `Makefile`, change if necessary and run `make install-doc`. This target is also run if a `make install` is done. Don't forget to specify this new path in your configuration file for your `HelpApplication`. Depending on the directory where you want to install you may need root privileges.

Specifying an *empty* entry for `HelpApplication` disables the menu `Help / FAQ`.

2.7. Where to put the configuration files?

Starting with V0.1.2 there is a configuration file for the program. On startup the program searches and reads the configuration file in the following places (and in that order):

- `/etc/pi-addressrc`
- `~/pi-addressrc`

The package provides an example configuration file with the program's default values. It's fairly well documented so the meanings of the key/value pairs should be obvious.

3. Using the program

3.1. Can I specify a default database to load on startup?

Just give the pathname of the database file to load on startup on the command line, e.g. `pi-address /path/to/AddressDB.pdb`.

Create an alias like `alias pi-address="pi-address/path/to/AddressDB.pdb"` if you want to load the program the default database any time you start the program.

Another possibility is to specify the default database in the configuration file with an entry like:

```
DefaultDB = /path/to/AddressDB.pdb
```

3.2. Can I reread the currently loaded database?

As of V0.3.2 there is a menu entry File / Reread database which rereads the currently loaded database. This is useful if you make regular backups of your PalmPilot data using e.g. `pilot-xfer` and want to easily update the database inside `pi-address`.

3.3. Where does pi-address look for the database files?

If you try to open a database file using File / Open `pi-address` will start searching in the following directories (in the shown order):

- `$PILOT`
- `$HOME`

Of course you can change directories at your will in the file selection dialog.

3.4. How can I import existing data?

Importing records is done by selecting File / Import / Import CSV. Select a file in the file selection dialog. The records in this file will be *merged* into the currently opened database, if any. The imported records will be assigned to the category which currently is selected.

The format of a CSV-file is the same like the one of `pilot-addresses` from the `pilot-link` package. To see an example create a new database (File / New), add a new record and specify a unique entry for every field. Export this database as a CSV-file (selecting File / Export / Export as CSV) and look at the file with your favorite text editor.

If you currently maintain your address records with another program, export the records from this program as a text file, write a small converter with your favorite scripting language which converts this text file to CSV format. Import the converted file into `pi-address`, that's it.

3.5. How can I import data from Alan Harder's Pilot Manager?

Alan Harder provided diff's which make it possible to read existing CSV-files of his famous `PilotManager`! I included these patches in V0.3.0.

You can select the pathname to the actual `PilotManager` data file using the usual file selection dialog. Preselected is the default pathname of `PilotManager` to the data file (`$HOME/.csvAddr`).

`PilotManager` uses a separate file for the application info of the Address Database of the PalmPilot. The default value (`/home/user/.pilotmgr/SyncAB/pilot.appinfo`) is used by `pi-address` without any user intervention.

You can specify a different pathname in the configuration file with an entry like:

```
PilotManagerAppInfo = /absolute/path/name
```

Don't use the environment variable `$HOME` because the underlying QT-functions cannot handle this!

This handling can be changed in a future version. If you use this feature, please tell me what you think of it and how it can be improved.

3.6. How can I export existing data?

Currently (as of V0.3.5) pi-address supports four different export formats.

In selecting one of the four export methods all currently displayed (selected through the chosen category) records will be exported.

3.6.1. CSV (Comma Separated Value)

The first is the same like the one of pilot-addresses from the pilot-link package. Select File / Export / Export as CSV... and choose an appropriate filename.

3.6.2. LDIF (LDAP Data Interchange Format)

The second is the format used by Netscape's Communicator Address Book (LDIF=LDAP Data Interchange Format). Select File / Export / Export as LDIF... and choose a filename. You can import this file to your Netscape Address Book. *Beware:* The Communicator 4.5 Release Notes states, that LDIF-files which contain 8-bit data (like e.g. German-Umlaut characters) must have *.ld* as filename extension!

Which phone labels are to be used as LDIF attribute values can be configured in the configuration file with the following entries:

```
# Variables for LDIF export function:
# which phone label (1-5) to be used as attribute value
# (0 means not used)
# LDIFtelephonenumber = 1
# LDIFhomephone = 2
# LDIFfacsimiletelephonenumber = 3
# LDIFmail = 5
# LDIFpagerphone = 0
# LDIFcellphone = 0
```

3.6.3. vCard

The third format is in vCard V2.1 format which was specified by the IMC group (see <http://www.imc.org/pdi/>). Select File / Export / Export as vCard... and choose a filename.

Which phone labels are to be used as vCard properties values can be configured in the same way as for the LDIF attributes.

Note: The vCard specification is in my opinion clear about how to handle non-ASCII characters and allows Base64 or Quoted-Printable encoding of such properties. But after looking at the vCard implementation of other applications I came to the conclusion that it is better to write 8-bit values and to encode only embedded newlines. It looks like many implementations of the vCard format (including the reference source code of IMC!) is buggy at this point.

3.6.4. XML (Extensible Markup Language)

The fourth format is in XML format. For the experienced user the specification of this format is included as a DTD (Document Type Defintion) file (`pilot-addresses.dtd`).

Select File / Export / Export as XML... and choose an appropriate filename. This format allows easy postprocessing using selfwritten scripts or programs. If anybody creates scripts for postprocessing (e.g. stylesheets for print or HTML output) I would like to hear about it and will include such scripts in the distribution in a separate `contrib` directory.

3.7. How can I clone an existing record?

As of V0.2.12 there is a `Clone` button to clone an existing address record. This is useful if you have many records which contain quite a few identical record fields (e.g. company contact records).

To use it *select* the record which you want to clone, press the `Clone` button (or use right mouse click and select *Clone*) then edit the record in the normal edit dialog. If you finish editing the record with *OK* this record will be inserted into the database.

3.8. How can I specify the device used for the Pilot?

The default device name for communication with the Palm Pilot is `/dev/pilot`. If you have a symbolic link to the actual device used, you are done.

You can specify a different device name in the configuration file with an entry like:

```
DeviceName = /dev/name
```

3.9. How can I delete all records of a specific category?

Select the category in the combobox and press right mouse button. A popup menu appears with an entry named `Delete addresses`. If you select this entry you will be asked for confirmation and if you answer *yes* all records belonging to this category will be deleted.

You can find the same functionality in the menuitem `Record / Delete Addresses...` (on some systems the right mouse button seems not to work :-).

3.10. How can I edit the categories?

As of V0.3.3 there is pushbutton to the right of the category combobox labeled *Edit cat.*. Press this button if you wish to edit your categories. A dialog will pop up which lets you *add*, *delete*, or *change* the categories.

If you *delete* a category all records which are assigned to this category will be moved to category *Unfiled*.

3.11. How can I disable all functions which access the Pilot?

As of V0.2.8 you can disable all functions which access the Pilot using the following entry in the configuration file:

```
DisablePilotFunctions = 1
```

This will disable the corresponding menu items and toolbar buttons for accessing the Pilot. The describing text for the used device in the statusbar will be changed to *disabled*.

3.12. How can I disable the confirmation messages of some operations?

As of V0.3.3 you can disable the confirmation messages for certain *dangerous* operations using the following entry in the configuration file:

```
ConfirmOperations = 0
```

3.13. What to do if the program hangs after trying to access the Pilot?

Some users reported problems if they try to access the Pilot. The reason for this is not known up to know. As a workaround there is a new configuration variable as of V0.3.2 which disables the test for accessing the device before actually using it. This should help in most cases.

```
CheckDevice = 0
```

This entry will disable the access test.

3.14. Can I change the configuration file at runtime?

As of V0.2.1 there is a new entry in the menubar *File / Reread configuration file*. If selected, the *user configuration file* will be reread and evaluated, changing the corresponding values in the program.

3.15. Why are the button W in the toolbar and the menu entry "Pilot / Write to Pilot" sometimes disabled?

Both the button W in the toolbar and the menu entry Pilot / Write to Pilot will be enabled *after* the entered data records are saved to a file.

3.16. Can I change the fonts used in the various windows?

As of V0.2.2 the user can configure the fonts used in the various windows through variables in the configuration file. The following variables are recognized:

ListFont

Font used for listing of all records in left window (Default: fixed).

RecordFont

Font used for display of a single record in right window (Default: Helvetica).

EditFont

Font used for displaying fields in edit dialog (Default: fixed).

The main purpose of this is to provide the user a possibility to display address databases with non ISO8859-1 character sets. There is still a lot of work to do for this, but it's a beginning.

3.17. Printing

3.17.1. Can I print my records?

Yes, as of V0.1.2 there is rudimentary support for printing address records.

Just select the category for which you want to print the records and choose File / Print from the menu bar. This will print all records selected through the *category* using a default value for formatting each record.

As of V0.1.3 there is also a toolbar button for printing the selected address records. Pressing this button activates the same function like choosing File / Print from the menubar.

You can modify the way the records are printed in changing the following values in the program's configuration file:

PrintingFontName

The font to use for printing (Default: Helvetica, valid font names: Helvetica, Times, Courier)

PrintingPointSize

The point size for printing (Default: 8)

PrintingFormat

Which fields to print (Default: %l %f %p1 %p2 %p3 %c1, see the following explanations for the encoding)

PrintTo

Where to print to (Default: Printer, valid entries: Printer, File)

PrintFileName

The default print filename if printing to a file (Default: `pi-address.ps`)

3.17.2. How is the encoding for the field names for printing?

The key `PrintingFormat` in the configuration file defines which fields will be printed for each record. The encoding of the fields follows:

- %l Last name
- %f First name
- %i Title
- %o Company
- %p1 - 5 Phone fields no. 1 - 5
- %a Address
- %z ZIP code
- %t Town
- %s State
- %n Country
- %c1 - 4 Customer fields no. 1 - 4
- %N Newline (start new line at x position 0)
- %T Tab (advance x position to next third of the page width)

Beginning with V0.1.3 the user can specify an optional `width` for each column (e.g. %20l).

When specified it is used to calculate the width of the column by multiplying the specified width (= no. of characters to print for this column) by the no. of pixels of the widest character for the font in use. So there is always enough room to print `width` characters though in most cases there can be printed one or two characters more as specified.

3.17.3. Restrictions and known bugs on printing

- Characters > 0x7F (e.g. german Umlaut-characters) will not be printed if using Qt < 1.40.
- No header line on each printed page.

Expect these restrictions to be solved in future versions.

3.17.4. Can I print to a file?

If you want to print to a file instead directly to a printer, choose **File / Print** from the menu bar and make the corresponding entries. You only have to set the **Combobox Print to:** to `file`, a default filename `pi-address.ps` in the current directory will be used if none is given in the setup dialog.

You can specify the default destination for printing in your configuration file. Set the following if you want your default to be printing to a file:

```
PrintTo = File
```

You can change the default printing filename from `pi-address.ps` by setting:

```
PrintFileName = /path/to/file-name
```

3.18. Can I execute a user defined application?

As of V0.3.2 there is a new menu item **Records / Exec. User Progr. #1** (the same functionality is also accessible through the right mouse button popup menu). This executes a user defined external program which can be configured in the configuration file:

```
UserApplication1 = /path/to/external/program param1 param2 ...
```

If this variable is not defined (which is the default), the menu item will be disabled.

You can reference any record field using the same syntax as in `PrintingFormat`. E.g. if you want to start your mail program use a configuration like:

```
UserApplication1 = mail-prog %p3
```

Change `%p3` to the phone entry which corresponds in your `AddressDB` with the email address.

Another possible use is writing a script using your favorite script language which dials a telephone number through an attached modem, so you only have to select the record, select **Records / Exec. User Progr. #1**, let the script dial the number and pickup the handset.

As of V0.3.3 the name of the menu item is configurable with an entry like:

```
ApplicationName1 = Invoke Mailer...
```

If there is additional need for more user defined applications, I will extend this functionality in a future version. Please let me know if you find this useful.

3.19. Why are there sometimes mixed languages in the menus/dialogs?

People using a german version of the Palm Pilot OS will see mixed german/english text entries in some menus/dialogs. This is because the label names for the record fields are stored in the database file. If you open such a database file, the corresponding field names (e.g. `Category`, `Last name`, etc.) will be updated and will be shown in the language the database was created with.

4. Miscellaneous

4.1. Is this FAQ accessible via WWW?

There is a homepage at <http://www.in-berlin.de/User/miwie/pia/> with links to the online version of this FAQ (HTML, ASCII and PS format) and some screenshots.

A copy of this FAQ is part of the archive in the `doc` directory.

4.2. Is there a users mailinglist?

There is an experimental users mailinglist hosted at <http://www.egroups.com/group/pi-address/>. Subscribe yourself at this webpage and join the discussion!

Alternatively you can send an email message to pi-address-subscribe@egroups.com.

4.3. Is there an announcement mailing list?

This may change without notice:

Currently the author is maintaining an announcement mailing list. This is a closed mailing list used only for announcing new versions of `pi-address`. If you want to be put on this list by the maintainer send mail to majordomo@miwie.in-berlin.de with `subscribe pia-announce` in the message body.

4.4. How can I contact the author of pi-address?

You can reach him via email at mw@miwie.in-berlin.de. I will try to answer all email quickly.

Any suggestions, hints, tips, questions, bug reports are always welcome.

4.5. Which platforms are supported?

`pi-address` is known to work on the following platforms:

- Linux, 2.x.x, i386
- Linux, arm
- Solaris, 2.5.x/2.6/2.7, Sparc
- Solaris, 2.7, x86
- NetBSD, Amiga
- FreeBSD, 2.2.5R, i486
- OpenBSD

- SGI, Irix 6.2, 6.3, 6.5
- HP-UX, 10.20
- Compaq Tru64 UNIX (formerly DEC OSF/1)
- email the author if you run the program successfully on another platform ...

4.6. How can I contribute to this FAQ?

Send mail to the author of this FAQ with complete information about the question and a suggested answer which you want to be included in this FAQ.

5. Credits

Thanks to Florian Cramer, Rainer Doemer, Philipp W. Grau, Alan Harder, Matthias Kranz, Jon Lasser, Frank Ronneburg, Peter Schwenke, Till Siering, David Wang, Johannes Walther, Carsten Wartmann and Peter Weyers for giving me bug reports, hints, suggestions, ...

Thanks to Matthias Kranz for maintaining the RPM package.

Thanks to Frank Ronneburg and our local Linux User Group (BeLUG) for providing ftp space to distribute the software.

6. License

6.1. How is pi-address licensed?

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7. Links

pi-address

<ftp://ftp.belug.org/pub/user/mw/pilot/>

pi-address FAQ

<http://www.in-berlin.de/User/miwie/pia/>

pilot-link

<ftp://ryeham.ee.ryerson.ca/pub/PalmOS/>

PilotManager

<http://www.moshpit.org/pilotmgr/>

Qt

<http://www.troll.no/>

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