

# PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility

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## Overview

PDA Toolbox is an Interactive Development Environment (IDE) that enables users to quickly and easily develop complex stand-alone applications for Palm Pilot devices. All project development is done using the 'drag and drop' graphical interface. After the application is finished, it can be easily compiled into a stand-alone Palm OS® executable (.PRC file) and downloaded to the Palm OS® hand-held device or the Palm OS Emulator.

This conversion utility allows users to easily convert databases created on the handheld to text files on the Windows™ PC, where they can be imported and used by standard Windows platform programs.

Text files created on the PC can also be converted to Palm Pilot Database format and be installed and used on the Palm OS® hand-held devices. This 2-way data transfer utility greatly enhances the usability of PDA Toolbox applications.

## File Types

The following table describes the file types referenced in this document:

*.PRC	Palm OS® applications
*.PDB	Palm OS® databases
*.XDF	Transfer Definition Files used by PDATConv.exe
*.TXT	Comma separated text data files
*.CSV	Comma separated text data files

## Installing PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility

PDATCONV.EXE should be copied to your PDA Toolbox 'working' folder. This is where it will be run from, and where it will look for the Transfer Definition Files (\*.XDF) when you select to convert between Palm Databases and Text files. If you are developing applications to distribute, these files should be included, along with instructions to the user to install them in your application folder.

## How it works

PDATCONV (the conversion utility) enables the user to select a Palm Database that has been backed up from their hand-held during synchronization, and Convert Now into a text file (.TXT or .CSV). They can then import this file into a spreadsheet or database for manipulation on the PC.

To convert from PC format to Palm Database the system uses a pre-defined Transfer Definition File (.XDF) to convert a Text file into a Palm Database. The user must export data into a Text file (.TXT or .CSV) with the columns in the same order as specified in the .XDF file. He then selects the XDF file, verifies the location of the Text file and target folder for the Palm Database, and converts the file. This Palm Database (.PDB) can then be installed on the Palm using the File Install routine on the Palm desktop.

## Limitations

Here are the limitations and bounds of PDATCONV:

- One database or text file may be converted.
- 32353 records per database or text file may be converted.
- Unlimited number of fields per database.
- String, Numeric, Boolean, Date, Time, Alarm, Data Icons, and Digital Ink (DINK) fields are converted.
- BW or 256 Color bitmap or DINK fields may be converted.
- No limit on file, field, or text size.

## Main Window

When the PDA Toolbox File Conversion utility is started the screen in Figure 1 will be displayed. The user can select a Transfer Definition file (.XDF) that was previously created, which will 'pre-fill' the Text file and Database (.PDB) filenames to convert.

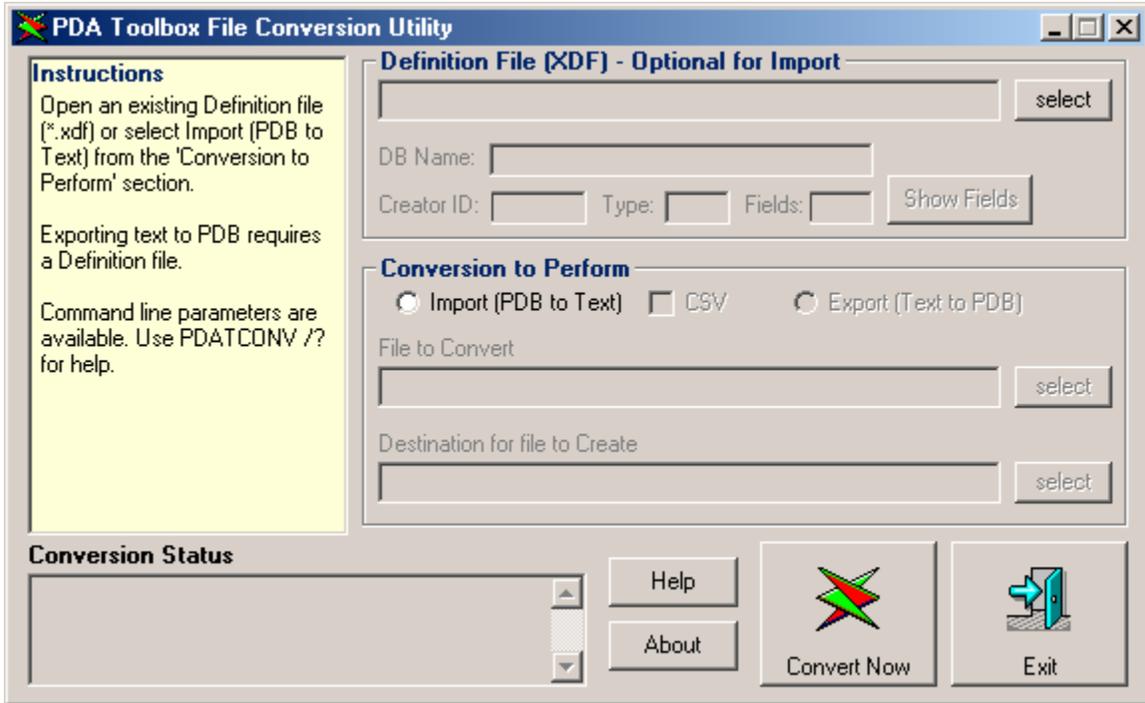


Figure 1: Initial PDAConv Screen

The user can then select the conversion direction, Import (Palm Database to a Text file) or Export (Text file to a Palm Database). When ready to convert the files, the 'Convert Now' button, and the desired file will be created.

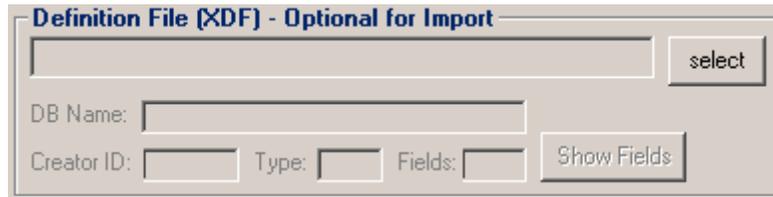
## Importing: Converting a Palm Database to Text Data

The following is a step by step 'lesson' in converting a PDA Toolbox Database (.PDB) to a Text file that can be imported into a spreadsheet or database on the PC. Before a database can be converted, it must be 'backed up' from the Palm Pilot to the PC. This happens automatically during the hand-held synchronization process, and the file is usually placed in the user's 'Backup' folder.

Optionally, a Transfer Definition File (.XDF) may also be present to tell the system what order to place the fields in the Text file, as well as other information required for the transfer. If you don't use a Transfer Definition File, skip to the "Selecting to Import a Database" section below.

## Selecting the Transfer Definition File

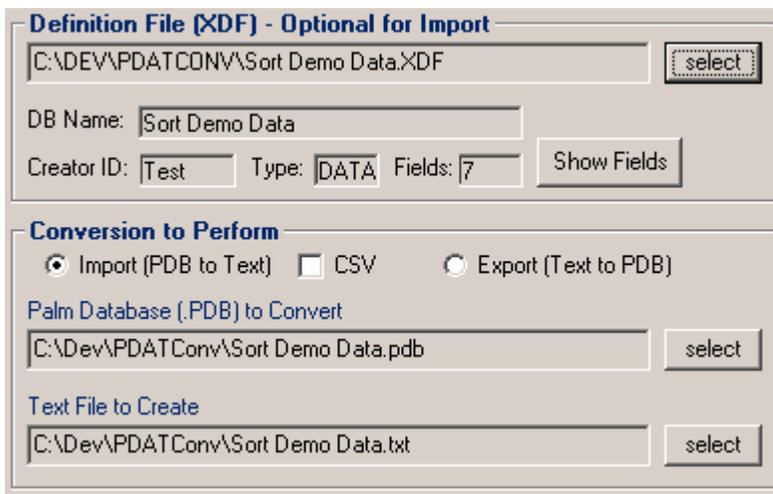
To load a Transfer Definition File, press the 'select' button in the “Definition File” frame and select the XDF file.



The screenshot shows a window titled "Definition File (XDF) - Optional for Import". It contains a file selection field with a "select" button. Below this are input fields for "DB Name:", "Creator ID:", "Type:", and "Fields:". A "Show Fields" button is located to the right of the "Fields:" field.

**Figure 2: Select an XDF File**

This will fill in the appropriate fields on the form:



The screenshot shows the same window as Figure 2, but now populated with data. The file selection field contains "C:\DEV\PDATCONV\Sort Demo Data.XDF". The "DB Name:" field contains "Sort Demo Data". The "Creator ID:" field contains "Test", the "Type:" field contains "DATA", and the "Fields:" field contains "7". The "Show Fields" button is still present. Below the main form is a section titled "Conversion to Perform" with three radio buttons: "Import (PDB to Text)" (selected), "CSV", and "Export (Text to PDB)". Below this are two more fields: "Palm Database (.PDB) to Convert" with the value "C:\Dev\PDATConv\Sort Demo Data.pdb" and a "select" button, and "Text File to Create" with the value "C:\Dev\PDATConv\Sort Demo Data.txt" and a "select" button.

**Figure 3: Form after XDF file is loaded**

In Figure 3 information for the XDF file is being displayed: the Database name (“Sort Demo Data”), Data Type (DATA), Creator ID (Test), and the field count (7). By pressing the 'Show Fields' button, a window listing field numbers, names and types will be displayed as in Figure 4.

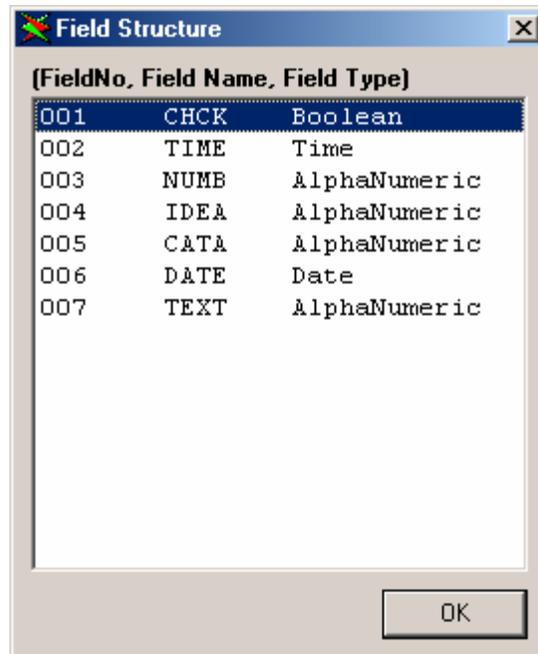


Figure 4: The 'Show Fields' dialog

## Selecting to Import a Database

Whether you have loaded an existing XDF file or not, you can select to import a Palm Database to a Text File by selecting the “Import” radio button as shown in Figure 5.

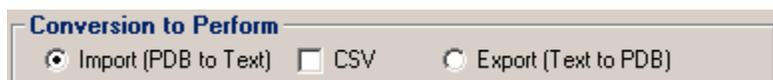


Figure 5: Selecting the type of conversion

The CSV checkbox determines if your new Text File has a file type of .TXT (unchecked) or .CSV (checked) – in either case, the file produced is in comma separated values format. If you have not loaded an XDF file, then the “Export” option will remain disabled.

## Selecting Palm Database File location

Selecting an XDF file will pre-fill the folder and filename of the Palm Database to convert. This can be over-ridden by the user if the files are in a different location. To set a new source file location, click the 'select' button next to the filename as in Figure 6.



Figure 6: The Palm Database file selection

Once you have selected an XDF file, you may only change the folder location of the database file. If you are importing without an XDF file, then you may select the Palm Database to import.

### Selecting Folder for Text file

Selecting an XDF file will pre-fill the folder for the Text file to create. This can be overridden by the user if the files are to be placed in a different folder location.



Figure 7: Text file output selection

You may only change the destination folder. The filename itself will always be the name of the PDB database with the .TXT or .CSV file type.

### Converting the PDB file

After you have chosen your source database and destination text filename, you can start the conversion by clicking on the “Convert Now” button. The utility will convert the Palm Database and create the Text file in the desired location. This file can now be imported into a spreadsheet or database and manipulated as desired.

If you did not use an XDF file, you will be prompted to create one from the information you just entered. If you did use one, and either of the source folders were changed, then you will be prompted to re-save the XDF file with the new location information.

### Exporting: Converting Text Data to a Palm database

The following is a step by step 'lesson' in converting a comma delimited Text file (.TXT or .CSV) to a PDA Toolbox Database (.PDB) that can be installed on the hand-held. A Transfer Definition File (.XDF) must be present to tell the system what order the fields are in the Text file, as well as database name, creator ID, and other information required for creation of the PDB database.

### Selecting the Transfer Definition File

To load a Transfer Definition File, press the 'select' button in the “Definition File” frame and select the XDF file.



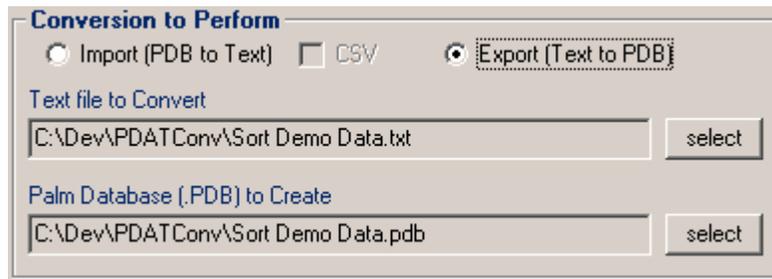
**Figure 8: Selecting an XDF file**

In Figure 3 information for the XDF file is being displayed: the Database name (“Sort Demo Data”), Data Type (DATA), Creator ID (Test), and the field count (7).

By pressing the 'Show Fields' button, a window listing field numbers, names and types will be displayed as in Figure 4.

### Selecting to Export a Database

After loading the Transfer Definition File, you should change the “Conversion to Perform” from Import to Export. This will change the screen to look similar to Figure 9.



**Figure 9: Conversion Info after Choosing Export**

### Selecting Text File location

Loading the XDF file set your data file location and filename to convert as in Figure 9. You can change the folder location of the text file by clicking on the “select” button next to the filename.

### Selecting Palm Database to Create

Loading the XDF file set your Palm database filename location that you want to create as in Figure 9. You can change the folder location of the database by clicking on the “select” button next to the filename.

### Converting the Text file

After you have chosen your source text data and destination database filename, you can start the conversion by clicking on the “Convert Now” button. The utility will convert the text file to a Palm Database in the desired location. This file can now be installed on to the hand-held using the Palm install utility.

If either of the source folders were changed, then you will be prompted to re-save the XDF file with the new location information.

## Digital Ink Fields

Digital Ink (DINK) fields are supported by PDATConv. At this time, only B&W and 256 Color images are supported.

When DINK fields are in the Palm Database, they cannot be imported to a comma separated values file as they are not text. To provide support for bring DINK fields to the desktop, the utility will convert each DINK field to a Windows Bitmap and store it in the same folder as the text data file.

These bitmaps files will have a filename built from the database name, the DINK field ID, and the record number:

**C:\Palm\Apps\MyAppData-AUGR-00001.bmp**

Where “C:\Palm\Apps\” is the path where the text data is being written to, “MyAppData” is the name of the Palm database, AUGR is the name of the DINK field (AUtoGRaph), and 00001 indicates it’s from record 1. This filename will be placed into the text data file as if it was the actual data.

When exporting a text file to a Palm Database, you may include the path/filenames of the bitmaps in any format you wish in the text data file. PDATConv will read the bitmaps and produce DINK fields. **NOTE: All images must be the same size that your application is expecting or odd results may occur.**

## Using PDATConv with the Command Line

The PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility can also be run from the command line, which allows integration into existing processes. It can be called from another program, or via a batch file.

It is important that the correct syntax be followed when calling the procedure.

To have PDATConv display the command line parameters, enter at the command line:

**PDATCONV /? or PDATCONV /H**

### Command Line - Palm to Text conversion

To convert from a Palm Database (.PDB) to a Text file (.TXT or .CSV) the conversion program should be called with the following parameters:

**PDATCONV /I Filename.XDF**

The '/I' parameter tells the program to 'Import' a PDAToolbox Database.

The Filename.XDF parameter should be the name of a valid Transfer Definition File (.XDF). The program will use the Database and Text file names and locations defined in the .XDF file for the conversion.

You can call the conversion to Import a Palm Database without specifying an XDF file by using

```
PDATCONV /I Database.PDB
```

Where Database.PDB specifies a valid PDA Toolbox Database (.PDB) file. The program will convert the file and create a Text (.TXT) file in the same folder as the database. No .XDF file will be used or created.

### **Command Line - Text to Palm conversion**

To convert from a Text file (.TXT or .CSV) to a Palm Database (.PDB) the conversion program must be ran with an Transfer Definition File (XDF) and should be called with the following parameters:

```
PDATCONV /E Filename.XDF
```

The '/E' parameter tells the program to 'Export' the Text file to a PDAToolbox Database. The Filename.XDF parameter should be the name of a valid Transfer Definition File (.XDF).

The program will use the Database and Text file names and locations defined in the .XDF file for the conversion. A Text file cannot be converted to a Palm Database without use of a Transfer Definition File.

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