

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460



OFFICE OF  
AIR AND RADIATION

November 19, 2002

Dear ENERGY STAR<sup>®</sup> Computer Partner:

Several manufacturers have recently asked EPA to consider the inclusion of tablet PCs in the ENERGY STAR Computer specification. After careful consideration, EPA has decided that it is appropriate to include this particular type of computer technology, despite the fact that this product is not expressly outlined in the current Version 3.0 Computer Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

According to the current MOU for Computer products, Version 3.0, a personal computer is defined as:

"A desktop, tower or mini-tower, or portable unit, including high-end desktop computers, personal computers, workstations, network computer desktops, X terminal controllers, and computer-based point-of-sale retail terminals. To qualify, the unit must be capable of being powered from a wall outlet, but this does not preclude units that are capable of being powered from a wall outlet and also from a battery. This definition is intended primarily to cover computers sold for use in businesses or homes. This definition of a computer does not include computers sold or otherwise marketed as 'File Server' or 'Server'."

Even though tablet PCs were not originally envisioned by the current MOU, careful study of the product specifications has strengthened the product's case for consideration. According to industry sources, the product EPA considers a tablet PC is capable of being powered and/or charged from a wall outlet and it is marketed as being a "PC" or personal computer. Other additional and/or optional characteristics, depending on the manufacturer, support its "computer" designation: it can have network capability, it can use a desktop-based operation system, and it can support the connection of an external keyboard. A tablet PC's design and energy-consumption align it very closely to that of a laptop computer, allowing for a natural crossover in regards to the specification. Based on the reasons outlined, ENERGY STAR will now consider tablet PCs, as defined above, for eligibility in earning the label under the definition of "portable unit."

Though EPA has determined to allow tablet PCs into the program, **this eligibility will not extend to products marketed as "personal handheld devices" or PDAs.** A PDA unit does not function as a desktop or laptop computer because of its size and target-function, nor does it consume similar amounts of energy to operate. Because the PDA's overall functionality cannot

be reasonably compared to that of a personal computer, EPA feels it would be inappropriate to qualify PDAs against efficiency criteria specific to this type of product.

Thank you again for your continuing support of ENERGY STAR, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this message.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Hershberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig Hershberg, Product Manager  
ENERGY STAR for Office Equipment