

Press Release – Dolphin iPad

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Last week, a young bottlenose dolphin named Merlin became the first of his species to join the growing number of enthusiasts using the Apple iPad. Dolphin research scientist, Jack Kassewitz of SpeakDolphin.com, introduced the iPad to the dolphin in early steps towards build a language interface.

“The use of the iPad is part of our continuing search to find a suitable touch screen technology which the dolphins can activate with the tip of their rostrums or beaks. After extensive searching and product review, it looks like our choice is between the Panasonic Toughbook and the Apple iPad” Kassewitz explained. “We think that once the dolphins get the hang of the touch screen, we can let them choose from a wide assortment of symbols to represent objects, actions and even emotions”.

Kassewitz explained the requirements of the technology. “Waterproofing, processor speed, touch-sensitivity, anti-glare screens, and dolphin-friendly programs are essential. As this database of dolphin symbols grows – we’ll need fast technology to help us respond appropriately and quickly to the dolphins.”

The research was being conducted at Dolphin Discovery’s dolphin swim facility in Puerto Aventuras, Mexico along the picturesque coast now referred to as the Riviera Maya. The dolphin, Merlin, is a juvenile, born at the facility only two years ago. “Merlin is quite curious, like most dolphins, and he showed complete willingness to exam the iPad” said Kassewitz.



For now, the researchers are getting Merlin used to the touch screen by showing him real objects, such as a ball, cube or plastic duck, then asking the dolphin to touch photos of those same objects on the screen. “This is an easy task for a dolphin, but it is a necessary building block towards our goal of a complete language interface between humans and dolphins”, Kassewitz said.

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