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**Appoint MousePen**

A picture containing indoor, sky, wall

Description automatically generated

Short Description: The MousePen was released in 1991 to support interaction with the still emerging graphical user interfaces. It was, if you will, a “ball-point pen,” It had a stylus form-factor with a very small mouse ball on the end. Like a pen, it enabled the fingers to exercise fine control. However, it took more time to acquire with the hand, compared to a mouse, and counter to what one is accustomed to with a pen, you could not lift it off of the surface to go quickly to a different position. Rather, it had to be dragged, as it was a motion, rather than position, sensitive device.

Bill Buxton’s Notes

During the transition in the early 1990s from text/line oriented interfaces, such as DOS, to graphical user interfaces interface (GUIs) such as the Macintosh or Windows, most computers did not have an integrated pointing device. There had been no apparent need to have a device devoted to pointing, selecting and dragging, for example. The GUI changed that. The challenge then was how to enable that functionality without having to buy a whole new computer?

Just adding a mouse was one option – especially for desktop computers. But what about laptops which need to be as portable as possible, hence minimum bulk, as well as be convenient to use on, for example, the seat-back table on an airplane? Regular mice tended to be bulky, relatively awkward to carry and to operate on the limited space of an airplane seat-back table. Consequently, products emerged which attempted to address this challenge.

The MousePen was one attempt to do so. It is literally a ballpoint pen. That is, it is a miniature ball mouse it into the tip of a pen, or stylus, type form factor. The resulting hybrid did not catch on, despite some favourable reviews. The reason is that it tended towards the worst, rather than the best, of those two worlds, being a relative motion-sensitive pen and a hard-to-pick-up mouse..

Device Details

Company: Appoint | Year: 1991 | Original Price (USD): $99.00

Degrees of Freedom: 2

Dimensions (L x W x H): XXX x XXX x XXX (mm)

Key Words

Primary: Mouse

Secondary: Ball Mouse, Stylus

Links

* Review: Appoint MousePoint Portable, Compute! Magazine, August 1991, p. 34. <https://archive.org/details/1991-08-compute-magazine/page/n35>
* [MousePenPro Enhancements Advertisement](https://microsoft-my.sharepoint.com/personal/bibuxton_microsoft_com/Documents/Buxton%20Collection/Collection/Shot/Appoint%20MousePen/MousePen_Ad.pdf)
* [MousePen Brochure](https://microsoft-my.sharepoint.com/personal/bibuxton_microsoft_com/Documents/Buxton%20Collection/Collection/Shot/Appoint%20MousePen/MousePen_Brochure.pdf)
* [New MousePen Article](https://microsoft-my.sharepoint.com/personal/bibuxton_microsoft_com/Documents/Buxton%20Collection/Collection/Shot/Appoint%20MousePen/MousePen_NEW_MousePen_blurb.pdf)
* Howard, Bill [with reviews by Robin Bornstein, John Quain, Eric Berli, Robert Kane & Oliver Rist] (1991) [Field Mice: Different, Yes. Better, Maybe](https://microsoft-my.sharepoint.com/personal/bibuxton_microsoft_com/Documents/Buxton%20Collection/Collection/Shot/Appoint%20MousePen/Field_Mice_PC_Mag_Oct_1991_Review.pdf). *PC Magazine,* October 15, 10(17), 111-133. Comparative review of nine alternative portable pointing devices (including the MousePen) for portable/laptop computers.
* powerpoint
* Vimeo video link
* you tube link

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Image** | **File Name** | | **Caption** |
|  | MousePen\_8977.JPG | Appoint MousePen with detail showing mouse-ball on tip. | |
|  | MousePen\_8976.JPG | Appoint MousePen showing cable required to to connect to computer. | |
|  | MousePen\_8982.JPG | Detail of miniature mouse ball at tip of the Appoint MousePen | |
|  | MousePen\_0192.jpg | Appoint MousePen being held in hand in normal operating posture. | |
|  | MousePen\_0194.jpg | Hand holding Appoint MousePen to show the mouse ball at the point. | |
|  | MousePen\_Blurb.png | A brief press clipping describing the newly released Appoint MousePen. | |
|  | Compute\_Issue\_132\_1991\_Aug\_0035.jpg | Review: Appoint MousePoint Portable, *Compute! Magazine*, August 1991, p. 34. | |
|  | MousePen\_Ad.jpg | A 1991 promotional sheet announcing an introductory special offer for the Appoint MousePen. Click on image to see. | |
|  | MousePen\_Brochure.jpg | A product brochure for the Appoint MousePen. Click on image to see. | |
|  | MousePen\_Brochure2.JPG | A second product brochure for the Appoint MousePen. Click on image to see. | |
|  | Field\_Mice\_MousePen\_PC\_Mag.jpg | An Oct. 1991 PC Magazine review comparing 9 add-on pointing devices, including the Appoint MousePen. Click on image to see. | |

**NOTES:**

* Go through this carefully – including other issues due to reviews of many devices in the collection. <https://archive.org/details/1991-08-compute-magazine>