Skyscape The Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary Illustrated Manual of Ophthalmology (MAOpth)
By Dr. Cristina Hubert

General comments

Skyscape has created an elegant and easy to use interface for medical reference books (ex. Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, Wills Eye Manual, Evidence Based Medicine – some of the titles reviewed), giving quick and easy access to critical and up to date medical information.
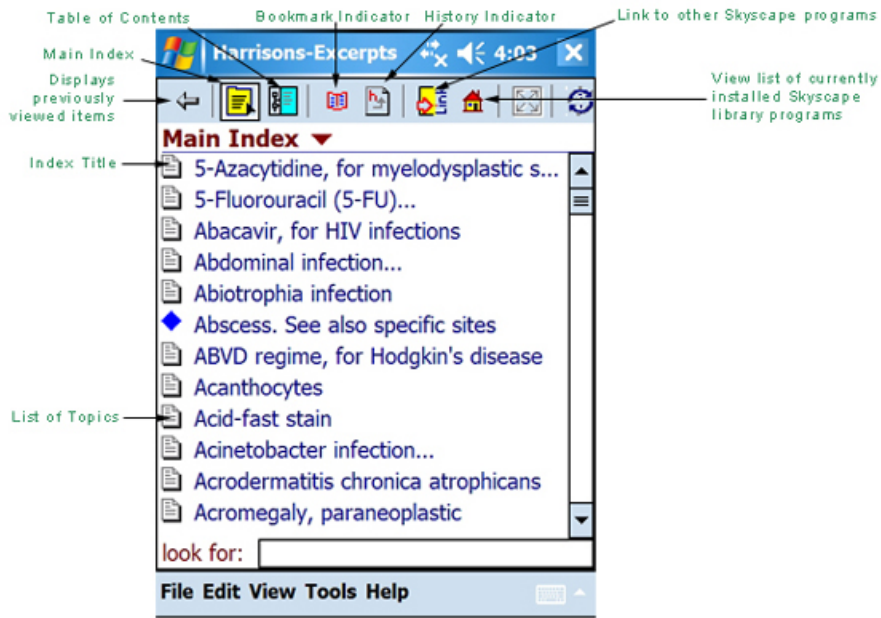
Skyscape does not write the reference books, they simply convert existing reference texts into a portable up-to-date companion one can carry on the Pocket PC and that can cross-index with all the other Skyscape medical books.

The Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary Illustrated Manual of Ophthalmology is recognized as a standard reference book for ophthalmologists in training or ER practitioners. This book provides complete information of all eye disorders incorporating not only diagnosis and treatment guidelines but also high quality images which makes it more outstanding among the other references. Skyscape sells it for $ 74.95, similar price you'll find the paperback version at Amazon. As an ophthalmologist I could test the usability of the software in a clinical environment and in real life situations.
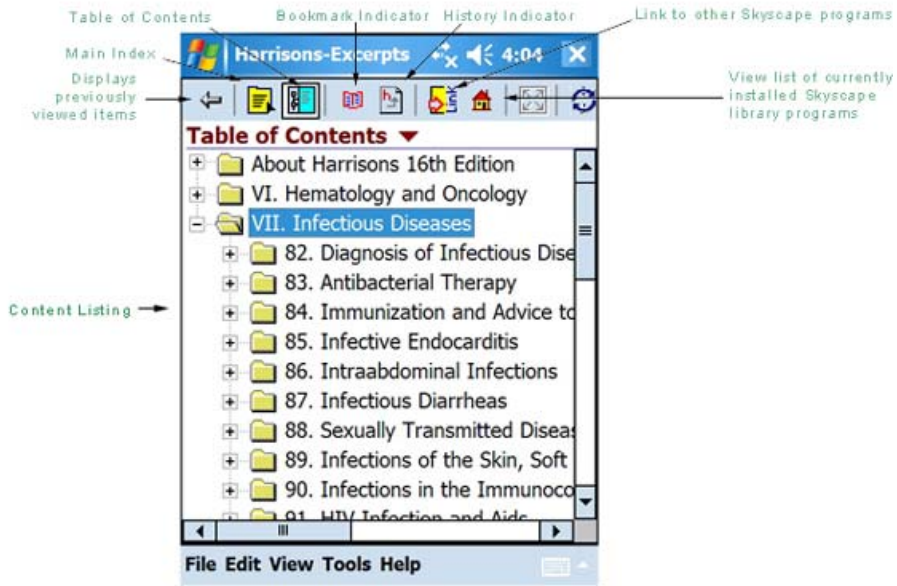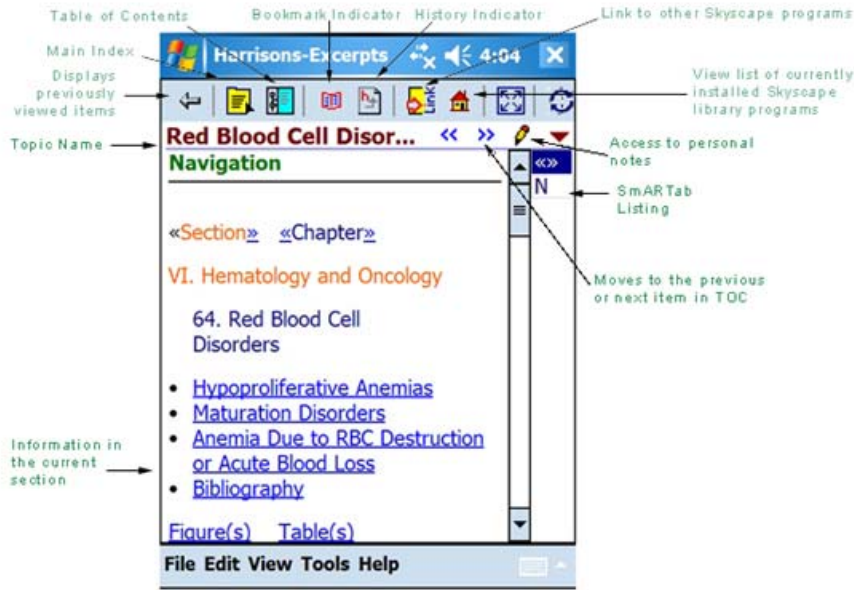

Interface

The following images (captured from the Skyscape site) show the main items of the screen:

Pocket PC Index View

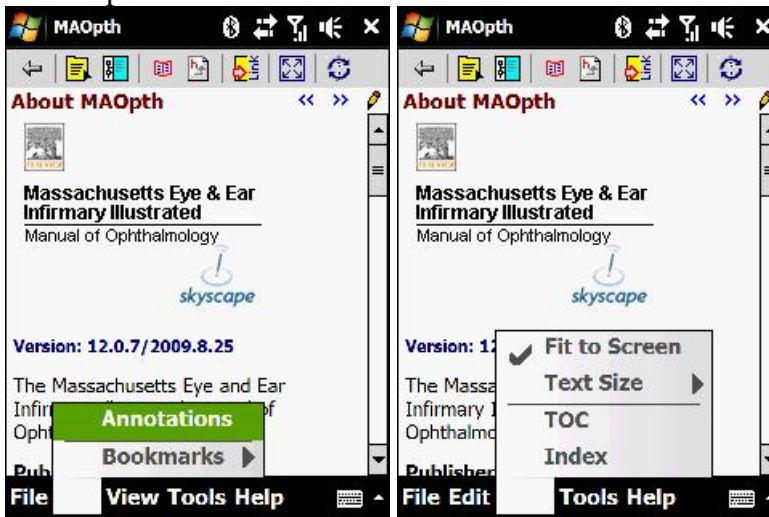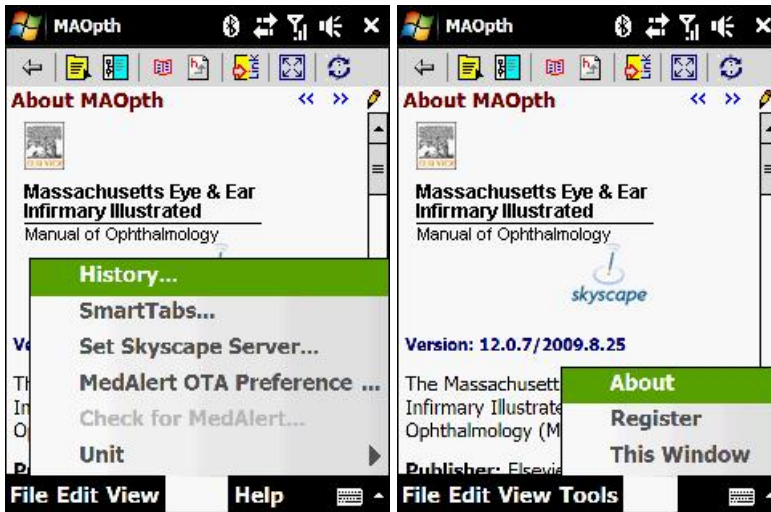
Pocket PC Table of Contents View

Pocket PC Topic View

From these images you can see that the interface is nice, easy to use and with a clean design.

Menu Options

The following images show the various menu options available: File, Edit, View, Tools and Help.

Annotations

Using this option, you can add a text and/or voice comments to any topic in the book.

Bookmarks

Bookmarks allow you to quickly go to specific topics from the bookmark menu.

Fit to screen

When this option is enabled (i.e. there's a checkmark next to it), the text flows so that you only need the vertical scroll bar to view the text. When it is disabled, the text appears as it would in the book – you'll need to use both the vertical and horizontal scroll bars to view the text. Personally, I prefer it enabled.

Text Size

Using this option, you can toggle between the different sizes of the text.

TOC

Takes you to the table of contents.

Index

Takes you to the index.

History

Lists the topics you've recently viewed, allowing you to quickly navigate back to something you were looking at before.

SmartTabs

SmartTabs are the category buttons that appear on the right of the screen in the topic view. Here you can change their order, their title, and the label displayed on the tab.

Set Skyscape Server - Allows you to specify the internet address of the Skyscape server and log in with your username and password used for updates.
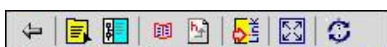
MedAlert OTA Preference

This option allows you to check wirelessly for new MedAlert messages every day or whenever you ask to.

Unit

It is possible to change the unit between conventional (U.S.) or SI (metric).

Toolbar

At the top of the screen, there is a toolbar made up of 8 buttons.

The function of the buttons (in the order they appear):

Back

Takes you back to the previous location in the book.
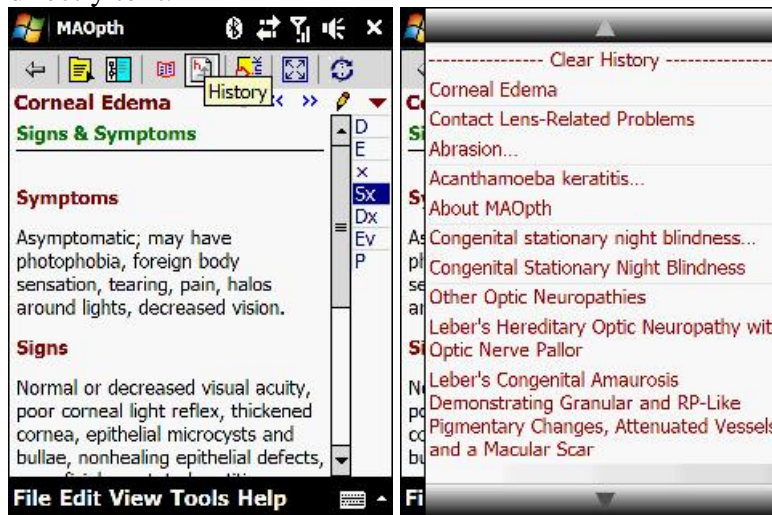
Index

Takes you to the main index.

TOC

Takes you to the table of contents.

Bookmark

Brings up a list of your bookmarks. By simply taping one of them, you go directly to it.
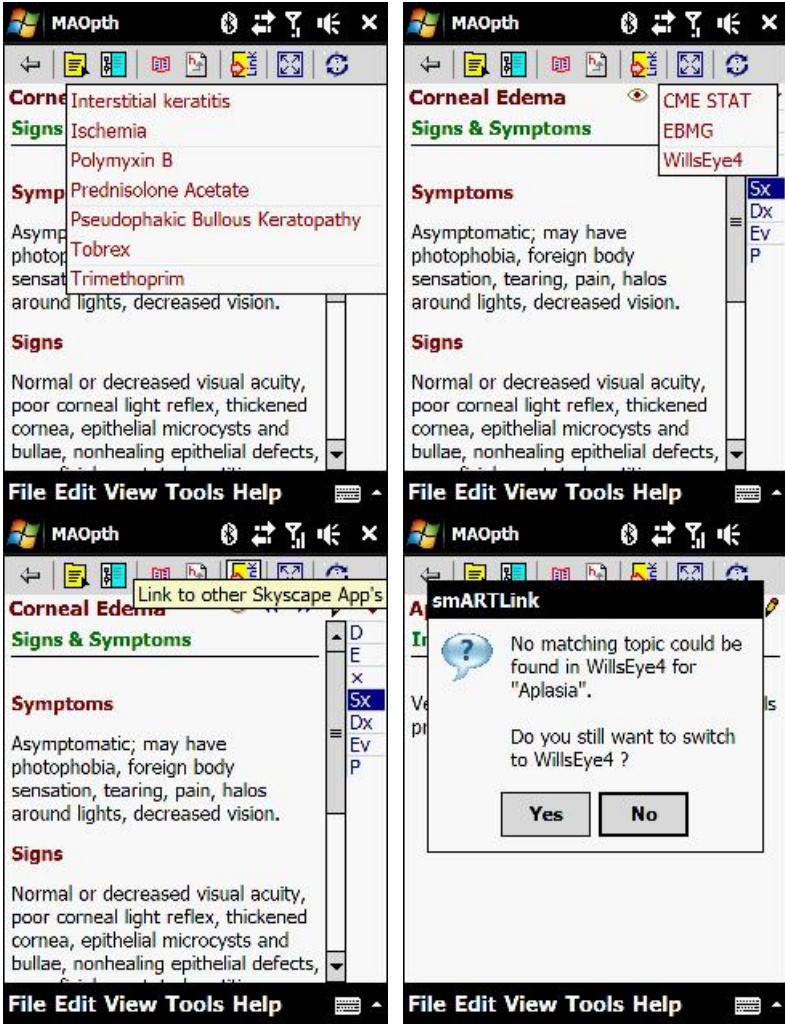
History

Brings up a history of topics you've visited. By simply taping one of them, you go directly to it.

Link

Skyscape patented SmartLink brings up a list of other books you have installed (in this case CME Stat, EBMG and Wills Eye 4) and allow you to cross reference. If you're on the main index and you select another book from the link, it opens that book. If you're in a topic and you select another book, it will take you to related topics in the book you selected. It is useful as it can help you find related information on the topic among all the Skyscape titles you've installed. If it doesn't find a related topic in the other book it gives you a warning but still gives you the option to open that book if you choose to.
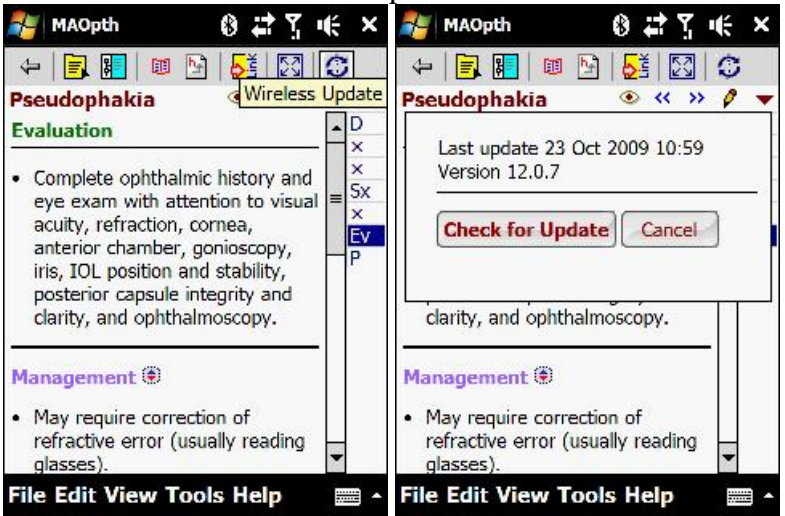
Toggle to Screen
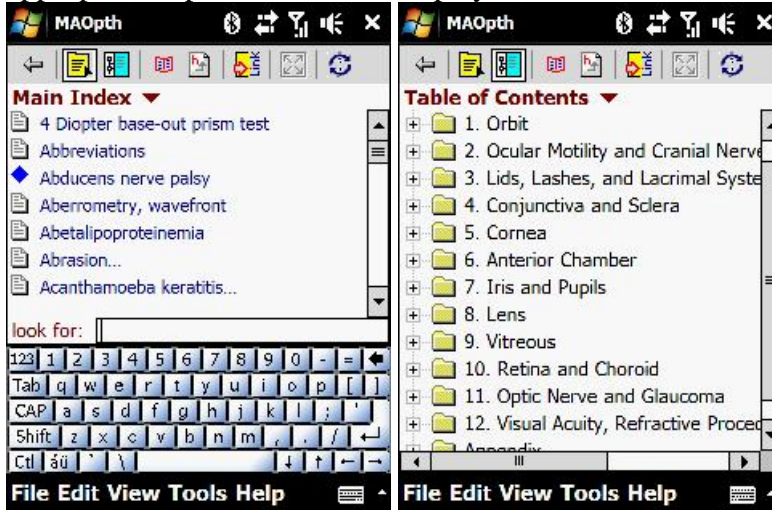Toggles the fit-to-screen feature on or off.
Wireless Update
Allows the user to check for updates.

Using MAOpth

You can get to any topic using the table of contents where you can find all the eye disorders in anatomical order and opening the appropriate topic by taping on it or by using the main alphabetical index, entering the first few letters of a topic, then taping the appropriate topic from the list displayed.
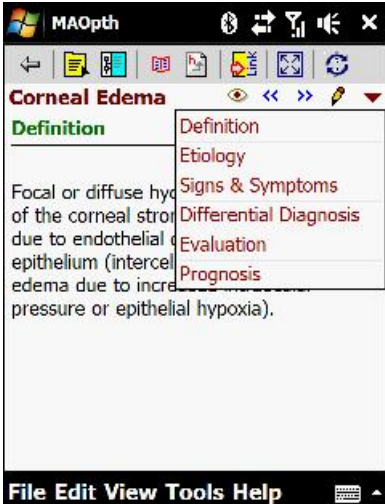

Once a topic is displayed, you can view any of the appropriate categories of information, by clicking on the appropriate SmartTab. SmartTabs vary from book to book, but in the case of the MAOpth, the SmartTab categories are:
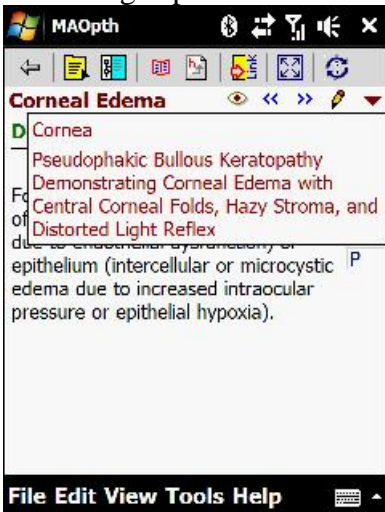
Tab	Category
D	Definition
E	Etiology
Ed	Epidemiology & Mechanism
Sx	Signs & Symptoms
Dx	Differential Diagnosis
Ev	Evaluation & Management
P	Prognosis

If one of the above categories is not applicable to the topic displayed, then the corresponding tab will show an 'x'. You can change the order of the smart tabs to suit your preferences.
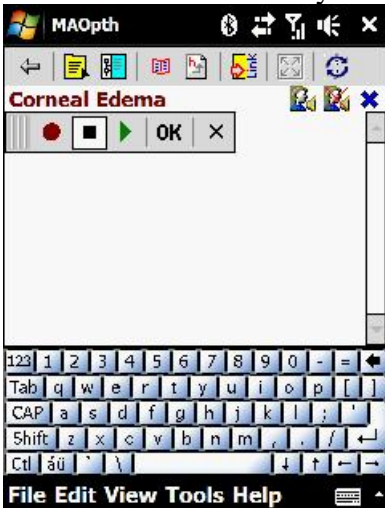
Two ways to select a category: simply tap on the appropriate SmartTab, or if you don't remember what the labels stand for, tape the little downward facing triangle just above the SmartTabs, and that will bring up a list of the categories fully spelled out. Again, simply tap on the appropriate category to select it.

To view topics related to the current reading, simply tap the eye next to the topic's title. This brings up the list of related topics; simply taping on one of them takes you to it.
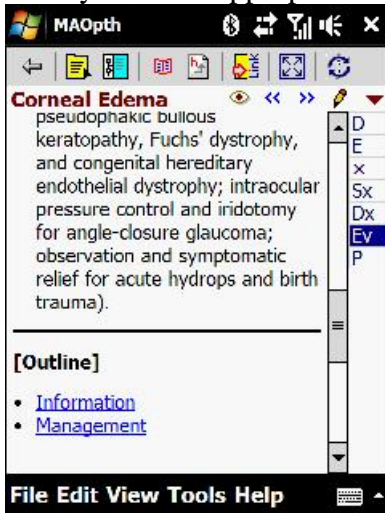

If you want to add your own comment or record a voice note click on the pencil next to the little downward facing triangle that is just above the SmartTabs or select Annotations from the Edit menu and you'll be in the annotation entry window.
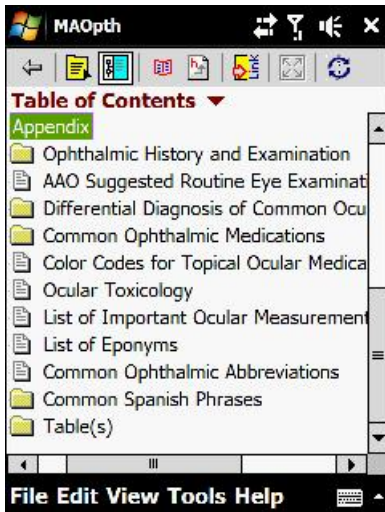
From here, you simply enter any text you want. If you want to record a voice note or play it back, then tap on the little icon of a person and a speaker (it's the first one to the right of topic's title), and a little voice recorder toolbar appears.

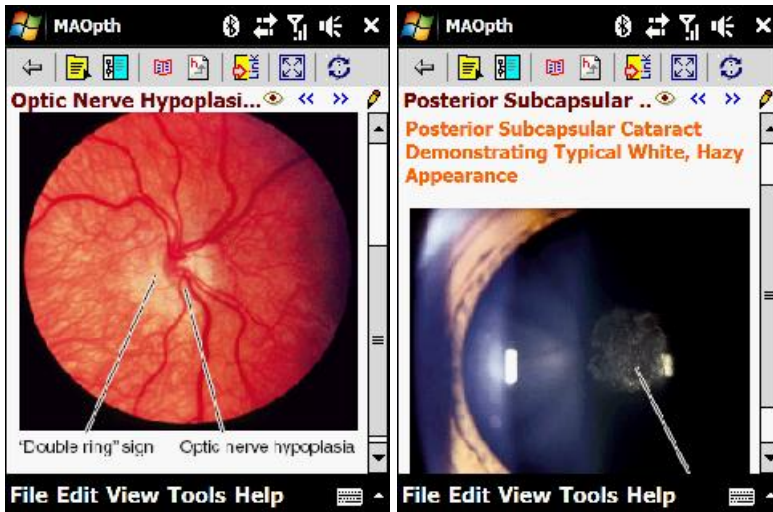The two double arrows (left and right) respectively take you to the previous or the next topic.

Some topics have an outline. In those cases, you'll have a link to the outline at the top of the topic, and the outline will be at the bottom. Clicking on one of the links in the outline takes you to the appropriate location in the text.

The last section Appendix contains information about eye history and examination, differential diagnosis, most common ophthalmic medication, eye toxicology, eponyms and abbreviations, as well as a section of common Spanish phrases, which is very useful in USA.

The distinctiveness of MAOpth among the other Ophthalmology references is that it incorporates a lot of clinical and diagnosis high quality color images that completes the information and makes it an all-in-one must-have companion.

In the field

Particularly when dealing with rare or complicated cases, having access to a complete reference book, anytime and anywhere, proves to be incredibly helpful to remember all of the details for the diagnosis, the workup, the treatment, or the follow-up.

Conclusions

Skyscape's approach of the medical reference is simple, elegant, and works extremely well and the interface is clean, simple, and very practical.

The accuracy of information is delivered in an up-to-date, complete book of guidelines which makes The Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary Illustrated Manual of Ophthalmology a pertinent, and reasonable-priced companion that you surely need on your PDA if you are an eye practitioner. Skyscape takes the paper version to a higher level by making it portable, searchable, and by placing relevant medical information at the doctor's fingertips anywhere anytime.

Score

Design: 9
Usefulness: 10
Value: 10
General: 10