

WANTED: guinea pigs

THAT'S THE message from PMA's advisory committee after a presentation by instore IT specialist Frank Dekker.

He's looking for retailers prepared to road test a new A4 sized computer tablet which can be used to help customers buy the camera that's right for them.

Called Web In Store, the Fujitsu system enables sales staff to log on to review websites so that customers can read what both other photographers and magazine writers and editors

“Digital cameras are a considered purchase and customers want plenty of advice before buying.”

say about a particular camera. Using existing review sites, it cuts out any advertising so that the customer isn't tempted elsewhere by perhaps a lower internet price or a better bundle and its also designed as a training tool to help sales staff familiarise themselves with the cameras that are currently available.

It's independent of EPOS systems, wirelessly connected to the internet, touch screen operated and hand held using an elastic strap on the back so it can be carried anywhere and used by anyone in the shop.

Frank explained that a digital camera, especially as D-SLR, was a considered purchase and customers wanted plenty of advice before they actually bought one. The problem was that staff were not always bang up to date with the latest developments – or indeed were not motivated or dedicated enough – to give that kind of advice so Web In Store would be a valuable tool to help overcome these shortcomings. Customers could see for themselves exactly what their peers and expert writers were saying about the camera



they were thinking of buying and this would help them make that considered decision.

It was expected that each tablet would cost in the region of £1800, which would include full

installation and access to dedicated helpline.

Anyone who would like to take part in the Web In Store trials should contact Tracey Chapman at tchapman@pmai.org.

■ A Web In Store tablet in use in a mother and baby store. The tablets can be used hand held - if you'd like to try one in your store as a guinea pig, let us know!



Also on the agenda...

Credit insurance

Retailers should check their supplier credit insurance limits, Reg Atkins urged the meeting. He had found that his credit limit didn't just apply to one supplier as he had thought but was spread across a number, effectively significantly reducing his credit without his being aware of it. Companies which might have ignored a credit insurance maximum in the past were now being more cautious because of the financial situation retailers now found themselves in, he said, so there was an increased chance of orders being refused because they would not be covered.

Keeping up to date

PMA is to compile a calendar of imaging industry events which will be posted to the association website and regularly updated. The aim is to ensure that members can keep up to date with events throughout the year, especially those which could be important to them but which receive little pre-publicity. It would include trade meetings and shows, social activities and other events, such as the Spring Fair which were relevant to PMA members.

Any problems?

With new passport photo regulations now in place, Nigel

asked that any members who experienced problems with getting approval for their photos even though they apparently complied with the background, pose or other stipulations, should contact him with details straight away so he could take the matter up with the Passport Office.

Staff training

The first module of the Retail Academy staff training course which deals with visual merchandising was now under way, reported Nigel, with the second module, customer service, ready to go. Full details from Nigel at nmcnaught@pmai.org.