

Kestrel 5700 Compatibility with Window Mobile Devices

The Kestrel 5700 adopted a new Bluetooth version 4.0 "Low Power" which is incompatible with prior Bluetooth technology and devices, such as the Trimble Nomad, which uses Bluetooth technology version 2.0. This incompatibility prevents communication between the two devices. We at Lex Talus do not know of any add-on component or dongle that would otherwise enable this communication. The question is, does the lack of the ability of the PDA device to connect to the weather meter materially impact the use of the software? It doesn't.

The Kestrel 4500 outputs via Bluetooth five environmental variables, each used by the program - station pressure, temperature, humidity, wind speed, and wind direction. It knows the wind direction because it has an internal compass. The wind speed a nice feature and can confirm your estimates and is thus a good learning tool. Plus, it has a feature to average wind speed if it is a little gusty. The wind direction, however, is just about useless. While the program can and does convert the wind compass direction into a direction relative to the shooter, you as the shooter already know that information - you don't need a wind meter to give you wind direction. And, when you ask the Kestrel to send its atmospheric information, it dutifully sends all of the information, including wind speed and direction to the Nomad replacing whatever you had entered in the wind speed and direction data boxes. This can be a great annoyance because if you don't expose the impeller to the wind and point the device into the wind because you merely wanted to get a current temperature, the erroneous wind data will replace the good data you had. To deal with this annoyance, a little check box was added on the Kestrel interface page to omit wind information. You only need to get wind information for current conditions once and generally don't need the Kestrel to keep outputting that information. That information will invariably change at least slightly and sometimes significantly at let off so the shooter must make the final adjustments to windage hold off by looking at down range wind conditions and trying to mentally compute a resultant wind vector from muzzle to target just prior to let off. Generally, most shooters end up using the Kestrel's wind function to merely check his wind speed estimates at his firing position and thereafter don't really use it for that purpose after the initial data input. If it appears that the wind at the firing position has changed materially, then it may be rechecked, but that does not justify the process of linking the Kestrel to the device for a single, intermittent data update. (However, the internal compass does come in handy from time to

time as a way to get target direction. Just close the wind impeller protector and point the Kestrel at the target for its azimuth. If you have a Vector, PLRF, or something similar, you would of course use that. But if you don't have one of those, the Kestrel is a handy and inexpensive way of getting that information.)

After the shooter gets the wind data entered, he might use the Kestrel once to import the atmospheric data consisting of the station pressure, station temperature, and station humidity. After that he doesn't really need to use the unit at all except to check temperature. On any given day, unless a weather system is coming in, the pressure is not going to change much and neither is the humidity and whatever changes do occur generally do not materially affect the computed firing solution. What will change significantly during any 24 hour period enough to affect the trajectory is temperature and the changing temperature will generally require making updates every 1/2 hour or so. But this adjustment should probably be done by hand. Why go through the process of linking the Kestrel just to get a temperature update? It is faster and easier just to check it on the Kestrel and adjust the temperature by hand entry.

The reason an interface was created was because some people wanted it and would put the Kestrel on a weather vane, set the program to update the inputs every couple of seconds. We at Lex Talus have never understood anyone doing this because by the time the shooter looks at the solution, gets back on the rifle, and settles for the shot, things have changed. The only way to have current wind data is to feel it at the FFP and see it downrange in your scope and do the mental calculations necessary to do a proper wind hold. So, we've always looked at the Kestrel interface as a nice feature but not really all that useful. We could be wrong, of course. Maybe there is a use that we haven't thought of. But we use it so little, that if we didn't have it none of us would miss it.

If you already have a weather meter then our advice is to use it and see whether you miss not having a connection. If you find that you absolutely have a need for automated atmospheric data entry, then the only alternative is to find a 4000 series Kestrel with Bluetooth, perhaps on Ebay. The only one with an internal compass was the 4500, so the others with Bluetooth capability do not output wind direction. Not a loss as far as we're concerned unless you need that internal compass for target direction. On the other hand, a good hand-held compass works as well.