POLYTOUCH®

10 years in the fast lane: POLYTOUCH® PASSPORT 32 Interview with the product developer Jan Altes

CELEBRATING
10 YEARS on the market
TOP-NOTCH-TECHNOLOGY INSIDE

Christian:

The PASSPORT 32 was only the second POLYTOUCH® self-service terminal by Pyramid Computer. How did this system come about?

Jan:

In 2014, we developed a self-order terminal for a fast food company. Since it was a customer-specific product development, we couldn't add it to our own portfolio. So we decided to launch our own kiosk, based on the same technology, while incorporating the experience we had gained from that OEM project. As with the model for that restaurant chain, the touchscreen was going to be 32 inches.

Christian:

Such a large display size was quite a unique selling point for self-service terminals at that time. Was that the reason for the 32 inches?

Jan:

Yes, that restaurant chain was one of the very first to want 32 inches for their kiosk systems, and Pyramid was known for having mastered kiosk construction in this screen size. Two years earlier, we had launched the POLYTOUCH® CLASSIC 32. The CLASSIC 32 was the world's first terminal with a 32-inch PCAP screen and had a considerable impact on the market. With the PASSPORT 32, we had the perfect answer to the growing demand for large-format terminals. And that was also reflected in our sales figures after the launch.

Picture 1

The POLYTOUCH® PASSPORT 32 is one of Pyramid Computer's most successful kiosk systems. In 2026, it is celebrating its 10th birthday. Reason enough to talk with Jan Altes, the product manager who helped launch this slim, long-running favorite with a small footprint.

Jan began his rapid training as an IT specialist for system integration at Pyramid Computer in 2012. At the beginning of his second year, he was already working full-time in product management in the POLYTOUCH® kiosk division. He later became the head of the entire portfolio. After a brief stint at another company, he rejoined Pyramid Computer in 2024 as senior product manager for POLYTOUCH®.

This interview was conducted by Christian Hartmeier. He is responsible for the product lines AKHET® (industrial PCs and servers), faytech® (touch computers and touch monitors), and POLYTOUCH® (self-service terminals and PLS) as content creator.

Picture 3

Christian:

Who came up with the idea for the PASSPORT 32?

Jan

The impetus came from our company founder and then Managing Director Frieder Hansen, who wanted a free-standing terminal with an extremely modular design. We knew we needed a product that we could sell in a wide range of industries and niche applications worldwide. The result proved the idea right. The PASSPORT 32 today enables self-service in hospitals, pharmacies, discount stores, fast food restaurants, swimming pools, lottery outlets, and tourist information offices. And that's by no means the entire list!

Picture 2

Christian

What's behind the flexibility that enables such diverse use cases as self-checkout, self-ordering, ticketing, appointment booking, and lottery sales, which continues to make the terminal so successful today?

Jan:

That flexibility is thanks to the operating console, known internally as the Belly. It has space for the industrial PC box and for the peripheral modules. It's designed to allow the cost-effective integration of the hardware required for a specific use case: payment modules, printers, 2D scanners, 3D cameras, biometric document readers, OCR readers, NFC/RFID read/write devices, etc. The possibilities are endless. We can even fit a camera into the display frame.

This comprehensive modularity naturally makes it easy for us to customize the kiosk for our customers. We now have several hundred versions of the PASSPORT 32 in

our ERP system. Since the terminal was launched, approximately 10 different printers have been installed in it: classic POS printers, including fiscal printers for operators in countries with those tax requirements, label printers, ticket printers, and ID card printers. The same applies to scanners. We have our standard scanners, but if the customer wants something special, we can accommodate just about any request.

Christian:

What other aspects of the PASSPORT 32 are important to you?

Jan:

One of our most important goals at the time was ease of installation and service. We wanted the assembly to be possible without tools and in less than 20 minutes.

We invested a lot of ingenuity and work into implementing these requirements. The PASSPORT 32 stand is a kit that can be assembled in 5 minutes. Then the control console is attached to it, which has an in-house computer box pre-installed in it. The technician only has to slide it up and secure it with a hand-screw. This is the consistent concept throughout: the screen is also snapped into the stand and secured with two hand-screws.

The simple design of the PASSPORT 32 also includes the two-hand principle, i.e., we have controlled the weight of the individual components so that only one technician is needed to set up the terminal or move it around, rather than four hands, i.e., two technicians.

This significantly reduces on-site installation and service costs, making the PASSPORT 32 even more attractive to operators.

Christian:

Operators of the PASSPORT 32 praise its slim design, which saves valuable retail space. How did you achieve this?

Jan:

This is a very good example of how technology and design are interrelated. Without innovative technology, we would not have been able to create the extraordinary design of the

Picture 4

PASSPORT. According to the specifications, the terminal was to have an ultra-flat and virtually cable-free appearance. That's why it was out of the question to mount the computer box on the back of the touchscreen and connect it with the usual HDMI cable. Instead, we decided to house the box in the control console and connect it intelligently to the display via a plug-in board, including all the needed power and data connections.

Christian:

I assume the magic word here is LVDS connector?

Jan:

Exactly! The LVDS connector is located on the top of the computer unit, which is mounted at the very top of the control console. The touchscreen is plugged into this connector. Today, connecting a computer unit to a touchscreen via such a connector is no big deal. Back then, it was different. We had already developed our own LVDS connector for the OEM system, which supplied the display with power from the computer unit and transmitted image and touch signals between the two. That was the basic research we had done for the fast food project. For the PASSPORT 32, we improved the technology so that we could handle even more communication via the interface. This small connector is what enabled us to give the PASSPORT its distinctive slim and wireless design.

Christian:

How much does today's PASSPORT still have in common with the 2016 version?

Jan:

The installation and service principle has remained the same, as has the modularity. This allows the latest peripherals to be installed. Conversely, this means that ope-

rators can replace the scanners and printers in their older terminals with the latest models. The PASSPORT 32 is therefore also retrofitting-friendly and offers a return on investment with payoffs extending over many years.

We've modernized the technology in the computer box and the operating console. Thanks to continuing technical development, the current PASSPORT 32 is even more modular, as incredible as that may sound. And thanks to the latest manufacturing technologies, we can produce small batches at a more economical price than before. .

Christian:

Thank you very much, Jan, for these interesting insights. Would you like to say anything else about the PASSPORT 32?

Jan:

We learned a lot during the development and manufacture of this terminal. It was a significant step towards the technology and design philosophy that still characterizes our POLYTOUCH® kiosk systems today: innovative ideas, in-house development work, modular system concepts, scalable platforms, freely configurable peripherals, stand variations with single or double touchscreens, wall-mounted versions, robust

robust metal housings, sleek and minimalist design, short installation and service times, powerful in-house industrial PC technology, and branding in the operator's CI.

Christian:

That was a powerful closing statement. Thank you for your time! I wish PASSPORT and you many more successful years!

Jan:

Thank you!

List of pictures: Picture 6

1: POLYTOUCH® PASSPORT 32 (Wallmount) as a SCO terminal for EDEKA 24/7

2: POLYTOUCH® PASSPORT 32 for lottery retailers

3: Bedienkonsole (2016) with SIM card dispenser, scanner, printer, and payment module

4: POLYTOUCH® PASSPORT 32 as a self-ordering terminal in a Romanian Hesburger branch

5: POLYTOUCH® PASSPORT 32 in clinics as part of the Siemens HiMed infrastructure

6: POLYTOUCH® PASSPORT 32 as an SCO terminal for the Aversi chain's range of non-prescription offerings in pharmacies

Pyramid Computer GmbH and its product divisions AKHET®, faytech®, and POLYTOUCH® offer solutions for the comprehensive digitization of entire industries.

The POLYTOUCH® product division specializes in the development and manufacture of self-service terminals.