

Using AvantGo with the Palm Clipboard

The Problem

If you're like me, you use AvantGo every day to browse timely content on your Palm (usually offline). I often want to copy some small snippet of text from an AvantGo page into a Memo, ToDo, or whatever for later reference – usually just a URL, an email address, etc.

Unfortunately, the current version of the AvantGo Palm client isn't able to do this directly. While the Edit menu includes the standard commands (Cut, Copy, Paste, Select All), they seem to be disabled. I suspect this is because AvantGo pages use some variant of HTML for formatting, hyperlinks, etc. and the PalmOS clipboard only “understands” plain unformatted text. If AvantGo *did* utilize the standard PalmOS clipboard functions, the results would include all the HTML and formatting codes and you'd end up with unusable gibberish anyway.

Fear not, Palm users! After a little bit of thought and research, I've come up with a workaround that will allow you to copy text from AvantGo into your Palm's clipboard – with some limitations, of course. You can only copy one screen of AvantGo text at a time, and you can't select *which* text on the screen you want to copy.

Perhaps it's not the most elegant solution - but it works! Like most things on the Palm, once you get used to doing it, it quickly becomes second nature.

Read on....or click here to download a printable .PDF version of this document:

<http://home.att.net/~johnbeekman/public/avantgoclip.pdf>

The Workaround

My solution utilizes a freeware hack called **ClipStringHack**, which captures text *as it's written to the Palm screen*. You'll also need to configure ClipStringHack to make it work correctly with AvantGo (see **Step 4** below). If you've gotten this far, you're probably somewhat of a Palm power user; so I won't bother going into what hacks and

HackMaster are all about.

Setup

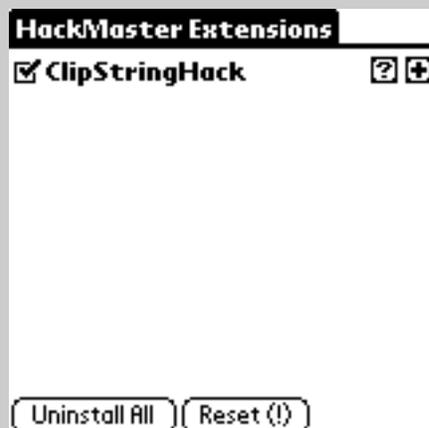
Step 1: If you don't have **HackMaster** or some other software for managing Palm hacks, download HackMaster and install it to your Palm. You can find **HackMaster** here:

<http://www.daggerware.com/hackmstr.htm>

Step 2: Download ClipStringHack and install it to your Palm. You can find it here:

<http://lthaler.free.fr/clipstring.htm>

Step 3: From the HackMaster screen, enable ClipStringHack by checking its checkbox. Then tap on the “+” sign to go to the ClipStringHack Config screen.



Step 4: Configure ClipStringHack with the following settings:



Checking “generate new line” causes ClipStringHack to correctly handle any line feeds in the AvantGo text, and (usually) eliminates run-on text.

If you set the rectangle coordinates as shown above (0,12 and 160,152), the “capture area” will exactly correspond to the text viewing area in AvantGo. If you leave them set to the defaults (0,0 and 160,160), you’ll end up capturing lots of extraneous text that you don’t want (menu text, etc.).

Note: After much trial-and-error, I got the coordinate settings so that they work correctly on my Palm IIIxe. You *may* have to experiment with slightly different settings to get it to work right on your rig, especially if you have a Sony Clie’ (which has slightly different screen dimensions from Palms and Visors).

Step 5: Once you’ve configured ClipStringHack as shown above, tap on OK and then return to the Palm’s Application screen.

Now that you’ve installed and configured ClipStringHack, you should be ready to go.

How To Do It

Step 1: Run AvantGo and load the document whose text you want to copy.

Step 2: Scroll up or down until the desired text is displayed in the viewing area.

Step 3: Use AvantGo’s • navigation button to back up to the previous page.

Step 4: Activate ClipStringHack by drawing a horizontal line from the Calculator button to the Graffiti area. You’ll see "ClipString ON" momentarily flash on your screen.



From now on, everything that’s written to the screen (within the capture area) will be copied to the Palm clipboard.

Step 5: Use AvantGo’s • navigation button to return to the page that you want to copy. You’ll notice that the page loads a little more slowly because ClipStringHack is capturing the text as AvantGo writes it to the screen.

Step 6: Turn off ClipStringHack by drawing a horizontal line from the Calculator button to the Graffiti area. You'll see "ClipString OFF" momentarily flash on your screen.



ClipString OFF

Step 7: VOILA! You can now go into another Palm application and paste the text into a new or existing document.

Tips, etc.

- Once you've copied the desired text to the clipboard, you can just press the Memo button and paste it into a new Memo document. Once it's in a new Memo, you can then do any necessary editing or return to AvantGo to grab additional pages before you paste it into some other app.
- If you leave the both the new Memo *and* the AvantGo doc open, you can easily toggle back and forth between AvantGo and Memo to grab additional pages using the steps outlined above.
- When you press the PageDown button in an AvantGo document, there's a one-line overlap. Use manual scroll as needed before capturing the next page.
- If the text you want to capture is located on the *first* page of an AvantGo doc, you can just use the Reload Page command instead of the • and • navigation buttons as follows:

ClipString ON, Reload Page, ClipString OFF

- If you're browsing an AvantGo custom channel that you've created from a "regular" Web page and you tap on a *mailto:* hyperlink, you'll get the following message:

***AvantGo does not support the protocol for this URL:
mailto:someguy@scuzznet.com***

You can use ClipStringHack to copy the email address as follows:

ClipString ON, tap on the mailto: hyperlink, ClipString OFF, OK

Conclusions

99% of the time I only need to capture a small snippet of text, such as a URL or email address so that I can paste it into a Todo or Memo and deal with it later. In these cases, ClipStringHack works great. Admittedly, grabbing large multi-page documents like this could be hazardous to your sanity!

If you *absolutely* need to get a larger online document into your Palm, it's usually easier to grab it using your computer's Web browser - most AvantGo content is also available on a regular Web page somewhere. If you're a Windows user, there's a great freeware utility called **IE2PDB Explorer Bar**. It's an Internet Explorer toolbar object that converts Web page text to a Palm DOC file. It even cues up the DOC file to be installed on your next HotSync! You can find it here:

<http://www.camelot.net/software/ie2pdb.htm>

If you found this document helpful, please feel free to drop me a line at:

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