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- Intel 80386 microprocessor running at 20 MHz.
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- · Advanced Intel 82385 Cache Memory Controller with 32 KB of high speed static RAM cache.
- · Page mode interleaved memory architecture.
- · Socket for 20 MHz Intel 80387 or 20 MHz WEITEK 3167 math coprocessor.
- . 5.25"1.2 MB or 3.5"1.44 MB diskette drive.
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- · Enhanced 101-key keyboard.
- . 1 parallel and 2 serial ports.
- · 200-watt power supply.
- · 8 industry standard expansion slots.

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#### STANDARD FEATURES:

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- · 1 MB of RAM\* expandable to 16 MB+ (8 MB+ on system board).
- · Page mode interleaved memory architecture.
- · Integrated diskette and VGA video controller on system board.
- Socket for Intel 80287 math coprocessor.
- · One 3.5" 1.44 MB diskette drive.
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- 1 parallel and 2 serial ports integrated on system board.
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#### STANDARD FEATURES:

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   640 KB of RAM expandable to 16 MB+ (4.6 MB+ on system board).
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†Using I MB SIMMs. Inquire as to availability.

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System 220

With Monitor

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Dell Enhanced MS® OS/2 Standard Edition 1.0: \$324.95

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# PC W\@RLD

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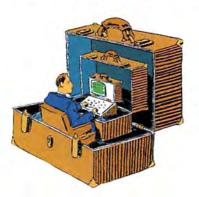
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#### The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of



Senior Editor Eric Knorr

Six 20-MHz 80386 systems; 15 VGA monitors; 10 VGA boards; 7 battery-powered, hard disk-equipped laptops. No doubt about it—our end-of-the-year all-hardware issue covers the high end.

Of course, high end doesn't necessarily mean high price. When we assembled the best from this special issue into the dream system that graces this month's cover, we found some unexpected values.

To Senior Editor Eric Knorr, for example, the high-powered systems that square off in our lead review represent some of the best bargains in the world of computing.

Knorr knows his way around a 386 mother-board: In the past two years, he's reviewed virtually every important new system that uses Intel's 32-bit pride and joy, including Compaq's Deskpro 386 and 386/20, the IBM PS/2 Model 80, Dell's System 310, the AST Premium/386, and many more. That's some high-powered hardware, especially for someone who once told a group of industry analysts that his favorite word processor was EDLIN.

"These systems are almost a commodity item now," says Knorr. "And the high-performance Everex isn't even the most expensive system we looked at. More important, the 386 is a stable platform for the future. If you're serious about multitasking—with *Windows* or with OS/2—you need that much power." So, in many ways, a 20-MHz 386 is the safest investment in personal computing.

And that's not the only hardware bargain we found. Our dream system's VGA display adapter/monitor combination represents another good buy. "The VGA as a standard promises to be around a long time," Knorr says, "especially with the extended modes of most VGA cards today. And the VGA monitors we looked at cost significantly less than multiscan monitors."

In the final analysis, it's value that counts. After all, the *real* dream system is the one that won't give you nightmares a year from now.

Also in this issue: Marina Hirsch measures the satisfaction of users who voted with their pocketbooks for IBM's MCA bus ("Who Likes the PS/2?"). If you fall into that category, don't miss this month's bonus Buyers' Guide, "Everything You Need to Upgrade Your PS/2"—the most complete collection of PS/2 peripherals ever assembled. And we've got the perfect antidote to the year-end number-crunching blues: Software Shelf reviews of five dazzling new games, including Microsoft's long-awaited update to Flight Simulator: Happy landings!

Ed Both

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Every program you create with Personal Developer can be copied and distributed at absolutely no cost. So you can give them away to your close friends – or work out different arrangements for your not so close friends.

But first, you'll have to contact your Clarion dealer. For the one nearest you, call toll free, 1-800-354-5444.



System Requirements:

Requires an IBM PC/XT, PC/AT, or PS/2, or true compatible, with 512KB of memory, a hard disk file and a diskette drive. (Copies of your programs may be made for diskette-only systems.) The Clarion Personal Developer supports the following monitors: monochrome, CGA, EGA, and VGA. DOS 2.1 or higher is also required. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation, PC/AT, PC/XT, PS/2 are trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation. Clarion Personal Developer and Clarion Software are trademarks of Clarion Software. Copyright 1988 Clarion Software. Clarion Software, 150 East Sample Road, Pompano Beach, FL 33064

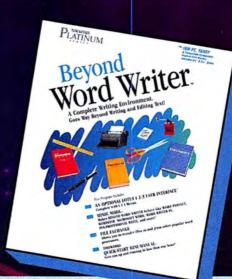
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**Beyond Word Writer...** A Complete Writing Environment. Goes way beyond writing and editing text.



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BEYOND WORD WRITER is not your typical word processor. It places you in a highly intuitive writing environment which takes you far beyond simply writing, editing and printing documents.

This includes:

- An Optional Lotus 1-2-3 Interface, complete with 1-2-3 menus.
- A Mimic Mode

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- Writing Shortcuts that match your "speed of write" to your "speed of thought."
- Multiple Document Windows that let you work on several documents simultaneously—even while you're printing out!

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# What you've been doing.



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On your 386, it hasn't been incredibly exciting having all that power.

If the screens on the right look more intriguing to you than those on the left, you're ready for Microsoft\* Windows.

Windows opens up the world of visual thinking to all 286 and 386 owners by offering the power of graphics.

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screen will appear on your printed page.
And once you've learned Microsoft Windows, you'll have the basis for scores of other programs because all the countless new Windows applications are based on the same easy, logical format.

bodies of text. And what you see on the

Since Microsoft Windows virtually looks and works like MS® OS/2
Presentation Manager, you won't have to worry about it becoming obsolete in a couple years. We made both systems compatible. So, Stop playing with ancient instruments. Now cutting and pasting is a simple point and click with the Microsoft Mouse.

data between them. And your knowledge

ing MS OS/2 Presentation Manager. You'd expect a program this powerful to require a more powerful machine. But we consistently create software that makes

of Windows will give you a jump on learn-

# What you could have been doing.



With Windows/286, you could have been seeing things much more clearly.



With Windows/386, you could have been seeing a lot more things much more clearly.

the best use of your present hardware.
For example, Microsoft Windows/
286 will work with as little as 640K and

instantly make your machine more sensitive, intuitive and highly visual. It gives you the ability to run every Windows application available.

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Microsoft Windows/386 will give you everything that Windows/286 gives you. Plus multitasking with most DOS applications. Now you can finally utilize the speed and power of any 386 machine.

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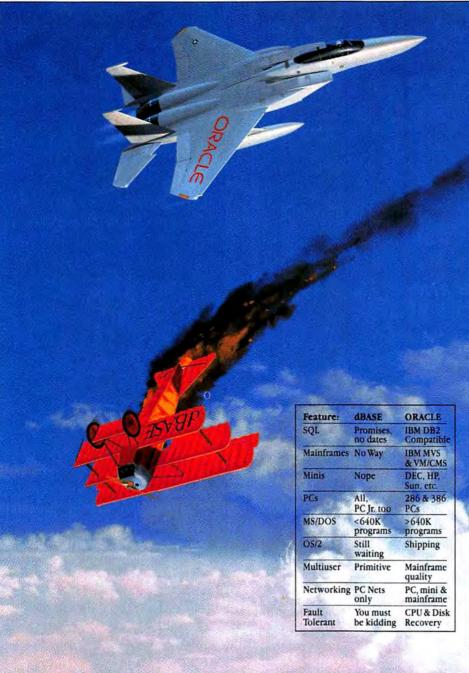
work with a graphics program. Cut and

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#### TOP OF THE NEWS

#### **AMD Attacks Intel**

Rival Chip Maker Takes Aim at the 80286 Market and Intel's 80386SX Chip

While the Intel 80386 chip is rapidly replacing the 80286, the industry still expects 19 million of the latter to ship over the next two years, and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) hopes to increase its 35 percent share of that market. AMD is scheduled to deliver 12-MHz, 16-MHz, 20-MHz, and 25-MHz CMOS versions of its 80286 processor by mid-1989. A second source for 286s that serves virtually every major PC maker in the world, AMD expects its customers to announce as many as 50 computers based on its current 16-MHz NMOS 286 before year-end. The company is pitting its processor line directly against Intel's 16-MHz 80386SX chip, which can run 32-bit software but has the same external data pathways and addressable memory range as the 80286. Optimized for 16-bit

software, the AMD 80286/16 runs such programs 20 to 25 percent faster than the 80386SX and 5 to 10 percent faster than a full-fledged 80386, claims AMD marketing manager Glen Burchers. Additionally, 80286/16 chips cost system builders about half as much as 80386SX chips. Burchers says his customers predict that systems based on the former should be \$500 to \$1000 cheaper than similarly configured 386SX machines. AMD also has sued Intel, claiming that a 1982 cross-licensing agreement gives it the right to manufacture the 80386 chip (which Intel has refused to second-source). Until that issue is settled, says Burchers, "we want to make it a real painful choice to switch to the 80386SX in terms of price."

#### Magellan Aims for Hard Disk Mastery

Utility Combines DOS Shell, Search Capabilities Lotus Development is launching a DOS shell/information-retrieval utility that incorporates powerful navigation tools designed to let users quickly locate information that may be temporarily "off the map" on a hard disk. Shipping in the first quarter, Magellan is a \$149 stand-alone package that employs "fuzzy searching" of indexed files to find specific items of interest that may be lost somewhere out on the hard disk. Rather than building a structured Boolean query, as text-search packages typically require, users start their searches by typing in a series of words likely to appear in the file. (All files to be searched must be indexed with a scheme dreamed up by HAL author Bill Gross that builds unusually compact index files, thus saving disk

space.) Because *Magellan* incorporates translation facilities for popular applications, users also can quickly scan the contents of groups of files (say, all 1-2-3 files) one by one in an on-screen window. Once the file of interest is located, a single keystroke brings up the appropriate application with the file already loaded. Alternately, multiple files can be gathered and imported into an application. *Magellan's* DOS shell includes a tree-structure directory, a macro language, and point-and-shoot DOS command execution. Lotus decided that making *Magellan* RAM-resident would increase RAM-cram, as well as the likelihood of incompatibility, and hopes that many users will make *Magellan* their central working environment.

## Integrated Input System Ships

Hand-Held Device Uses the Three Most Popular Data Input Methods San Diego start-up Marq Technologies has introduced an input system that combines a high-resolution mouse, a hand-held scanner, and a hand-held optical character recognition (OCR) device. Marq, which wants to focus on entry of data rather than of text, began shipping the \$199 mouse portion of its modular tool in November along with its \$149 MarqNavigator, a windowed user interface for 1-2-3 that remains character based. The vendor plans to ship the OCR and scanner portions of the MarqSystem before April. The four-button Marq-Mouse, which is compatible with market leaders, has two pointer-movement speeds that the user

can toggle between, and a resolution of 600 dpi, compared to the standard of slightly over 300 dpi. Inserting a transparent optics cartridge turns the MarqMouse into the MarqScanner. The user waves the transparent scanning window over an image in a "paintbrush" movement to capture up to 16 shades of gray at 300 dpi. Inserting an OCR cartridge and pushing the left mouse button turns on a reading light and activates the MarqReader. Marq claims a high level of accuracy for its OCR device, partly because the software recognizes any type style between 6 and 14 points.

#### TOP OF THE NEWS

#### Alpha/four Coming

Alpha Software Prepares a Relational Version of Its File Manager Alpha Software will ship a new version of its Alpha/three flat-file data base in February, but this one will be relational (see Top of the News, PCW, April 1988). However, Alpha/four still won't include the procedural language and open-ended programming capabilities of high-end relational products such as dBASE IV, reveals Alpha President Richard Rabins. The package won't even include a traditional application generator—instead, its macro generator recognizes menu selections and imbues them with many common relational data base functions. For example, Alpha/four is programmed with 50 of the most common data entry field rules pertaining to field validation and computation, as well as the ability to build smart forms in which

the cursor moves to different fields depending on the data entered in a prior field. Instead of writing their own data base applications, users simply link as many as ten open files to common data base action items via point-and-shoot menus. These user-created sets of open data bases will be capable of one-to-one or one-to-many relationships among their fields. "Programmability is not necessarily a requirement for relational capability," insists Executive Vice President Selwyn Rabins. "The goal is to design a program that can do many of the things that a powerful relational data base can do without forcing the user to write code." The data base should retail for \$495 to \$595 (compared to \$395 for Alpha/three, which will still be sold).

#### Fax/Modem/Voice Combo Available

Complete Communicator Covers Telecom Bases The Complete PC has validated its corporate name with the introduction of a combination fax, modem, and voice-mail card for \$899. The Complete Communicator includes a 9600-bps group III facsimile board that fits in any 8-bit slot. The board is equipped with version 2.1 of the company's memory-resident fax software—a fax menu that can pop up in most word processors and graphics applications, permitting users to transmit a fax by typing a name and phone number and then hitting the "send" key. The Complete Communicator carries a daughterboard with a 2400-bps Hayes-compatible modem and Bitcom communications software. It also has the hardware and software to

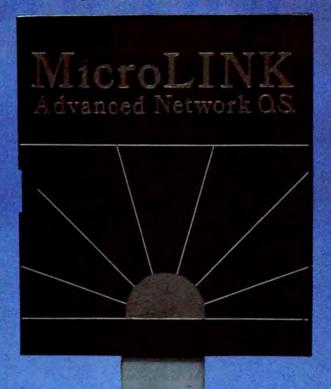
support 999 password-protected voice mailboxes. The board sends voice and fax messages and receives them in the background using a single phone line, alerting the user to incoming messages via an on-screen prompt. William Grubb, president of The Complete PC, promises compatibility with the DCA/Intel Communicating Applications Specification (CAS). CAS will provide a standard for application vendors who want to add limited communications capabilities to their programs. The Complete PC also offers the fax board as a standalone that can be combined with the modem or the voice-mail answering machine, or both. All will be available during the first quarter of 1989.

#### **Toshiba Debuts Printers**

Dot Matrix Models Offer Portable Letter Quality Printing Toshiba America has married its two most successful product lines-portable computers and letter quality printers—to create two new downsized 24-pin printers. The ExpressWriter311 transportable printer and ExpressWriter301 portable printer were unveiled in October along with two highend laptop computers. Scheduled to ship in February, the ExpressWriter301 is a 24-pin dot matrix device that weighs only four pounds, measures about 12 by 5 by 3 inches, and retails for \$489. It is equipped with both built-in rechargeable NiCad batteries and a 12-volt AC adapter/recharger. It gives up only a little speed to desktops: 60 cps draft and 42 cps letter quality printing. On the other hand, its big brother, the ExpressWriter311, prints 180 cps in draft and 60 cps in letter quality mode. Already available, the \$589 24-pin Express-

Writer311 has a trim 12.7-by-16-by-4.8-inch footprint, weighs only 11 pounds, and has a retractable handle. Like the ExpressWriter301, it includes five resident fonts but also accepts 16 optional font cards and has a 16K buffer. In its product sweep, Toshiba also introduced the high-end T5200/100-a 20-MHz version of its popular 80386based portable with a VGA-compatible gas plasma display and a 100MB hard disk for \$10,999. Similarly, the T1600 becomes Toshiba's most powerful battery-powered portable. Equipped with a 12-MHz 80C286 processor, an EGA-compatible supertwist LCD screen, and battery conservation features, the \$4999 T1600 ships with a fast 27ms 20MB hard drive and 1MB of memory that can be expanded to 5MB.

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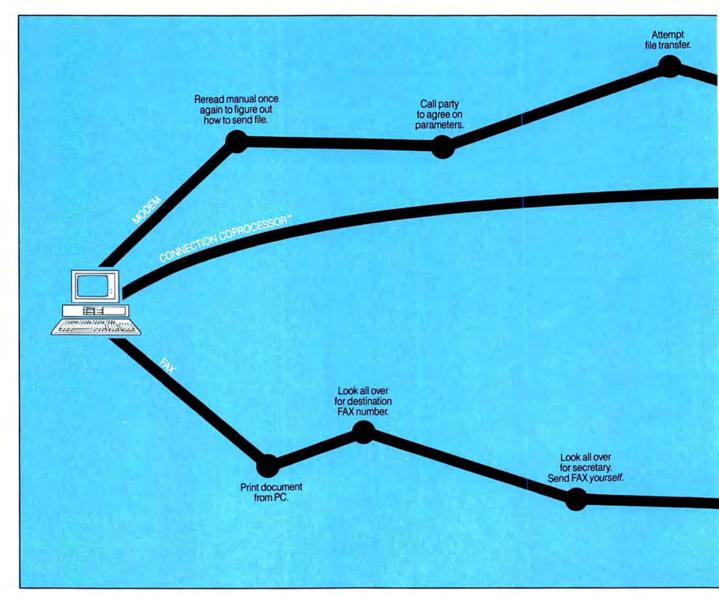
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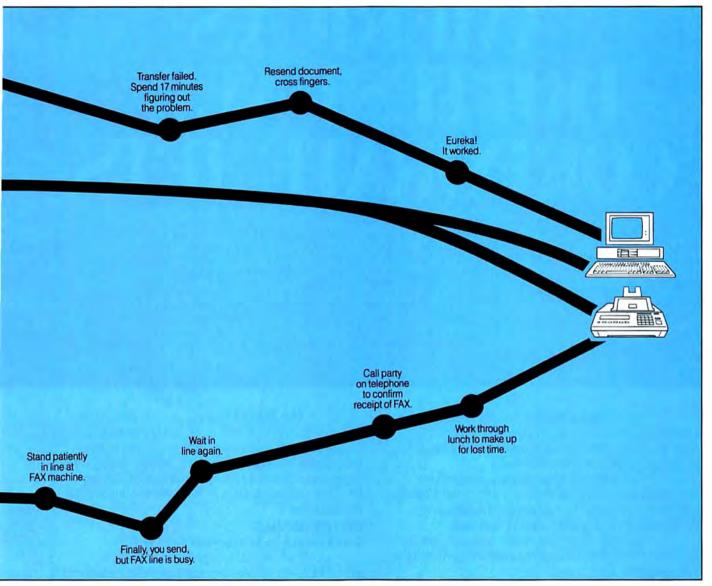
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The 286/14 is also powered by an Intel 80286 CPU, but operates at 14 MHz (with zero wait states) for even faster performance. It, too, comes equipped with 1024KB memory, 1.2MB floppy disk drive, serial/parallel/game ports and a 101-key keyboard. No doubt about it — it's a hot machine and a dream to fly!

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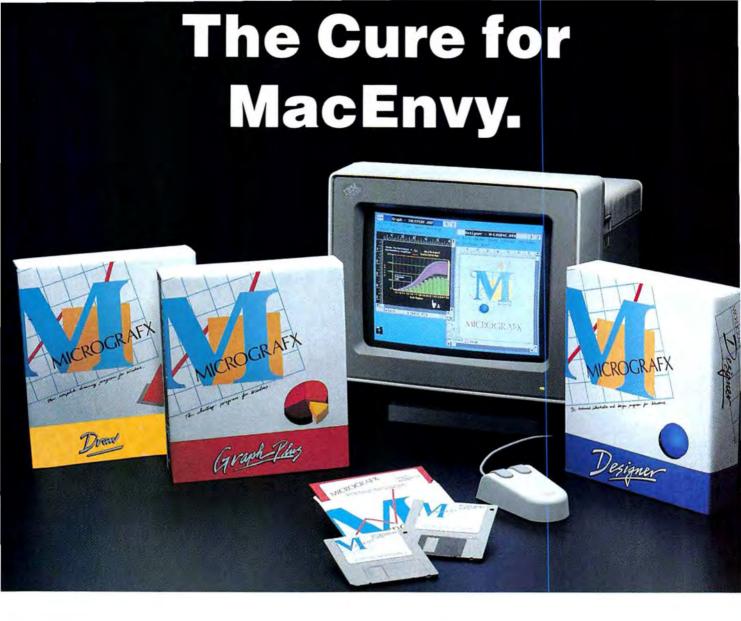
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#### Wish List for 1989

1988 promised to usher in the next generation of personal computing, but instead it turned out to be a dud.

Here's a five-part prescription for a more fulfilling 1989.



Richard Landry

Funny how reality gets in the way of the most ambitious marketing plans. Nineteen eightyeight was supposed to be the year when users dropped DOS like a hot potato and made the great leap forward to OS/2. Instead, the RAM drought stopped OS/2 in its tracks. Lowball clone makers were destined to wither away, thanks to the Micro Channel and Big Blue's protective licensing measures. Instead, Dell introduced a Micro Channel clone only to drop it due to lack of customer demand, and Compag bushwhacked IBM with a high-performance, multimaster bus that's free for the asking. Meanwhile, the PC industry as a whole got a rude shock from customers who decided to wait for the dust to settle before they bet their pocketbooks on new hardware and software standards.

There's no doubt that industry infighting has confused the computing scene more than ever before. So here's my wish list for 1989—five steps the major players could take to clear the air and start us all rolling again.

IBM gets real about OS/2 and the PS/2. Big Blue's been taking a beating for the PS/2's lack of substance, and users are miffed by the low level of compatibility between OS/2 and their previous investments in DOS software. IBM should hustle to provide the fix—a 386 version of OS/2 that lets users multitask their old DOS applications. Then what about the multimaster network, printer, and graphics boards that are lurking around in Big Blue's labs? Get 'em out here, fast!

Compaq gets real about EISA. There's been a lot of talk that EISA is really nothing more than Compaq's way of telling IBM it wants a bigger discount for Micro Channel technology. Let's hope not! Competing bus standards are actually a good thing for users, especially in an era of top-heavy operating systems like OS/2 and UNIX. The standard that gets the nod from add-on board manufacturers is likely to be the one that offers the best performance at the lowest price. So why not NuBus too?

Microsoft bundles Windows with DOS. Microsoft knows that one reason software developers won't support Windows is they don't want to add any more dollars to Bill Gates's war chest. So (continues)

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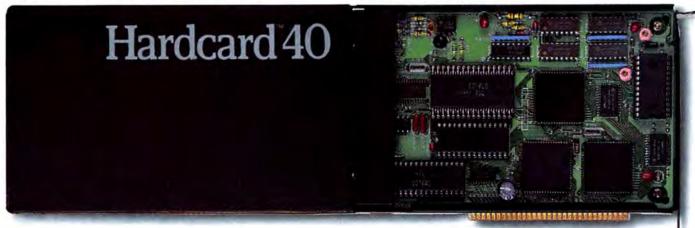
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why doesn't Microsoft do the obvious and make *Windows* a part of the operating system? IBM is already bundling *Windows* with DOS 4.0 in a special college edition. Can Microsoft afford to forgo the extra bucks that *Windows* brings in? Sure—especially since it stands to gain the most from sales of *Windows* applications like *Excel* and its rumored upcoming word processor, data base, and E-mail packages.

Ashton-Tate makes the dBASE language an open standard. Ashton-Tate put a devilish thought in the air recently when it introduced a product that converts code created by dBASE clones into dBASE IV code. Now Oracle and Borland are rumored to be working on products that return the favor. Guess what -in the world of multiuser, networked data bases, both Paradox and Oracle have a big lead on dBASE. The only way Ashton-Tate can preserve its franchise is to encourage as many vendors as possible to support the dBASE language. That means embracing clones like Clipper, Foxbase, and DBXL, not flattening them with legal challenges. Otherwise, get set for a rerun of the Micro Channel story—this time in data base software.

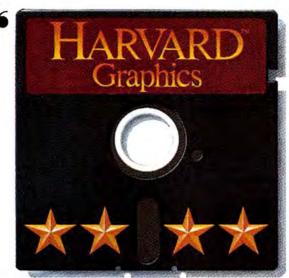
Lotus discovers the meaning of customer service. It's amazing how fear motivates. Lotus is terrified that delays in the shipment of 1-2-3 release 3 will cause buyers to shift to Excel or Quattro, so it's laying on a host of goodies for prospective buyers, including a limited period of toll-free support. Great! Let's hope that when release 3 finally ships in 1989, the new support policies

don't magically disappear. Better yet, why don't Lotus, Microsoft, and Borland get into a brawl over which can provide the best customer support? That's the kind of battle nobody can lose.

Call me crazy, but it seems obvious that if the big players thought less in 1989 about cornering their respective markets and more about sharing the wealth, we'd all walk away a little richer. And next year would be more exciting than this year's batch of false starts and empty promises.

Sadly, 1988 also marks David Bunnell's departure as chairman of PCW Communications, the parent company of PC World. For those of you who don't know the historic role he's played in the personal computer industry. David founded three of the four most important PC publications around today: Personal Computing, PC Magazine, and PC World. This is the kind of success that would make publishing moguls like Henry Luce turn green with envy. David will continue to write his monthly column for PC World, but he'll also be starting a new company and working on future success stories. Everyone on the PC World staff will miss him deeply. Good luck, David!

As always, I'm interested in your opinions on these or any other subjects. Write to me at *PC World*, 501 Second St., San Francisco, CA 94107, or send an MCI message to Richard Landry/301-3685. ●

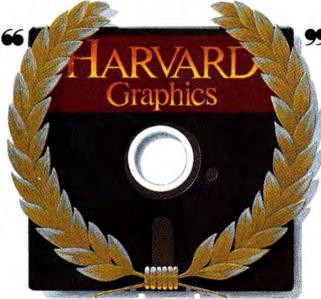


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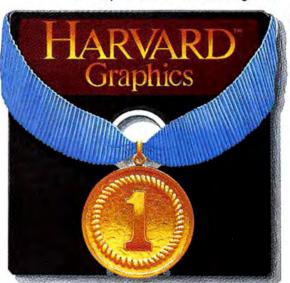


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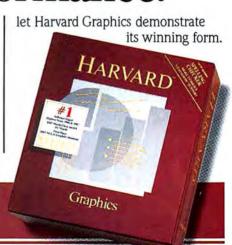
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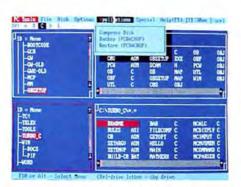
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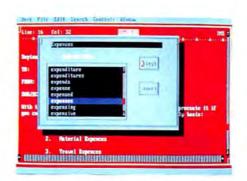
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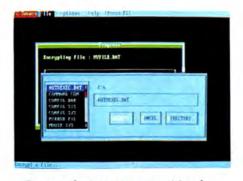
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#### LETTERS

#### Reactions and responses from the PC World community

#### Good News, Bad News

After some time away from the magazine, I was pleasantly surprised by *PC World*'s August 1988 issue. I particularly appreciated the no-punches-pulled reviews of monitors and XT and AT clones ["Viewers' Choice: 13 Monochrome Monitors," "XTs for Bargain Hunters," "Business-Class ATs"].

Computer stores typically tout the items they have in stock, and magazine publishers often seem more interested in protecting their advertising revenues than in protecting their readers. These articles were a refreshing change, and in the long run will help the poorly rated manufacturers by encouraging them to improve their products. Now, with the September issue's coverage of 24-pin printers, I'm ready to go out and buy myself a system.

One quibble, however, with the August review of the Epson LQ-1050 dot matrix printer in *The Hardware Shelf:* The reviewer raved about the printer's speed and print quality while blithely sailing over "an unfortunate tendency toward paper jams." Don't speed and print quality approach zero during a paper jam? I think the reviewer's decision to list "advanced paper handling" under *PROS* was a mistake.

Gregg Calkins Jackson, California

#### WordPerfect Takes a Turn for the Worse

From the cheerleading cover teaser to the last sentence, Eric Alderman's glowing review of WordPerfect 5.0 ["WordPerfect Gets Better!" PCW, September 1988] reads like an unrestrained press release. While I hesitate to step out of the ranks of the WordPerfect faithful, the closing sentence contains an unintended criticism that I sadly agree with: "WordPerfect's colossal improvements recommend it to power users of all stripes."

Unfortunately, many of us are not power users. One of *Word-Perfect's* many saving graces was its relative simplicity. Now it has evolved from a good word processing program into a complex combination word processing/desktop publishing program, and the low learning curve—once a selling point—has taken a sharp turn upward.

Mark Flint Central Point, Oregon

#### Perfect, but Out of Print

Had Eric Alderman tried to print a document using downloadable fonts on a NEC P560XL printer, he would have toned down his WordPerfect 5.0 adulations considerably. Although the program has been trumpeted to the heavens for its printing capabilities, it lacks a driver for this popular printer. How many other (continues)

WordPerfect users are fuming because the program doesn't support theirs?

Jan R. Harrington New York, New York

#### Where Are the Bugs?

I have just finished reading Eric Alderman's rave review of Word-Perfect 5.0, and I wonder why he made no mention of several obvious bugs in the program. Word-Perfect's Canadian distributor recently informed our computing center of the following problems: the auto-install program doesn't work; lesson six of the tutorial program doesn't work; the dictionary file must be renamed so that WordPerfect can find it; and last, the device driver for the IBM Personal Pageprinter must be modified to work properly.

Did Mr. Alderman encounter any of these bugs? If so, he should have warned his readers before exhorting them to pay \$495 for the program. If not, he should review his reviewing skills.

Laurens Verkade McGill University Montreal, Quebec

My review of WordPerfect did point out several problems with the program, including its poor manual, deficient macro stepping, and limited Document Compare facility. Although it did not mention the problems indicated by Mr. Verkade, they are generally minor in nature and have since been corrected in an update from WordPerfect Corporation. Nonetheless, it has become apparent that several of the printer definition files shipped with the initial release

of version 5.0 are incomplete. I would have mentioned this in the review had I been able to test the program with those printers.

—Eric Alderman

## Consultant's-Eye View of Standards

This letter is in response to Richard Landry's July *PC World* column ["Beyond the Speed Trap"]. My company, a business development and marketing firm, frequently makes computer purchase recommendations to its clients. Currently, we recommend nothing but 8086- and 80386-based machines; we consider the 80286 a waste of capital.

With respect to OS/2, we offer our clients an unambiguous *no*. I *(continues)* 

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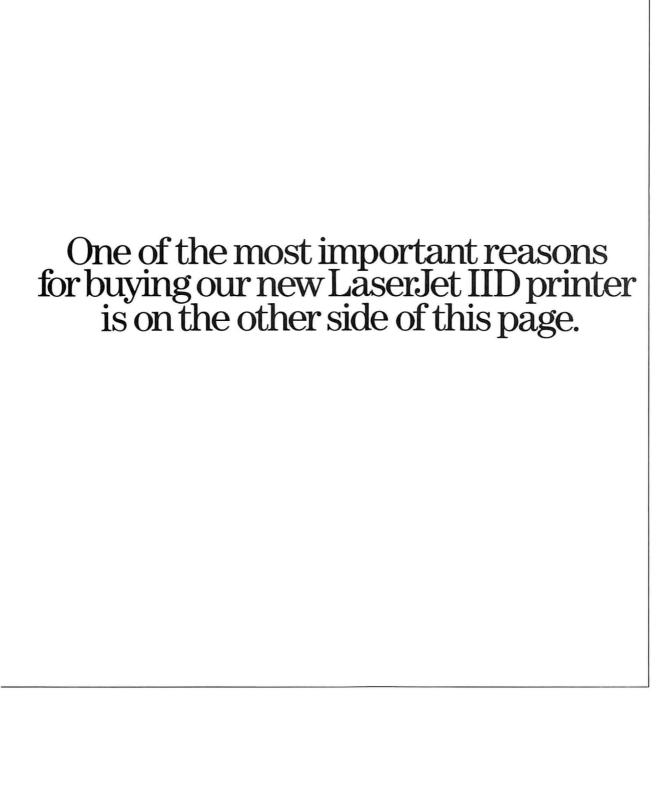
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PC W\(\partial\) RLD

cannot, in good conscience, recommend that anyone purchase thousands of dollars' worth of hardware just to run ported versions of existing DOS applications. And on the subject of new bus technologies, we think all the ado is just advertising hype. We ignore it, advise our clients to ignore it, and will stay with conservative, tried-and-true technology until a new standard comes along.

Our biggest complaint, however, is with software companies. Why can't they get together and create some standard printer drivers? Software Publishing Corporation, for example, includes good drivers for the Toshiba P351 in Harvard Graphics, but not in PFS: Professional Write. Microsoft Project doesn't acknowledge any Toshiba printer

in the 321/341/351 series, and neither does 1-2-3.

Daniel A. Morgan Mercer Island, Washington

# The Straight Skinny on Shareware

I find it appalling that Tom Smith's defense of shareware was relegated to the *Another Angle* column [*PCW*, September 1988]. I always thought that was the only angle.

Michael de la Maza Irvine, California

# Give Shareware a Fair Shake

As you pointed out in your flatfile manager review ["Five Flat-File Favorites," *PCW*, August 1988], all of the products reviewed have good features and merit consideration for purchase. However, you left out what in my opinion is one of the best file managers available: Button-Ware's *PC-File+*.

This shareware product can't be touched in features, ease of use, and ease of learning. I find it ironic that in the same issue of *PC World*, author Judy Getts ["Shareware Comes of Age"] states, "Many magazines balk at reviewing such packages." I guess the proof is in the pudding.

Richard Curry Columbus, Ohio

PC World reviewed PC-File + in December 1987's The Software Shelf, and although our round-up reviews usually cover the top products in a given field, they have on occasion intentionally omitted products recently re-(continues)

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viewed in the magazine. Future PC World roundups won't be constrained by this policy, however, and we hope readers won't be dismayed by the occasional repetition. —Ed.

## In Need of Some Pointers

I really enjoyed the "Best of Shareware" Buyers' Guide [PCW, August 1988]. I'm a college student and bit of a programmer myself, and I'd like to share some of my programs with other computer users. However, I have no idea how to go about it. Where can I find out how to copyright and distribute my software?

David Saylor Johnson City, Tennessee

Try contacting the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP) at 325 118th Ave. SE #200, Bellevue, WA 98005. You can also find lots of helpful folks—many of them ASP members—in the IBM software forums on CompuServe and The Source, or through a local bulletin board in your area. —Ed.

## It's Gotta Have That Click

I enjoyed the review of AT clones ["Business Class ATs," *PCW*, August 1988] but was disappointed that you didn't include keyboards in the "ergonomic design" section of the Features Evaluation.

It's great to be able to reset the computer without reaching around to the back, and to be able to adjust the viewing angle of the monitor. But if the keyboard stinks, it doesn't matter how many other wonderful features the machine has. I'm still looking for a keyboard manufacturer who has figured out that stiff, sticky, flat keys are not the way to go. I mean, if we can come up with an IBM-compatible computer, why can't we do the same with keyboards?

John V. Hedtke Bellevue, Washington

# COBOL Alive and Well Under DOS

I noted with great interest your coverage of a topic that rarely surfaces in the major PC magazines: COBOL [Top of the News, PCW, September 1988]. OS/2 may prove important to corporate and government users at some point in the future, but Mr. Lobdell's comments imply that you need OS/2 to do any significant application development in COBOL. This is just not true.

COBOL-compiled object code, like that produced by any high-level language compiler, is only as fast and efficient as the compiler that creates it. OS/2 will certainly allow inefficient compilers to get away with a lot more than they otherwise could under DOS's 640K memory limit. However, COBOL will work for you now—under DOS—if you choose the right compiler.

Michael N. Dodas Salt Lake City, Utah

## **We Stand Corrected**

In your May 1988 Letters column, Robert Luhn described the COMDEX attendees who adorned the cover of PC World's January issue as "subscribers, businesspeople, programmers, doctors, bureaucrats, and other law-abiding folk." I wanted to let (continues)

# THE BUS STOPS HERE!

# CompuStar: PS/2 and PC/AT Compatibility.

Ask any computer expert about what type of system you should buy nowadays and you'll likely get a "pass the bus" response. Something like — "Well, uh, the PC/AT\* bus is your best buy but, then again, the new PS/2\* bus may become the next industry standard." Great advice, right? If trying to decide on a microprocessor weren't tough enough, now you're expected to pick a bus, too.

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The CompuStar can be configured with any of four microprocessors — an 8086, an 80286, an 80386SX, or an 80386. The processor and up to 16 megabytes of user memory have all been combined, using the latest VLSI technology, on a single, plug-in CPU module. Plus, any time during the first year of ownership, CompuStar users can "trade-in" the CPU module they initially selected toward the

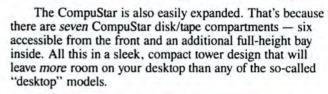
purchase of any of the other more powerful modules. *Nobody* but Wells American gives you this kind of value.

# A CONVERTIBLE BUS? YOU'RE KIDDING!

No, we're not. In fact, it may well be the most practical microcomputer innovation ever. Say you've selected an AT compatible CompuStar and later want to add PS/2 compatibility. No problem! Snap in a PS/2 Bus and Adapter Module and you can use both buses in the same system. Likewise, if you've selected a PS/2 compatible CompuStar and decide you want to add an AT bus, just snap in an AT Bus

Module. Depending on configuration, the CompuStar can have up to 13 bus expansion slots — all AT slots, all PS/2 slots or a "splitbus" of AT and PS/2 slots. No matter which bus becomes the

next industry "standard," you'll have peace of mind knowing your investment in a CompuStar will be protected.



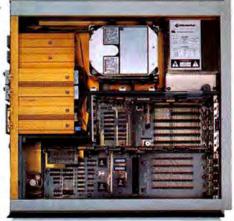
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"WordPerfect 5.0's colossal improvements recommend it to power users of all stripes." - Eric Alderman, PC World

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WordPertect is the most feature-lader ve ever seen." "Beyond any question, rfect 5.0 is a fine prog y the best in the world

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you know that I, too, was at COMDEX, although I won't be again for a few years. So don't count us non-law-abiding folk out.

Name withheld Federal Correctional Institution Pleasanton, California

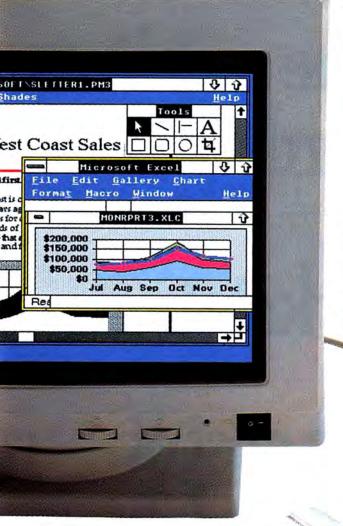
## Corrections

The caption accompanying the Product Outlook screen shot on page 98 of PC World's August 1988 issue says that Brown Bag Software's MindReader 2.0 has a new interface. In fact, the program mistakenly gained the interface of Mind Path Technologies' IntelliForm, described on page 90. We regret the mix-up. Brown Bag also informs us that the multilevel registration policy for Homebase 2.5 described in the same issue's "Best of Shareware" Buyers' Guide has been discontinued. The current registration fee with printed manual and one year of toll-free phone support is \$89.95.

Our September 1988 Buyers' Guide, "30 Templates for 1-2-3," contains an error. The Professional Corporate Financial Planning Models produced by Stephen Archer Associates include model horizons of 4, 5, 8, 10, and 12 months. And in our review of Forecast Pro (The Software Shelf, October 1988), the vendor's address was wrong. The correct address is Business Forecast Systems, 68 Leonard St., Belmont, MA 02178; 617/ 484-5050. PC World regrets these errors.

To send correspondence or to submit material for publication in this column, please see How to Contact PC World, page 4. ●

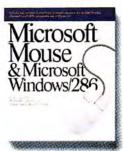
# Push your software to the limit.



If you want to get the most out of today's new, high-powered software applications, we have a few words of advice: Use a Microsoft\* Mouse.



The Microsoft Mouse gives you easy access to all the powerful features today's software has to offer.



It looks innocent enough here, but wait until you see how the Mouse makes your software scream.

The Mouse can unleash your software—and take full advantage of the features intended to make your work easier.

With the Mouse you can effortlessly manipulate menu-driven applications without taking your eyes off your screen. You can pull down menus. Highlight text in one fell swoop. Copy, cut and paste formulas in spreadsheets easily. And move things from here to there without any command-key mumbo jumbo.

> Literally hundreds of applications support the Mouse. But as the leading software developer for personal computers (and one of the first to bring a graphical interface to PC screens), we've gone a step further: Microsoft Windows/286 with PC Paintbrush\* for Windows, Microsoft Paintbrush or EasyCAD™2 actually come with the Mouse (or vice versa).

Already, the Microsoft Mouse has made its way into the hands of over one million personal computer users. And that number is sure to grow even faster. After all, graphically oriented software is the driving force behind improved productivity.

But it's the Microsoft Mouse that puts you in

the driver's seat.

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These are the reasons why the experts are so impressed with Proteus. And they're not alone. NASA, Xerox, GE, RCA, Dupont, GM, Revlon, General Dynamics, the U.S. Government, the U.N., MIT, Harvard, and Cornell have all become big Proteus users.

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**Business Computer Digest** 

"The Proteus is one of the fastest desktop computer systems we tested, a zerowait-state hot rod.

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**Personal Computing Magazine** 

"...the favorite system of our technicians because of its speed."

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# The Year That Wasn't

1988 held a lot of promise(s).

Here's a recap of the abundant lows and all-toofew highs.



David Bunnell

he end of the year is a great time to stop and take a reading of where, and how far, we've come in the last 12 months. In the case of 1988, I've got to say that PC users lived through a pretty disappointing year. As usual, we were promised a good deal but got short shrift when it came to reality. We had to listen endlessly to the pros and cons of what were touted as major developments in the PC market. More than a few not-ready-for-primetime products saw shrink-wrap. More groundbreaking products were announced than could dance on the head of a pin, and some were actually available for sale.

Let the grouchiness begin. I give thumbs down to:

· Microsoft and IBM for going only halfway with the Presentation Manager, which is just not stylish, exciting, or enough of a departure from the old interface. In fact, it's simply a bad version of Windows. The poor strategy and marketing that accompany the Presentation Manager can only hurt these two companies, which stand to benefit most from better graphics development. Meanwhile, developers aren't able to move ahead with Windows-based applications-and that slows graphics progress for us all. Why didn't Microsoft and

IBM do it right in the first place, like Hewlett-Packard did with NewWave?

- OS/2 itself, a.k.a. the vapor operating system. The whole personal computer world would have been better off not hearing about it at all in 1988. The speculation, debate, and unsubstantiated claims surrounding it have given users much angst, especially since OS/2 can't run very well at all on AT-class machines. I'd have thought a megacompany like IBM would have its eye on the ball with something as important as this, but I guess it blinked.
- IBM, for not supporting its own promising development, Micro Channel Architecture. Though Big Old Blue claims to be selling lots of PS/2 machines, it isn't admitting that most PS/2 sales are of Models 25 and 30, which don't have MCA, and not the higher end machines (which are saddled with very slow hard disks, by the way). Why couldn't IBM create a zippy bus that also used existing boards? I think the PS/2 slogan should be, "Tomorrow's technology today, but you can't use it just vet."
- Dell Computer, for releasing hardware just a little before its time, as Orson Welles would say. (continues)

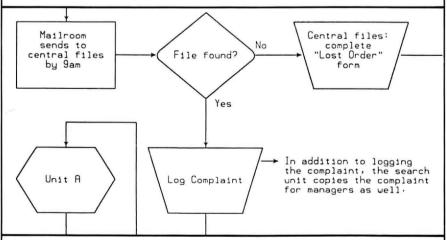
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EASYFLOW works on IBM PC's, IBM PS/2 and compatibles. Requires 384 K memory, DOS 2.0 or higher and an IBM CGA/EGA/VGA or Hercules monochrome compatible adapter card.

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DAVID BUNNELL

There seem to be lots of promises before delivery dates, and delays on shipments. We don't need the aggravation. Michael Dell pioneered the high-quality mail-order-clone business. Is Dell resting on its laurels? Say it ain't so!

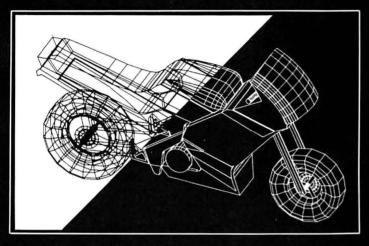
• Ziff-Davis's new *PC Computing* magazine. It's for people who would rather read about computers than use them.

Although it hardly seems like 12 months' worth, I have to admit there were a few bright spots this year. Let me hasten to give kudos to:

- Compaq Computer, which has taken the leadership position away from IBM. Instead of jumping on the PS/2 bandwagon, Compaq had the foresight to continue down its well-considered path with faster, more effective 386 machines. In the early '90s, I wouldn't be surprised to see Compaq with a larger market share than IBM.
- The "Gang of Nine" (AST Research, Compaq, Epson, Hewlett-Packard, NEC, Olivetti, Tandy, Wyse Technology, and Zenith Data Systems). This savvy group has developed EISA (Extended Industry Standard Architecture), which will allow them all to use existing bus structures with some new add-in cards, extending the life of their products. They're refusing to be sheep, so we don't have to be either.
- Two major software programs that add new capabilities and functions to the PC: Aldus's *PageMaker*, an elegant port of Macintosh software; and Lotus's *Agenda*, which gives us a very useful new species, information management software.

(continues)

# AW...WHAT THE HECK!



The first question asked by many people is, "Why is <code>DesignCAD3-D</code> priced so low?" The answer? After developing <code>DesignCAD3-D</code> we were unable to decide how the product should be priced. We consulted experts. We used the finest spreadsheets on the market. We took employee polls. We asked our lawyers and accountants for their opinion. We even asked our Mothers, Wives, and childhood Sweethearts! Finally in the greatest American Tradition, we said, "Aw ... What the Heck! Let's see the other guys beat this price!" <code>DesignCAD3-D</code> sells for \$299 complete. No add-ons, nothing else to buy!

DesignCAD 3-D is a complete 3-Dimensional CAD system. It offers most, if not all, the features found on programs costing more than \$3000! In fact, **PC Magazine** says, "For a low-cost, self-contained 3-D package Design-CAD's range of features steals the show. The package offers more than adequate features for a wide range of professionals and hobbyists alike."

Once again, American Small Business Computers has proved that you don't have to spend a lot of money to get quality software. DesignCAD 3-D provides features such as Shading, Solid Object Modeling, Hidden Line Removal, Cross Sectioning capability, ability to output shaded drawings to laser printers, dot-matrix printers, or pen plotters, extensive file transfer capability, all for only \$299! No other 3-Dimensional CAD system can come close to providing the price/performance of DesignCAD 3-D.

There is a very important reason to buy DesignCAD 3-D other than price: PERFORMANCE! DesignCAD 3-D provides complete 3-Dimensional drawing capabilities. It's not a "warmed-over" 2-D program. DesignCAD3-D allows you to draw any entity in 3-D space. This means, for example, that you can draw a curve in the shape of a spring. You can draw a circle or arc at ANY angle on ANY plane.

DesignCAD 3-D allows up to 4 simultaneous views - any angle or perspective - on the screen. DesignCAD 3-D also provides complex extrusions—linear, scalar, and circular. Extensive 3-D text capabilities and auto-dimensioning are provided, at no extra charge, of course!

DesignCAD 3-D almost certainly is compatible with the computer system you now own. DesignCAD 3-D supports more than 200 dot-matrix printers, at high resolution. DesignCAD 3-D supports more than 80 plotters, and most digitizers, mice, and graphics adapters available for "PC and PC Compatible" systems. Shaded and wireframe models can be output to the printer or plotter YOU own.

\$299

DesignCAD 3-D provides the capability to read drawings from most other CAD systems (DesignCAD/ProDesign II, AutoCAD's DXF, Hewlett Packard's HPGL, and IGES). DesignCAD 3-D will also write GE, and POSTSCRIPT files. This file exchange utility is included at no extra charge, of course.

DesignCAD 3-D does not require expensive graphics adapters and monitors - even shading can be done on ordinary displays, such as the Enhanced Graphics Adapter (EGA), Color Graphics Adapter (CGA) and Hercules Monochrome Adapter. DesignCAD also supports many of the ultra high resolution graphics adapters, with more hardware being supported daily.

However, the best reason to buy DesignCAD 3-D is not the low price. It's not the outstanding performance. It's not the extensive hardware compatibility. The best reason to buy DesignCAD 3-D is for its amazing ease of use!

What else do you need to know about DesignCAD 3-D? Only this: "Included at No Extra Charge." What is included at no extra charge? EVERYTHING! \$299 BUYS IT ALL!

# DesignCAD 3-D

Oh yes, we also market a 2-Dimensional version of *DesignCAD 3-D* with special drafting and design functions. Can they work together? Naturally... Our Mothers, Wives, and childhood Sweethearts would see it no other way! The price?... **\$299, of course!** 

How do you get one? See your local computer store or dealer, or contact:

To quote PC Magazine . . .

"DesignCAD 3-D, the latest feature-packed, low-cost CADD package from American Small Business Computers, delivers more bang per buck than any of its low-cost competitors and threatens programs costing ten times as much."



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Write or phone us for FREE DEMO DISK and information on DesignCAD 3-D and DesignCAD 2-D products.



- · Seymour Rubinstein, for facing the giants and winning, business-style. Formerly chair of MicroPro, Rubinstein started a company on a shoestring this year to develop a spreadsheet program called Surpass. How far could a one-product company expect to go in an application area dominated by Lotus, Microsoft, and Borland? Apparently far enough, because Borland bought Surpass, thereby eliminating it as competition and giving Rubinstein the dollars to pursue his next entrepreneurial dream.
- · Finally, Sun Microsystems, for thinking ahead. The first company to make UNIX usable, its 386i dedicated workstationwhich can also run DOS programs—is selling like crazy. Sun's painless and automatic LAN setup is going to be a dream come true. President Scott McNealy has hinted that in 1989 Sun may break into the retail market, possibly with its "puny UNIX," which would be usable on all PCs. In addition, Sun is supposed to be working on "Jackintosh," a new workstation that might bring a reasonably priced level of functionality and power to the average user. Thanks, Sun, for thinking of the rest of us.

So there you have it: the year of living less than dangerously. From a user's viewpoint, 1988 gets very low marks. Come on, people, let's put a little muscle behind that "the future is here" hype we know so well! Next year, do you think we might see a few more products that relate to how we actually work with computers, and do so in snappier, more creative, more effective ways? You can't blame a guy for asking.

your direct order.

# The future of personal computing now rests on just one thing.

final focus that original Microsoft vision. Through Windows, any number of software applications will seamlessly integrate. Sophisticated spreadsheet pro-



riving the network.

grams.
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word processors. Interactive databases.
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And in MS\* OS/2, the new operating system we developed jointly with IBM, the Windows technology (called Presenta-

tion Manager) gets even more exciting. Opening up mega-amounts of power and memory. Opening up your screen to do several tasks at once. And opening up endless possibilities for developers using the Microsoft family of languages.

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By linking users via software, information can be shared and exchanged by members of a group. Projects are worked on together, instead of bit by bit. And it's amazing how a company communicates once it's joined by electronic mail.

There is no question that the advanced productivity springing from today's personal computer is the direct result of our continued commitment to superior technology.

But even so, that's only half of the equation.



# At Microsoft, first we make it possible.

If you happened to catch the January 1975 issue of *Popular Electronics*, you were one of the lucky few to witness the debut of the personal computer.

Impossible as it seems, a magazine with less than one-tenth the readership of *Time* or *Newsweek* launched a technology race roughly parallel to that of the space program.

It also launched a company that immediately assumed center stage in the exciting

new world of personal computing. The company was Microsoft, and the tenet upon which it was founded was a simple one. To see a computer on every desk and in every home.

To take that rudimentary new

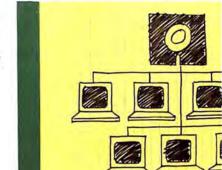
contraption that was the early personal computer and turn it into the powerful machine that has literally changed the way we work, required some important

steps. The first order of business was to create not simply products, but standards. Microsoft\* BASIC became the first universal programming language for the personal computer. And set a standard upon which an industry could grow.

Next came what

is now the world standard PC operating system, MS-DOS, developed by us and chosen by IBM for its first personal computers. Today, 20 million machines run on it, and so does a billion-dollar software industry.

And when the Macintosh was



being developed, we were there. That early participation allowed us to write its richest and most important software. These crucial pieces include the powerful

Networking made practical, with software of

Microsoft Word, the muchapplauded Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Works, the singlesolution program for the diverse needs of small business.

As we were contributing to the development of the Mac, we were also developing a system to put graphics interface technology into the world of IBM\* PCs and compatibles.

The introduction of Microsoft Windows in 1985 meant that an easy-to-understand desktop graphical environment now appeared on PCs. Ultimately, this friendly screen will forever replace the cold theater of character-based computing.

But Windows is more than just a useful tool. It is an important technological feat, one that becomes critical to bringing into

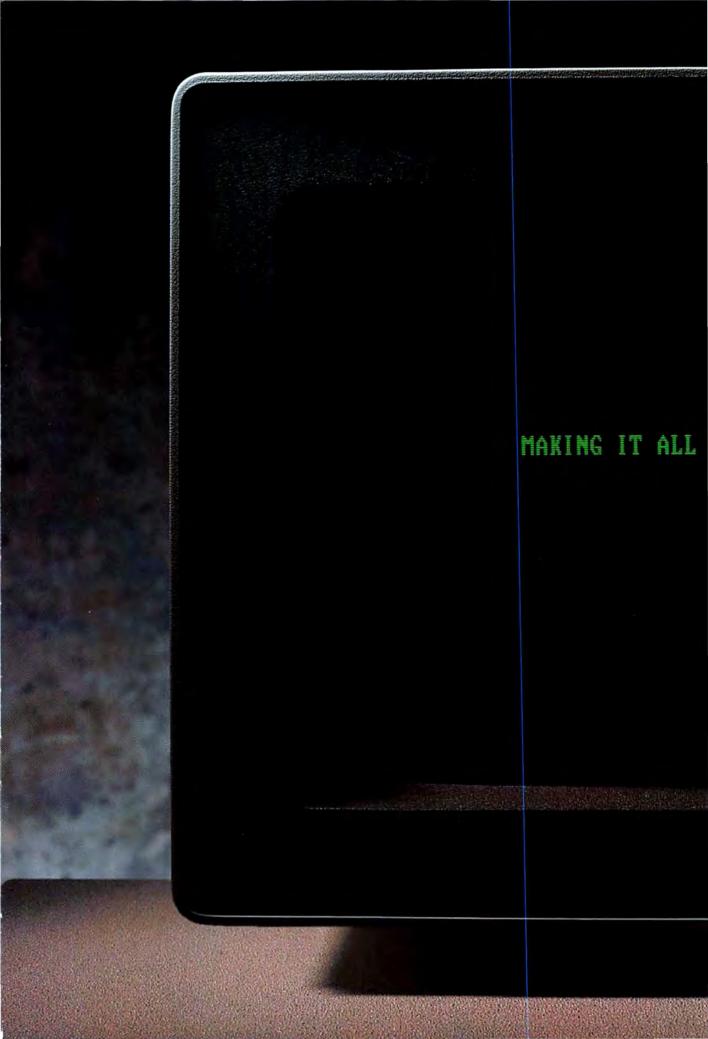


The world wasn't waiting. We were. The PC makes its debut.











# e make tical.

working with pictures makes the work you turn out much more interesting. Which is why the introduction of Microsoft Windows to the IBM PC and compatibles brought with it a whole new category of software with impressive credentials. Like

a more finished look. And no matter what application you're using, Windows will take over the job of running your printer.

There is also a hardware complement to graphical applications: the Microsoft Mouse. An unprecedented 1.5 million users have found that a simple point and click eliminates complicated keyboard commands.

Our Windows spreadsheet

macros from other programs.

The new generation of PCs will run OS/2 with Presentation



A simple point and click replaces mumbo-jumbo keyboard commands.

Manager, taking our graphical screen to even greater heights. By unlocking the capability of these machines, users can easily switch between programs almost instantly. Members of a workgroup can work together on an unlimited number of tasks.

And finally, every kind of program, from spreadsheets to electronic mail to word processing, works in a common way. To the user, learning one is a quick step toward learning them all. To the corporate bottom line, it means far less valuable time and money are spent on training.

But the real practicality of the graphical user interface comes to life when, inevitably, it appears on every computer screen, everywhere. And networking becomes not only possible, but required in this competitive world.

When you think about it, the goal Microsoft set in 1975 of seeing a computer on every desk and in every home seems close at hand. Because, at Microsoft, our fierce pursuit of technology comes with a promise to keep.

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With Windows giving laser
printers their marching orders,
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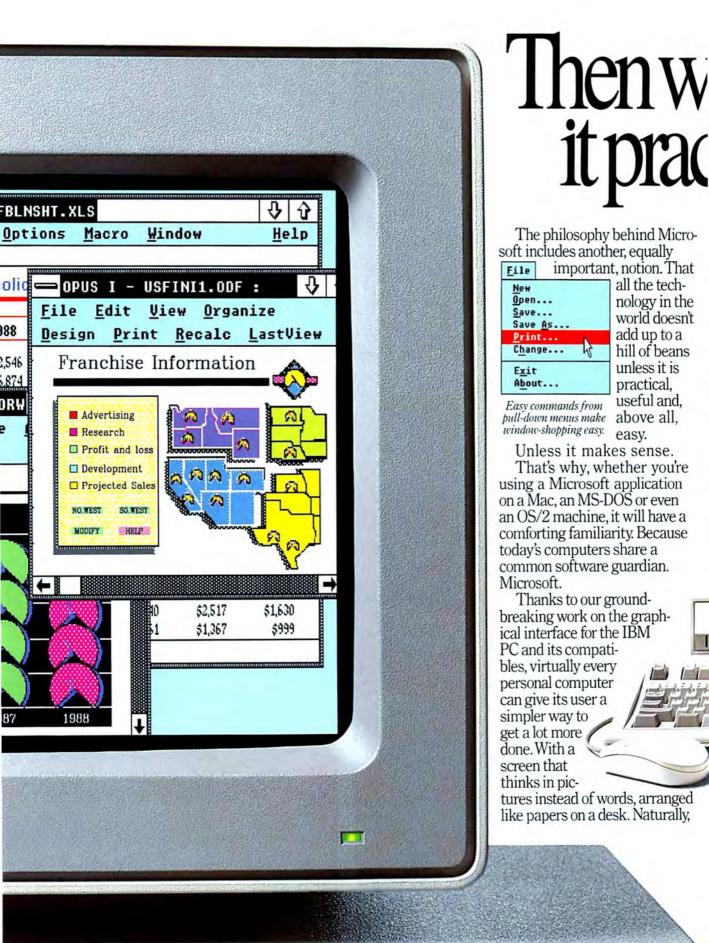
WYSIWYG, as in What You See Is What You Get. No translation needed.

program, Microsoft Excel, goes so far beyond just simple number-crunching that it has

received

unparalleled acceptance in corporate America. More powerful than any other, it also easily delivers sophisticated charts, graphs, text and data pulled simultaneously from several sources. And to make it even easier, we built it to graciously accept files and

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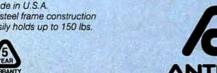
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# Windows **Special Report**

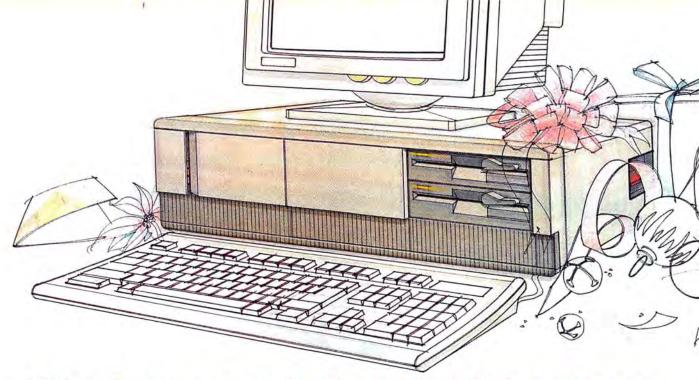
Senior Editor Robert Luhn spearheads the latest in our continuing series of editorial supplements. Packed with reviews and previews of Windows applications, the report also tackles the big questions: Is Windows a good investment? And will the Presentation Manager pay off?

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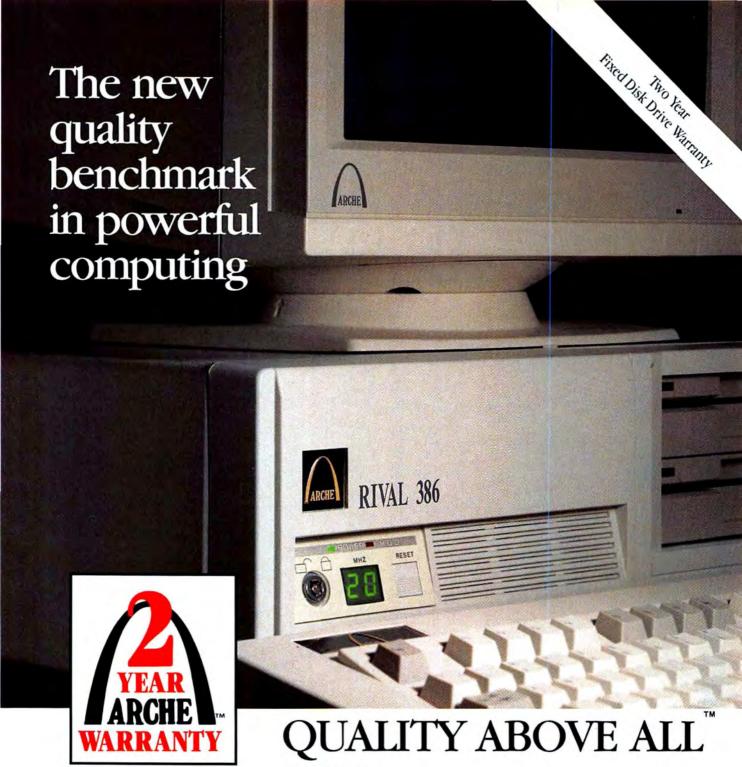
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# Why the Graphic User Interface is important

The graphic user interface is poised to meet the current challenge—

> how to merge text and graphics in a way that users understand.



Stewart Alsop

by now, even the most diehard DOS command-line fan knows that the major benefit of graphic user interfaces is that you end up with programs that all perform basic tasks in the same way, so you don't have to think about how each program saves files or sends output to printers. I won't bore you by reciting the benefits of a standardized user interface. What hasn't been talked about much are the more subtle benefits of a graphic user interface and how it will change the way users think of their personal computers.

The central idea about a graphic user interface is that everything on the screen becomes bit-mapped. That means objects can be created and modified on the screen simply by turning pixels (the dots that make up what you see on the screen) on and off

Text, for instance, is no longer fixed by whatever set of characters is implanted in the machine's innards. With a graphic user interface, you can give text any font or style or size you want. As a result, you gradually begin to think differently about output. The printing process has become a way of trying to get some recalcitrant printer to understand what you see in your mind without your having any way to describe it. With a graph-

ic user interface, you merely change the text on the screen to what you think it should look like, and the machine reproduces what's on the screen. Text becomes a dual weapon for communication: You can use both content and appearance to help communicate your ideas.

Once you begin to think in terms of "graphical" text, you also realize that you can print what's on your screen with anything that supports the notion of putting dots together to form graphics. That includes dot matrix, laser, and ink jet printers; plotters; facsimile machines; typesetting machines; and, of course, other computers with graphic user interfaces and displays. Being able to make pictures on a variety of dotoriented display or printing devices suddenly turns printing into an abstract notion; sending files. Taking that notion one step further leads to a world where your problem is identifying the right address for the recipient instead of figuring out whether your computer can talk to your printer.

In a similar fashion, graphic user interfaces lead users to think of pictures and graphics as objects that can be modified or (continues)



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created at will, using simple drawing or painting tools. Since many of these tools become available inside other kinds of programs like spreadsheets or word processors, the user faces no penalty for experimenting with graphics. And users begin to use graphics in ways and to a degree they had never previously considered.

The visual nature of the graphic user interface (even when all you're looking at is text) changes the way you think about starting new activities. You interact with a standard DOS computer through commands typed on the keyboard, which means your understanding of what is possible is predefined by how well you can translate what you want to do into keyboard commands. For example, when you want to move a group of files from one directory to another. you need to think about what makes those files similar, translate that similarity and the action into a DOS command (COPY C:/LETTERS/\*.SEP C:/ MAIL), and type it on the keyboard. A graphic user interface liberates you from the keyboard so you can experiment. To move the group of files, you point at the files you want and then drag them to the place you want them. If you miss one, you don't have to retype or reconfigure the command.

This visual, ad hoc approach is called the noun-verb action. With a graphic user interface, you select what you want (noun) and then do what you want (verb). In DOS, you first say what you want to do (verb) and then tell DOS what you want to do it with (noun). Since we have been trained to speak in a nounverb fashion, the graphic user

interface lets us act naturally without fear of messing up.

In my last column, I bemoaned the shortcomings of the Presentation Manager (see "A Perspective on the Presentation Manager," November 1988). Once IBM and Microsoft bring the Presentation Manager up to par and software developers create a complete set of applications for it, I'm willing to bet that every user is going to feel a lot more productive, better at communicating, and less wary of experimenting. That sure sounds like a good move to me.

Stewart Alsop is editor and publisher of P.C. Letter and a contributing editor for PC World.

# POWER TIP NO. 22

# Fast Navigation in 1-2-3

Making changes to a massive 1-2-3 worksheet can require you to travel to a distant cell. If you forget where you started out, finding your way back involves time-consuming keystrokes. Before you begin a worksheet search, tap the <Plus> key. Once you find the data you're looking for, hit <Esc>, and the cursor jumps back to the starting point. Hit < Esc> once more, and the plus sign disappears. Bruno Terkaly Corte Madera, California

# Heresan





After exercising your grey matter with a few hundred "what if's" every day, it's nice to have a no-brainer to deal with. How's this: for every Lotus\* 1-2-3\* Release 2.01 you buy on or after Septem-Upgrade as soon as it's available. (Be sure to save your proof of purchase.)

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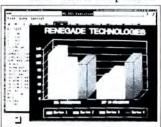
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#### 1989-

#### A Year of Reckoning

Both IBM and AT&T set industry standards that changed the course of computing.

But how they did it, and why, reveals some truths about the industry.



William F. Zachmann

t isn't much of an exaggeration to say that 1989 will be a year of reckoning for IBM's personal computer strategy. By this time next year, everyone will know whether the new direction IBM has tried to set is a success or a failure.

If IBM is able to persuade the majority of users in corporate America that an IBM PS/2 with a Micro Channel Architecture bus running IBM OS/2 Extended Edition is a requirement for personal computers in their organizations, the company will be back in the driver's seat. If, however, the majority of those users are satisfied with systems using the Extended Industry Standard Architecture (EISA) based on the original AT bus and running DOS, OS/2, or UNIX, then IBM will have lost control of the desktop just as surely as AT&T lost control of UNIX.

The latter outcome appears more likely, at least partly because of the similarities between IBM's efforts and AT&T's. Both companies, in trying to reach too far, seem to have lost their balance.

In AT&T's case, the initial promises were explicit and egalitarian. AT&T originally positioned UNIX as a would-be multivendor standard that, even though developed and managed by AT&T, would be equally avail-

able to all. The original promise of UNIX was to provide a fair and impartial "level playing field" for all vendors willing to embrace it as a standard.

AT&T's difficulties with UNIX began when the former Ma Bell, instead of treating all suitors equally, began to develop a special and relatively exclusive relationship with one of them—the young, dashing, and rapidly growing Sun Microsystems. The cozy relationship between AT&T and Sun sufficiently roused the ire of other UNIX vendors to encourage them to band together (along with IBM and DEC) to demand a say in UNIX's future.

AT&T, faced with the alternatives of walking down a path nobody else would follow or yielding to the demands of the spurned, made the obvious choice. In doing so, however, AT&T ended up with far less control over UNIX than it had had in the first place. The effort to gain an exclusive advantage from UNIX was viewed by others as a betrayal of AT&T's original promises and resulted in even less of an advantage in the end.

In IBM's case, of course, the externals are quite different.
IBM never intended to create an (continues)

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industry standard with the original IBM PC, XT, or, finally, with the AT. *Industry standard* implies a common ground, but IBM no more wanted to create one with the AT or its predecessors than Kimberly-Clark wanted to create a generic standard with Kleenex (which we are legally bound to write as a registered trade name).

Still, by publishing detailed technical specifications of the original IBM PC and touting its "open architecture," IBM led buyers to believe that it had taken a big step away from the proprietary systems of the past. When other vendors began to build systems compatible with the PC, XT, and AT, IBM at first appeared ready to meet competitors in the marketplace rather than in court. Most users took "open architecture" to mean that IBM intended to compete by offering better products rather than by locking out competitors.

However, in setting out to build a much more proprietary system with the PS/2 generally and Micro Channel Architecture in particular, IBM effectively reneged on its implicit promise of open architecture, just as AT&T reneged on the explicit promises of UNIX. The primary purpose of the PS/2 and the Micro Channel Architecture was to eliminate competitors rather than to serve customers. IBM began to concentrate as much on finding legal ways to eliminate competition as on delivering real value to its customers.

Still, even though they received no immediate benefits from the PS/2 and the Micro Channel Architecture, many users trusted IBM's explicit promises that both would offer substantial future advantages with IBM's OS/2 Extended Edition. The PS/2 and the MCA, IBM claimed, were worthwhile investments that would pay off in future benefits through IBM's new operating system software.

The future has become the present. Users are now (or soon will be) able to see for themselves the degree to which IBM's proprietary PS/2 Micro Channel Architecture systems are really capable of providing better performance, function, or value than industry standard systems from other vendors. The cloud of vaporware is lifting to reveal what is real...and what is not. ●

This is Will Zachmann's last column for PC World.

#### **POWER TIP NO. 23**

#### Highlight Key Data in 1-2-3

If your spreadsheets contain a multitude of individual line items, it's sometimes difficult for co-workers to spot an important bit of information -such as net income. You can use 1-2-3's Range Unprotect command to highlight individual cells. Place the cell pointer on the desired cell, issue /Range Unprotect, and press < Enter> twice. On a color monitor the cell appears green; a monochrome monitor makes the cell brighter.

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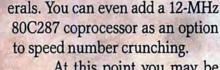
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At this point you may be thinking that the COMPAQ SLT/286 does everything a desktop can do. You're right. In fact you can even do more at the office with its optional Desktop Expansion Base.

Unlike competitive expansion units, ours wasn't an afterthought. Its integrated design gives you two industry-standard expansion slots along with duplicate

interfaces for your peripherals. The expansion unit even recharges the battery for you.

Best of all, the COMPAQ SLT/286 just snaps right into the Desktop Expansion Base.
No cord. No wires. No hassle.

Its footprint is small enough

to fit on an airline tray table,

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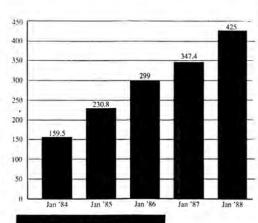
Every system needs a manager! Even the experts know it. "Technical expertise can be acquired or contracted out, but an administrator that doesn't at least know DOS cannot do the job effictively." - Christine Strehlo, Personal Computing

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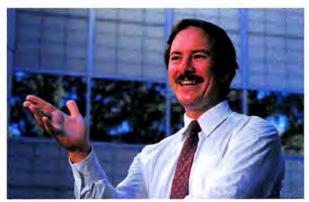
Circle 286 on reader service card

Edited by ERIC BENDER

Who's Afraid of IBM?

#### **Compatible Makers Drive** a New Bus Architecture

AT-Compatible Architecture Challenges the Micro Channel



The current AT bus will meet almost all needs in the next few years, notes Compag's Gary Stimac.

t was your classic Manhattan press conference in the requisite \$200and-up-a-night hotel, the venue that PC vendors inevitably choose to celebrate the really important events. The ballroom was packed with members of the press, Wall Street analysts, and executives from every PC supplier of any note, save IBM. They had all rolled out at an uncivilized 8 a.m. for the announcement, whose details had already leaked to every major newspaper short of the National Enquirer.

This was the christening of Extended Industry Standard Architecture (EISA), a new input/output bus specification introduced by Compaq

Computer and eight other major system vendors and backed by virtually every IBM PC-compatibles manufacturer in the industry, save IBM.

EISA-based systems. they claimed, will deliver the same 32-bit data transfers and busmastering capabilities (which offer a foundation for intelligent peripherals) that IBM's highly touted Micro Channel Architecture (MCA) offers. The critical difference is that EISA accepts the current ATstyle boards that IBM has snubbed.

But none of the designs will appear until late 1989, and when they do, they'll be ultra high performance workstations or network servers, targeted at that thin upper crust of the PC-buying public with heavily transaction-oriented applications and open checkbooks.

Given that, what was all the excitement about? The answer has less to do with PC technology than with industry politics, opines International Data Corporation PC analyst Bruce Stephen. "For the first time, a group of manufacturers has banded together to take on IBM as a collective force," he maintains. "From a market dynamics standpoint, it indicates that IBM can no longer control computer buyers and move them toward its products simply because the IBM name is the be-all, end-all, and best-of-all."

Stephen and many others view the Micro Channel as a not-so-well-disguised attempt to steer IBM customers away from the architecture upon which its competitors depend and toward a proprietary solution. However, while IBM has shipped more than 1.5 million MCA-equipped PS/2s to loyalists since the machines were introduced 20 months ago, less brandconscious buyers are snapping up even larger quantities of so-called Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) machines, leaving Big Blue with a shrinking corner of the marketplace.

The problem is that IBM hasn't delivered the intelligent hard drive controllers, coprocessing boards, and communica-(continues)

#### OS/2 Still **Not Ready**

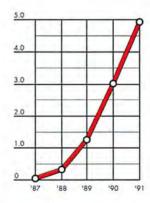
Will Slow Burn Flare Up in 1989?

N o one expected a DOS replacement to be snapped up like a free lottery ticket. Even so, OS/2's proponents have been disappointed in the rate of progress since the next-generation operating system shipped in December 1987.

"IBM has been taken somewhat by surprise (continues on page 84)

#### **OS/2 Shipments** Worldwide: **Wait Until Next Year**

(in millions)



Source: IDC

While OS/2 should begin to spread rapidly next year, the system software will represent only a small fraction of the installed base until well into the 1990s, according to International Data Corporation predictions. Far more than 20 million PCs currently run under DOS.

### Evolutionary Strategy Pays Off for WordPerfect

Blanket Support Makes Believers



Dan Lunt emphasizes that WordPerfect has avoided "jumping on the bandwagon of new technologies."

The two top officers were formerly college professors. The marketing director had been hired as a programmer. The execu-

tive vice president got his job by pointing out that no one had filed the legal papers required to go into business.

But WordPerfect survived that quixotic startup to build a 1000-employee company. Was it luck, or was the eight-year rise to the top of the word processing heap the result of careful calculation?

"A lot of people feel like WordPerfect came from nonexistence to stardom overnight," says Marketing Vice President Dan Lunt. "Part of what makes it a strong product is that it evolved in a slow way."

The program began life in 1979 as a word processor for Data General minicomputers. Besides the DG version (now accounting for 2 percent of sales), there are versions for DOS machines (85 percent), the Macintosh (about 6 percent), DEC

VAX (3 percent), and other machines (4 percent). A version for IBM mainframes is scheduled for 1989, as are versions for OS/2 1.0 (first quarter) and 1.1 (by year end), despite WordPerfect's initial hesitation.

That early reluctance "is rather typical of the way we look at things," says Lunt. "We haven't been interested in jumping on the bandwagon of new technologies."

Infocorp in Santa Clara, California, estimates WordPerfect's share of the PC word processing market as at least 30 percent—not as dominant a position as 1-2-3 or dBASE enjoys but at least twice the share of its nearest rival.

Bill Higgs, Infocorp's (continues on page 86)

#### **New Bus**

(continued)

tions gateways that are a rationale for abandoning AT-style bus architecture in favor of the big, broad Micro Channel highway.

Even when such devices arrive, few buyers will require them—and thus few will need either MCA or EISA, maintains Gary Stimac, Compaq vice president of systems engineering.

Both advanced architectures offer data transfer rates three to four times the 8MB-per-second maximum bandwidth of the current ISA bus. But even heavily I/O-intensive applications today require

only 1.2MB per second at most. In a single-user environment, the current bus easily accommodates data transfers, claims Stimac.

Busmaster capabilities and the extra bandwidth will be mandatory for only the most demanding applications—say, a departmental file server connected to a number of PCs making frequent and complex requests. "I don't see a need for a singleuser PC to go to EISA in the next four to five years," concludes Stimac.

"Of course [Compaq] would say that," counters senior IBM engineer Chet Heath, chief architect of the Micro Channel. "Otherwise they would be admitting that existing [ISA] technology is obso-

lete. The question is not what you can put on paper, but what you can put into silicon. What we specify is a reality, and it's been available for 18 months."

Heath ridicules the EISA proposal to mix ATstyle cards with 32-bit busmasters, predicting technical problems. He suggests that Micro Channel busmasters will be announced this fall and delivered by spring.

His vision of individual computing also differs radically from Stimac's: "I believe the majority of us will use PCs to do multitasking. And when we do, I/O will operate concurrently because applications will operate concurrently."

Asked why users need concern themselves with products years before their full utility is realized, both Heath and Stimac insist that early bus introductions provide a necessary blueprint for third-party board makers.

But the real issue, says IDC's Stephen, is who owns the standards. EISA is being licensed for a nominal charge to all who want it, while IBM wants royalty payments of as much as 5 percent from sales of MCA compatibles. "I make it a very public right of passage," he says. "Compatibles vendors aren't afraid of IBM anymore." —Mike Hogan



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#### Acer Aims to Become "the IBM of Taiwan"

A Dragon by the Tail?

In Chinese lore, the dragon is a benevolent symbol of power and good fortune. For Taiwanese computer makers, 1988—the Year of the Dragon—lived up to expectations and then some. The Republic of China will sell \$5.7 billion worth of computer hardware—vaulting the tiny island with a population of 20 million into sixth place among world computer suppliers.

The fastest-growing vendor is the Acer Group (formerly Multitech). Founded on a \$25,000 shoestring by five Taiwanese entrepreneurs—in the previous Year of the Dragon, 1976—Acer has more than doubled reve-

nues each year. The company sold \$331 million worth of equipment in 1987, and at midyear it was ahead of its \$550 million sales goal for 1988. The Acer Incorporated computer subsidiary employs around 4500 workers.

Competitors compare Acer to IBM—at least in Taiwan. Its 85 stores represent the largest retail computer chain on the island, it has large distributor and publishing subsidiaries, and it even peddles silicon to other PC makers.

But most of the 450,000 (continues on page 88)



Users still await OS/2 packages, says Microsoft's Mark Mackaman

processing, data base, graphics, and communications packages—and any front-line applications from Microsoft itself.

Symantec Corporation of Cupertino, California, is among those delivering OS/2 products, but while buyers express great interest, "there's not tremendous demand for OS/2 applications yet," says President Rod Turner.

Most software houses have waited for OS/2 1.1 (the version that includes the Presentation Manager) to ship before starting to get serious. This version was expected in midfall from IBM and in early 1989 from other leading vendors. OS/2 1.1 raises drastically higher development hurdles, and its technical contents seemed likely to change up to the last moment. As Lotus chairman Jim Manzi puts it, "We've been building on top of shifting sands for two years."

A handful of Presentation Manager packages may appear by year-end, but don't expect significant offerings in any force before second quarter 1989 at the earliest. Even Aldus, which claims that PageMaker will be the first major Presentation Manager application, won't deliver until six months after the system software ships.

Despite assurances to the contrary from IBM and Microsoft, when the software does appear it probably won't run quickly without an 80386 machine. But the industry does expect prices to match those for DOS packages, at least until overwhelming new features are offered.

Dealers want to sell just one physical package with both DOS and OS/2 versions, which will help to keep sticker prices from rising. But the single-package demand raises tricky questions for software houses, who want to keep their own costs down by minimizing the amount of disks and documentation in the package.

One tactic crams together DOS and OS/2 software via OS/2's "family application program interface." Developers write one program file that checks to see which operating system is loaded; the program can then adjust itself accordingly. But such software can exploit only a limited subset of OS/2 functions, and its memory demands may be heavy baggage in DOS use. Microsoft and several other vendors are expected to take this route. at least for their word processing applications. Another group, which includes Symantec, has decided against it, at least for the moment. -Eric Bender

#### **OS/2**

(continued)
that OS/2 didn't catch on
faster," remarks Judith
Hurwitz, senior analyst
at Patty Seybold's Office
Computing Group in Boston. While a year ago
IBM executives were declaring that OS/2 would
account for a majority of
PC shipments by 1991 at
the outside, the industry
now expects the shift to
come at least a year or
two later.

IDC pegs worldwide OS/2 shipments at around a third of a million copies this year, rising to 1.3 million next year. Those figures are "reasonable," says Mark Mackaman, Microsoft's OS/2 product marketing manager, adding that "acceptance of OS/2 is going to be slow." As Mackaman notes, no one shells out hundreds of dollars for the joys of executing directory commands—instead, customers take the plunge once application packages based on the new system platform offer more bang for the buck.

The first OS/2 packages began dribbling out in the first quarter of 1988, and important data base management packages began appearing in the summer. By fall, only about 50 applications had hit the shelves. Absent were the leading spreadsheet, word

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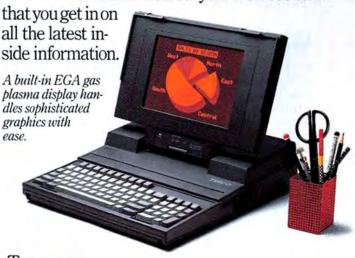
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Hardware Approaches Vary Widely



A ST Research and Intel slug it out in memory boards, while Lotus and Microsoft do battle in spreadsheets. But all four have joined hands to create an expanded-memory standard that quietly offers increasing benefits to an ever-broader crowd of users.

While expanded-memo-

ry boards once were restricted to power users, "now they're moving toward average users," says Timothy Dowling, Above-Board product manager at Intel Personal Computer Enhancement Operation in Hillsboro, Oregon.

As applications grow in size, word processors like WordPerfect and utilities like SideKick Plus are tapping expanded memory. And customers who buy environment packages like Desqview and Windows can run several large applications simultaneously. Even IBM, which bucked the trend for years, bought in last summer, incorporating EMS support in both DOS 4.00 and its own memory boards.

Launched in 1985, expanded memory made a clever end run around DOS's 640K memory limit, essentially by taking an idle chunk of memory above that limit and using it as a window to "page out" to more memory-up to 8MB. Intel and Lotus, the original instigators, wanted to provide a way to store large spreadsheet files. Microsoft soon signed on, and the scheme was codified as the Lotus/ Intel/Microsoft Expanded Memory Specification (EMS) 3.0.

AST, the largest board supplier, quickly responded with an even cleverer approach. A superset of EMS, AST's Enhanced Expanded Memory Specification (EEMS) offered the ability to run code greater than 64K in expanded memory, access to up to 16MB of memory, and multitasking under DOS environments. Unsurprisingly, EEMS boards sold better than EMS.

In August 1987, with input from the vendor community, most notably AST, the original trio released EMS 4.0, a superset of the earlier methods. This latest rendition offers the chance to further boost performance (particularly in multitasking) and tap up to 32MB of memory. Additionally, it gives a single design target for software developers and for Intel, AST, and dozens of other board manufacturers.

Genelle Trader, marketing director for enhancement products at AST in Irvine, California, estimates that roughly 1.25 million expanded memory (continues)

#### **WordPerfect**

(continued)
director of software research, attributes most of
WordPerfect's success to
aggressive marketing, including a policy of unlimited toll-free support. In
Higgs's view, "There's a
perceived attitude that

Technical support is a crucial marketing function, "as important to us as advertising, if not more so," says Lunt, who has supervised support since

they care."

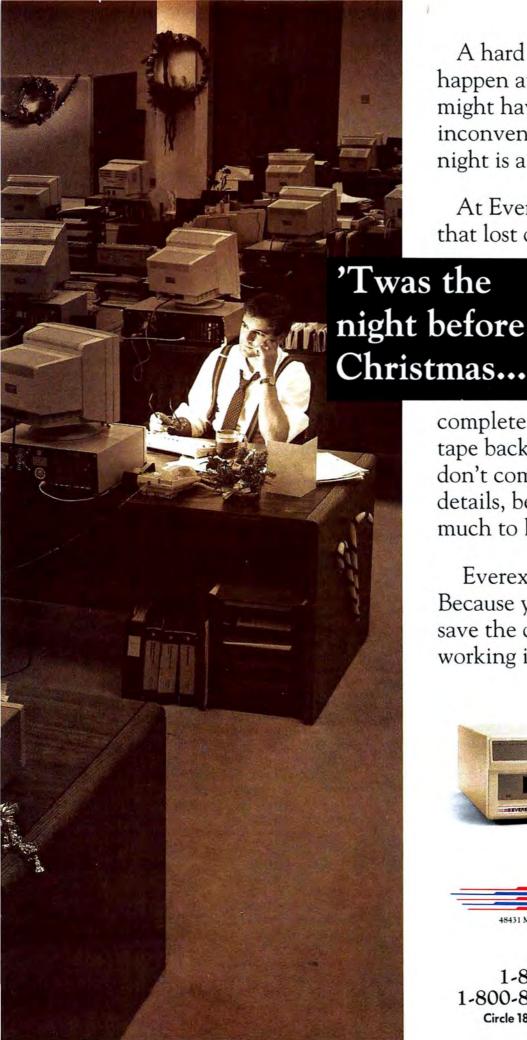
the days when he answered the hot line as a programmer. WordPerfect goes far beyond lip service, with 375 support operators on the payroll and a phone bill for the toll-free lines that exceeds \$300,000 a month.

Providing blanket support does carry risks: When WordPerfect 5.0 and WordPerfect for the Mac were released within days of each other, the ensuing flood of calls blocked all 800 lines into Utah, knocking out telemarketing centers for American Express, Delta Air Lines, and others.

WordPerfect also publishes Library, a group of utility programs; a spreadsheet called Plan-Perfect; and the DataPerfect data base manager. The spreadsheet and data base, though, combine for only about 5 percent of sales. WordPerfect accounts for 85 percent, and Library, a surprising 10 percent. All of these "are

important product categories to WordPerfect," says Higgs. "A company likes to spread the risk around."

Still private, WordPerfect currently expects a \$160 million year with a very handsome profit. "We've been smart at times, and we've been lucky at times," says Lunt. "It's added up to a good formula." —Daniel J. Rosenbaum



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PCs Acer will build this year are headed to the United States and Europe. And within a year, Acer will have the manufacturing capacity to turn out more than a million PCs annually.

Stan Shih, Acer's selfeffacing 44-year-old chairman and chief executive,
says Acer Group wants to
be "more than just a PC
company—we want to be
the computer company of
Taiwan." By 1990, he predicts, Acer will hit annual
sales of \$1 billion.

The company's core business will remain PCs, and fulfilling Shih's dream means associating "Made in Taiwan" with legal, high-quality systems.

On the legal front, Shih and other computer executives lobbied for 1985 legislation granting copyright protection to software. Last summer, Acer and several other Taiwanese suppliers settled a long-running dispute with IBM over revalties for PC and AT clones and license fees for Micro Channel technology. ("There is no past license fee," Shih insists, "just an entry fee" to use IBM's patents.) Acer also hopes to blunt trade-protection risks by opening U.S. research and manufacturing facilities.

Acer's strategy also focuses on development. Alvin Tong, executive vice president for R&D and manufacturing, points out that Acer spends 5 percent of its revenues on R&D, compared to 1 percent for the typical Taiwanese company. In U.S. terms, he argues, "that's equivalent to about 10



percent, because of wage differentials."

The effort has paid off with what K. Y. Lee, vice president of product strategy, calls "superstar products"-like the 80386-based Acer 1100 that followed hot on the heels of Compag's Deskpro 386 in late 1986. That machine loosened up distribution channels for the U.S. subsidiary, Acer Technologies of San Jose, California. Lee expects the recently launched 25-MHz 386 system to make another big splash.

In the early days, Acer grew its business by building boxes that other computer vendors sold under their own nameplates, and such relabeling deals still account for half of Acer's sales. The strong client list includes Siemens, Unisys, Philips, and many others.

Overall, Shih says, "we have to concentrate on competitiveness; that's how you gain market share. If we—all the Taiwanese companies—can take [another] I percent of IBM's business—well, that's a lot of business."

—Ed Bott

#### Expanded Memory

(continued)
boards have been installed. All the boards support EMS 3.2 functions, and more than half support EEMS. However, products that take advantage of the 4.0 upgrade only began to appear in mid-1988, and their performance varies wildly.

"EMS is a software specification, and there are a million things in the spec you could implement in hardware to improve performance," Dowling comments.

While most EMS functions can be emulated in software, performance is uninspiring at best. At a minimum, effective EMS calls for memory-paging hardware. "The 80386 chip itself has paging capabilities built into it," Dowling notes. That factor has led Compaq and a few other vendors to offer EMS support for their 80386-based systems. (At press time, however, Compaq had not yet announced support for EMS 4.0.)

Almost at the other extreme in price and performance sit AST's RampagePlus boards, which boost throughput with 64 "mapping registers." (Expanded memory allocations are "mapped" by these hardware registers; adding alternate registers speeds operations. This scheme is particularly helpful when juggling multiple applicationseach application needs a set of mapping registers to keep track of memory usage, and if the board has only one set and two applications are running,

they must alternate using it.)

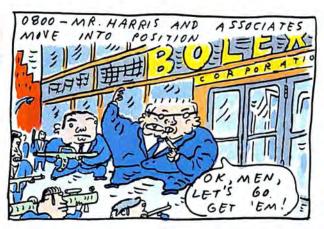
While earlier expanded memory schemes have attracted plenty of enlistees. EMS 4.0 has seen little third-party support so far. Desqview and Windows/286 and /386 are the first entries; applications installed in those environments don't have to be modified to get the advantages. (The Microsoft offerings also support the otherwise unrelated Extended Memory Specification, XMS, which lets them claim the extra 64K fillip of memory that Desqview has enjoyed for vears.)

Expanded memory won't end memory crunch on networked PCs; the difficulty lies in persuading net vendors to modify their code. "It's an uphill battle," Dowling says. "They're all focusing on OS/2."

Another key concern is compatibility. "We've been surprised how few 4.0 boards really support Windows," reports Mark Zachmann, chairman of Z-Soft in Marietta, Georgia. The bugs lie in the accompanying software, and Dowling doesn't find them surprising: "EMS 4.0 is vastly more complicated than the previous spec or EEMS." —Eric Bender

Ed Bott is PC World's managing editor, Mike Hogan is news editor, and frequent PC World contributor Daniel J. Rosenbaum has written three books about WordPerfect—the latest being Using WordPerfect for the Macintosh (Osborne/McGraw-Hill, Berkeley, California, 1988).















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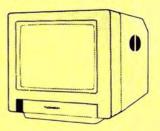
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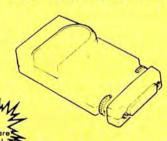
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· Hayes compatible

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   Turns on/off automatically
- · Small enough to put in your pocket
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### **Amí by Example**

Samna's Amí, a modest Windows-based word processor with easy-to-grasp desktop publishing features,

> includes prefab style sheets and instant examples of formatting selections.

Eric Brown

n early version of this Mindows-based word processor/desktop publisher was called Elroy, but the final is named Ami-the French word for friend, but with an accent added. Perhaps Samna Corporation felt it had to stress the product's user-friendliness. After all, the firm has long been known for its competent word processing powerhouses, but nobody has ever accused Samna of underestimating the technical sophistication of the buying public.

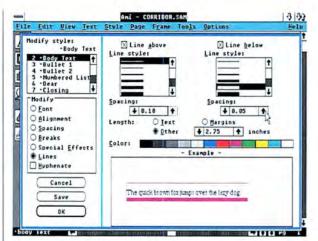
In any case, the new title is as straightforward as *Ami*'s easy-to-learn interface and \$199 price

PC World previews are informal assessments of products that at press time were still in the development stage.

Complete reviews—including features evaluations and performance testing—will appear only after a product is officially released.

tag (\$149 for the first four months). Lacking such features as footnotes, indexing, mail merge, an outliner, or even a thesaurus, Amí may not compete with the upcoming Windows version of Microsoft Word. However, thanks to its extensive yet easily mastered desktop publishing features, Amí is perfect for creating small-scale documents such as newsletters.

Amí marches to the beat of IMSI's PagePerfect—the combination word processor and desktop publishing program. As such, it compares favorably with NBI's recently released \$695 Legend, which suffers severe performance degradation because it stuffs too many features into the already slow Windows environment. Amí succeeds by attempting less-though hardly a speed demon, it puffs along admirably, considering its Windows overhead. (An upcoming PC World review will



When modifying styles, Ami displays graphic examples of your settings in the lower right corner of the dialog box.

evaluate the performance of the shrink-wrapped version.) Like *Windows*, the program demands an 80286- or 80386-based machine with 640K, EGA, and hard disk.

#### Simple Strengths

At first glance, there's nothing revolutionary about Ami, and that's all to the good. It dutifully follows Windows and desktop publishing conventions, with pulldown menus across the top,

icons along the left, scroll bars around the perimeters, and a context-sensitive help system tucked away in a corner. Rather than clog the screen with menu selections, the program assigns more arcane tasks to buttons that you click on from within numerous, well-designed dialog boxes.

One icon lets you switch to a speedier draft mode devoid of enhancements, a blessing that saves Ami's modest editing talents from being wasted in endless screen refresh. Basic editing tools are well represented, with cut-and-paste and search-and-replace functions easily accessible by mouse or keyboard. Ami even offers such niceties as an undo function and variables for date and page number.

Advanced editing functions, however, are limited to a 130,000-word spelling checker. If you need more editing capability, you can convert files to and from Samna Word, WordPerfect, WordStar, and ASCII and use Ami's editor solely for last-minute editing changes.

You'll likely spend most of your time in layout mode, where everything from print attributes to fonts and graphics are colorfully and realistically displayed. Amt's approximation of printed output is exceptional. The program offers a thorough range of views, from fullpage text to magnified zoom, but it lacks a dualpage mode.

#### **Working in Style**

Ami's implementation of style sheets may be the best on the market, far easier than the convolutions required by Page-Perfect. More good news for casual word processors and novice desktop publishing designers: The program comes with 20 preformatted styles. Tagging paragraphs with styles is easy, and if you

don't want to select styles from a pop-up menu, you can assign them to function keys.

Modifying or creating styles is also straightforward, thanks to graphic examples that adorn nearly every dialog box. To change such variables as leading or point size, you can select choices from a menu, click on up or down arrows, or enter precise figures—and when you do, the sample text in the example window adjusts accordingly.

Amí's examples save a lot of time you would otherwise spend switching back and forth between dialog boxes and page displays that refresh slowly. Usually the example displays are precise enough to let you choose the right setting the first time. PagePerfect also provides this capability, but only for a few settings; Ami's extends to almost every applicable formatting decision.

While not in Page-Maker's league, Amí offers a respectable number of formatting controls for such an inexpensive program. Style formatting handles such decisions as kerning, paragraph leading, bullets, and borders. Page formatting options include up to eight snaking columns, column balancing, and style-sensitive page-break controls, as well as the basics of hyphenation and headers and footers.

#### **Graphic Results**

Ami's Ventura-like framing controls and graphic import skills round out the program as a competent publishing vehicle. Framing text or graphics requires that you enter a separate mode, but the controls are clear and logical. Illustrated examples let you choose between wrapping the text around the frame, behind the frame, or not wrapping at all. Amí can import .PCX and TIFF files and lets you scale and crop imported graphics. Printer support matches Windows'-more than 130 output devices can finish the job.

Desktop publishers who use Windows will still choose PageMaker, and high-end wordsmiths should wait for Amí Professional-Samna's fullpowered word processor/ desktop publisher due in mid-1989. Still, with its short learning curve and thoughtful balance of editing and publishing features, Ami is a cinch to carve out a niche at the low end. And its run-time version may even steal some thunder from other entry-level publishing programs such as PagePerfect and Byline.

It's refreshing to see an old dog like Samna learn some new tricks. Unlike *Legend* and a few other newcomers, *Amí* seems right at home in the *Windows* world.

Eric Brown is an associate editor for PC World.

#### SNAPSHOT

#### Ami

Samna stresses Ami's word processing skills, but its real strength lies in easy-to-use desktop publishing features. Melding easily into the Windows environment, Ami excels at short to medium-size documents and publications.

#### KEY FEATURES

- Example windows in dialog boxes that reflect style formatting changes as you alter settings
- Easy-to-use tagged styles with 20 preformatted style sheets
- Draft mode for fast text editing
- Framing command with .PCX and TIFF graphics import and manipulation

#### AVAILABILITY

Ami was scheduled for release in November 1988. Ami Professional is due in mid-1989.

#### PRICING

\$199 (\$149 for first 120 days after shipment)

**Samna Corp.** 5600 Glenridge Dr. Atlanta, GA 30342 404/851-0007

For more information, circle 801 on reader service card.

#### **Word's Glitter and Grace**

Microsoft Word 5.0 adds graphics importing, page

preview, and snazzy document management features.

Eric Knorr

ors were for writing and editing text. But today's world-class word crunchers need splashy graphics and enough document handling features to please a hypertext programmer.

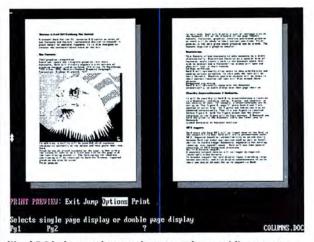
Like archrival Word-Perfect 5.0, Microsoft Word 5.0 provides a page preview mode and the ability to import and manipulate graphics files. Moreover, new bookmark and annotation features will enable users to create dynamic links between documents and to comment on each other's work. Word 5.0 also brings many small commonsense touches, vastly improved tabs, and a spelling checker that finally works in real time.

#### **Getting Graphics**

Word 5.0 incorporates all the graphics and page preview functions of Microsoft's Word add-on, PageView. .PIC, TIFF, .PCX, Encapsulated PostScript, and HPGL graphics files can be imported, sized, and viewed—and you can view one or two pages in their entirety. As with WordPerfect 5.0, the preview mode is not interactive; you edit text and manipulate graphics in the main editing window, then switch back to the preview mode to see how it looks.

At least in beta version, the latest Word's graphics and page preview functions haven't caught up to those of the latest WordPerfect. With Word 5.0, you can't rotate or invert a graphic, and color graphics appear in black and white on screen (neither program supports color hard copy). In addition, the preview display is always full page with greeked text, whereas WordPerfect 5.0 enables you to zoom in to 200 percent of actual page size and view several fonts on screen.

Other Word 5.0 graphics features are more similar to those of its rival.
Text automatically wraps



Word 5.0 helps you lay out documents by providing a textplus-graphics preview mode.

around rectangular graphic elements, and you can anchor a graphic to a paragraph or a position on the page. Lines and boxes sport a wider variety of styles, and you can shade and apply graphics-positioning commands to tables.

Layout enhancements will elicit sighs of relief. Word 5.0 enables you to edit multiple columns interactively and—at last—offers automatic pagination as an option, although

both these features drastically reduce the program's speed. Furthermore, while the new 'show line breaks' choice on the Options menu can't replace an on-screen font preview, it does display the actual number of characters that will print on a line when you choose a proportionally spaced font, reducing the number of unhappy surprises rolling out of your laser printer.

#### Placing Bookmarks

One of the biggest advantages Word 5.0 enjoys over its WordPerfect counterpart is the bookmark—a block of text of any length that you can jump to, link to, or cross-reference.

Bookmarks are ideal if you need to maintain several documents that are updated often. For example, if an essential price list is located in a large, frequently revised marketing document, you can highlight the list, give it a bookmark name, and import only the list into another document. The magic of bookmarks is that when the list is updated, it's updated simultaneously in both documents.

Cross-referenced bookmarks work like dynamic footnotes. To refer to a passage of text, you type 'See page:bookmark name' and press <F3>. When the document is printed, Word 5.0 substitutes the page number for the bookmark name—or, if it's a long passage, the page range.

Word 5.0's annotation feature, designed for group documents, bears even greater similarity to footnoting. Annotation will enable you to mark points in text with a numeral plus your initials in superscript; you'll then be shuttled to the end of the document (where your initials again appear and the time and date are automatically stamped) and prompted for a comment. Executing the Annotation

option from the Jump menu and entering the same numeral and initials returns you to your starting point.

With the Windows
Split Footnote command,
Word 5.0 can scroll annotations and text in tandem. In addition, Microsoft promises to add a macro to Word 5.0 that will collect annotations from several files and compile them into one file, organized by page number and position in the document.

Though not as razzledazzle as other document management improvements. Word 5.0's bolstered subdirectory support may prove more appealing. You can browse through your directory tree before you load a file or conduct a query, and add multiple directories to your query path. (The Query function, added along with the Summary in version 4.0, uses such Summary fields as date, author, and keyword to sort and create views of documents.) Another commonsense feature follows a long-standing WordPerfect custom: automatic document saving.

Bookmarks, annotation, and other document management features are most productive in a LAN environment. Rather than offering a separate LAN version, Microsoft has built LAN support into the standard version of Word 5.0. The unchanged \$450 Word price covers

program use on a server and one workstation; additional workstation versions are available at \$195 per user.

#### Oh, Those Little Things

Ask people what they dislike most about *Word*, and setting tabs ranks high. Previously, you had to move from field to field within the Tab menu each time you set a tab. Now you simply move the cursor along the ruler and type the first letter of the tab you want—Left, Right, or Decimal. Boom! The tab is set.

Lack of a real-time spelling checker has been another annoyance, exacerbated by Word's incompatibility with memory-resident spelling checkers like Turbo Lightning. Now you can look up spellings and replace words from within a document. And the process is fast.

While Microsoft's own research shows little user demand for outlining, another enhancement is a kind of reverse outlining. You can take any document, assign its subheads the style sheet designation 'Heading level 1', and collapse the document into an outline-like subhead list. Then you can shuffle entire sections just by moving the subheads.

Microsoft has made scads of small improvements—too numerous to mention here—to the user interface and screen display. Word 5.0 is clearly a formidable upgrade, even though it seems doubtful

#### SNAPSHOT

#### Microsoft Word 5.0

Microsoft's word processing powerhouse integrates lowend desktop publishing capabilities and shows higher polish throughout, but it really shines in document management assistance.

#### KEY FEATURES

- Support for "bookmarks"—blocks of text that you can jump to, link to, or cross-reference
- Annotation capabilities that aid group editing
- Integrated graphics importing and page previewing
- Real-time spelling

#### AVAILABILITY

Release is scheduled for November 1988.

#### PRICING

\$450; network end-user packs \$195 each

#### Microsoft

16011 N.E. 36th Way Box 97017 Redmond, WA 98073-9717 206/882-8080

For more information, circle 802 on reader service card.

that the program can beat WordPerfect at the pseudo-desktop publishing game. Word 5.0's strengths are in document handling and the long-awaited cleanup of some annoving flaws.

Eric Knorr is a senior editor for PC World.

# This is for ev too busy to get

If you're the type of person who's too busy to read an ad, read this ad.

Because you'll learn about a new tool that will help you manage people, ideas,

Dump any random. unrelated thoughts or ideas into Agenda, and it'll help you turn that information into a stream of structured, actionable knowledge. projects, and information with incredible efficiency. A tool that will help you avoid slumping into your chair, shaking your head, and asking, "How on earth will I ever get this done?" We call it Lotus Agenda, the personal information manager. Agenda allows you to dump random facts, thoughts,

and ideas into your PC without having to structure the information in advance.

Agenda's filing system is a more sophisticated version of this filing system. You can put items anywhere you want. View them any way you want. And have access to them anytime you want.

You can record the thousands of tasks you need to address to put together a new prod-

Scratchpad	Who	Issues
<ul> <li>Forward product comparison articles to Joan.</li> </ul>	• Joan	Competitive Tracking
Can we get the cost of goods sold under \$12?	• Tom	Materials
Bob will present ten-point incentives program at sales conference.	• Bob	Bonus Dollars
Tom will have his report in by a week from Friday, make sure 4 devers pricing strategy, softribution and implications of using outside vendor for typeswifting and printing.	• Tom	Distribution     Vendors     Pricing
Decision needed on research budget by end of this week—discuss options with Jim and Joan.	• Jim Joan	Research

Items. Dump information in manually, import it or use our pop-up capability while in another program.

uct line. Or the thousands of factors you need to put together a new bottom line.

Agenda will not only file these random items of information for you, it'll help you arrange them any way you want.

So you can understand them better, formulate new ideas better and extract all the answers you need better.

Which means, now you can concentrate



# eryone who's any work done.

Issues	Product Ideas	Who	Department
Packaging	<ul> <li>Accept packaging bids until the end of October.</li> </ul>	• Liz	Operations
Materials	Make sure synthetic materials are reliable.	• Sue	Operations
Research	<ul> <li>Have Tom break down market research results into best case/worst case scenarios.</li> </ul>	• Tom	Marketing
Distribution Vendors Pricing	<ul> <li>Tom will have his report in by a week from Friday; make sure it covers pricing, strategy, distribution, and implications of using outside vendor for typesetting and printing.</li> </ul>	• Tom	Marketing
Distribution	♪ Do Tom and Bob think we need to adjust distribution mix?	• Tom Bob	Marketing Sales

Categories. Agenda files items in all relevant categories so you can always find the information you need.

File: C: AGENDA \ FILES \ ISSUES View Issues by Person		06/21/88 11:00	
Issues	Joan	Promy	When
Research	<ul> <li>Decision needed on research budget by end of this week discuss options with Jim and Joan.</li> </ul>	·High	• 06/25/68
Competitive Tracking	Forward product comparison articles to Joan.	• Low	• 07/07/88
lesures	Bob	Priority	When
Distribution	<ul> <li>Do Tom and Bob think we need to adjust distribution mix?</li> </ul>	·High	• 06/22/88
Bonus Dollars	Bob will present ten-point incentives program at sales conference.	Medium	• 06/29/88

Views. Looking at the same information through different views gives you a more informed perspective. different ways so you can pinpoint information that's important to you. Or discover new relationships you hadn't considered before. And anytime you change an item in a view, Agenda will

more on using and acting on your information. And less on processing it.

How does Agenda work?

First, enter your items of information



The whole idea behind Agenda is to get them all in a row.

into your PC and assign them to categories that you create.

Then Agenda will do all of your filing automatically. And thanks to Agenda's *multiple filing capabilities*, if the information is relevant in more than one place, Agenda will take it and put it in several categories at once.

This makes it easy to view your data in

automatically update all other categories where the item has been assigned.

In fact, you could say that Agenda recalculates your text the way a spreadsheet program recalculates numbers.

All of which means, from now on you'll be able to come in every morning, check your Agenda, and get right to work.

Because you'll immediately know what work needs getting to.

For \$15, we'll send you an Agenda demo kit or videotape. Call 1-800-345-1043 and

ask for demo kit AGN-3058 for the 3.5" version or AGN-3053 for the 5.25" version. Or ask for videotape AGN-3063.



### Introducing Lotus Agenda

#### PRODUCT OUTLOOK

#### 98 PRODUCT OUTLOOK

#### LaserJet IID

HP gives its office workhorse a new Canon engine and comes up with duplex printing and other throughput enhancements.

#### **ALPS Allegro 24**

Out with the cylindrical platen, in with flat-surface paper feed; and gone are the paper jams, misprinted carbons, and mangled envelopes that had you tied in knots.

#### Ronstadt's Financials

Wit and wisdom are thrown in gratis with this spreadsheet-like business planner. Enter data just once, and Dr. Ronstadt will help you model, forecast, and analyze your enterprise.

#### LAN 60-2000, LAN 150-2000

Time to do some housekeeping on your hard drive? Sweep backup files onto Emerald's 60MB tape drives.

#### **Who Works When**

Who Works When deftly juggles all the variables that can turn staff scheduling into a three-ring circus.

#### LINK

Not quite a LAN (but an inexpensive interim step), LINK uses ordinary building wiring to let co-workers share files and peripherals.

#### SoftCode

Generate programs in many popular programming languages, using templates that you can customize.

#### 106 BRIEFLY NOTED

#### Epson FX-850, FX-1050

Two new dot matrix printers offer greater speed and paper-handling talent at the same low prices of the printers they're replacing.

#### **PubTech File Organizer**

Microsoft Windows users: Get a handle on your DOS file management chores, from searching across directories to loading programs, using this easy system of pulldown menus and icons.

#### OnTrak

Whip your lists of customers, sales prospects, and business contacts into order with this flat-file manager in Rolodex form that runs under *Windows*.

#### **Windows Manager**

Customize your *Windows* desktop for maximum efficiency, from moving and resizing windows to predetermining combinations of programs to be loaded.

#### EFAX-88

A portable fax machine that transmits hard-copy information at a decent rate.

#### **Generic Estimator**

CAD pros and hackers can prepare more effective construction bids using a combination of *Generic CADD* and *Estimator*.

#### **CrystalPrint WP**

Bargain hunters take notice: a laser page printer that beats the price of an Epson by one-third.

#### 110 UPDATE

#### AboveBoard Plus, AboveBoard Plus I/O, AboveBoard 2 Plus

The AboveBoard line of expanded memory boards trades up, adding multitasking, more addressable memory, and serial and parallel ports—not to mention some bucks.

#### PC-Write 3.0

Point-and-shoot menus and the ability to handle larger files and create multiple columns update this well-known shareware word processor.

#### DeskMate 3.0, DeskMate Workgroup Companion

Tandy combines all previous versions of its integrated package and then divides them in two: version 3.0 and its network companion.

#### LetterMaster 4.0

Keep thorough records of client contacts with this mail management/data base combo, which includes mail-merge, note-taking, and keyword-search capabilities. Comes in regular and network versions.

#### Publisher's Type 1.1

Create WYSIWYG fonts, logos, and special symbols using this Windows-compatible package.

#### pcANYWHERE III

Automatic call-back guarantees security when you're communicating from a remote PC.

#### Pro3D/PC

Pro3D/PC adds four new rendering options, printing enhancements, and lots of speed to its presentation graphics capabilities.

#### **Draw Plus**

You can refine your drawings with a new bag of drawing tricks, select and manipulate nonadjacent objects, and rotate objects in 1-degree increments. LaserJet IID

#### **Handling It**

Four years ago, when the word laser had just entered PC parlance, Hewlett-Packard decided to sidestep the glamour of desktop publishing and deliver a general office printer instead. The first HP LaserJet wasn't equipped with the Post-Script language of Apple's sexy LaserWriter or even with enough memory for a full page of graphics. But it was only half the price of the LaserWriter and did one thing very well: It printed letter-quality text very fast.

Four years, several upgrades, and 1 million units later, it's clear that HP guessed right about users' needs. Now its latest model, the LaserJet IID, suggests that paper handling will be the principal focus of laser printing improvements over the near term.

The LaserJet IID is the same office workhorse against which other lasers are now measured, but its slightly improved Canon SXD engine sets a faster pace for the rest of the pack. It provides 8-ppm printing as before, but HP has added three much sought after paper-handling capabilities.

The D in IID stands for duplex. The LaserJet IID can print on both sides of a piece of paper and take that page from either of two 200-sheet feeding bins, rather than one. You can use one bin for letterhead and the other for following pages, or tap both reserves for larger jobs. The IID also offers a separate 50-unit envelope feeding option, more than triple its predecessor's 15-envelope capacity. The LaserJet IID uses the same paper trays, memory boards, font cartridges, and soft fonts as the LaserJet Series II.

The IID comes with 640K of memory, expandable up to 4.6MB, and more fonts than earlier models—14 internal and 10 on a font cartridge. But while font and memory capacity has expanded over the years, giving the



The flatter the better is the motto of the ALPS Allegro 24, a 24-pin dot matrix printer that reduces jamming by feeding paper directly over a flat, stationary platen and under a downward-striking printhead. It prints 180 cps in draft mode and 60 cps in letter quality mode.

printer desktop publishing capability, the IID is still clearly positioned as a mainstream office printer.

HP also plans to be as aggressive in pricing as it was with the original \$3495 LaserJet: The IID sells for \$4295 equipped with 640K of memory (the envelope feeder is another \$350). Hewlett-Packard, Boise Division, 11311 Chinden Blvd., Boise, ID 83714; 208/323-6000.

—M. H.

Reader service no. 750

ALPS Allegro 24

#### **Paper Tiger**

There's no need to get your correspondence or your stomach in a knot just because paper jams have your printer looking like a dot matrix dumpster. New flatbed printers from ALPS can straighten out your work flow and reduce jamming by feeding paper directly from tractor to printhead without the usual over, under,

around, and through. Declaring cylindrical platens as archaic as manual typewriters, the ALPS folks give you the frontloading Allegro 24, which routes paper in a beeline over a flat, stationary platen, under a downward-striking printhead, and out the back.

Most printers seem to bear a special hostility toward envelopes, forms, transparencies-anything departing from 81/2-by-11inch paper. The Allegro 24 handles those materials as easily as fanfold or sheet paper, so there's one less reason to keep that typewriter hanging around. And since the Allegro doesn't bend multipart forms, you're more likely to find your words printed on the correct line on every carbon copy.

If, like most of us, you switch between fanfold paper (for drafts) and single sheets (for correspondence), you'll appreciate the Allegro's paper-parking button. It automatically backs the continuous sheet out far enough



Hewlett-Packard's LaserJet IID features advanced paper handling with two-sided printing, dual 200-sheet paper bins, and a special 50-envelope feeding option.

to drop a single sheet in place. Press the frictionfeed switch, and you're in business. An 87-column carriage lets you print 81/2-by-11 sheets horizontally. The paper-saving tear bar lets you roll out half-printed sheets far enough to rip them off, then backs the printhead up to the top of the form again. You can quickly customize alignment for printed forms via frontpanel controls. A singlesheet feed bin is in the works

ALPS saved money by eliminating the rolling platen and by using a power-saving printhead that requires a smaller, less expensive motor. It gives you 24-pin printing for only \$499. Of course, you can't expect everything for such a modestly priced printer, and ALPS emphasizes paper handling over speed. But drafts still print out at a respectable 180 characters per second, and 24pin letter-quality copies at 60 cps. Graphics roll out at 180-by-360-dots-perinch resolution.

The Allegro comes with a standard Centronics parallel port and an RS-232C option. It emulates the Epson LQ-2500 series command and character sets. Four resident fonts-Gothic, Tiempo, and Courier letter-quality type and a draft Gothiccan be bolstered with a cartridge containing three more letter-quality typefaces. The 7K standard buffer sounds skimpy, but that's what's left after the software is loaded. A 32K option is available. ALPS America Inc., 3553 N. First St., San Jose, CA 95134; 408/432-8000. -Mark Henricks Reader service no. 751

Ronstadt's Financials

### Comprehending the Situation

Confidence is what you feel before you comprehend the situation." That's one of the first messages to greet you when you load Ronstadt's Financials, a "statement driven" financial-budgeting/projection program from

Ronstadt's Financials helps you develop more precise business plans via spreadsheet-like financial modeling built atop a data base of your company's key financial indicators.

Lord Publishing. Another 300 or so business quotations and jokes pop up occasionally, but the program is quite serious about helping the small business owner get a grip on financial decision making.

Robert Ronstadt, who established an entrepreneurial studies curriculum at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, created Ronstadt's Financials to help you be more specific about your business plans and assumptions. Similar in format to a spreadsheet but without an empty matrix of rows and columns, Financials is actually built upon a data base supported by 1-2-3-like menus.

The program leads you through data entry with prompts for information such as typical business operating expenses, cost of sales, gross profit, and cash surplus. These are entered only once for the period specified. Userdefined variables-say, regularly recurring costs specific to your enterprise-can be added. After all the figures are input, Financials generates a detailed income statement, balance sheet, and various budgets, as well as break-even points, profitability measures, projected cash flow, and other financial ratios.

Financials also helps you build worst- and best-case business scenarios typical of spreadsheet financial modeling. You can tie budgets and schedules to these financial projections, and the program will support up to 64

statements and schedules in a scenario of up to 32,000 line items (which can be footnoted).

You can enter alternative data and see how your financial statement would change. These different business scenarios can be viewed on screen or printed side by side. Likewise, you can enhance your understanding of trends in your business using color charts to compare these statements over time.

Financials comes with built-in business models for general contracting, professional services, manufacturing, retail, wholesale, and real estate. But the program also is equipped with a general purpose model for quick projections and feasibility studies. An on-line glossary explains business and financial terms in context.

The package requires DOS 2.00 or later and 640K of memory, and a hard disk is recommended. You'll also need Hercules or compatible monochrome graphics or CGA or EGA color graphics. The \$499 Financials can use an 8087 or 80827 math coprocessor. Lord Publishing Inc., One Apple Hill, Natick, MA 01760; 508/651-9955. —Glenn Grant

Reader service no. 752

LAN 60-2000, LAN 150-2000

#### Half an Answer

Need a tape backup that's easy on power and real estate? Emerald Systems has half an answer. The company's new 51/4inch tape cartridge drives —the LAN 60-2000 and

## At last there's a way to make better looking presentations with less work.

#### Introducing Pinstripe Presenter.™

In the past you had two choices: you spent days with a graphic designer or you struggled with cumbersome presentation software. Now there's Pinstripe Presenter.

With its many pre-formatted graphic styles you can produce compelling, professional looking slides, overheads and handouts.

#### Everything you need.

You can create word charts, business graphs or freehand drawings, one at a time or combined on a single slide. Choose from among 8 chart types including text, pie. line, area, table, stacked bar, and horizontal bar. Both 2D and 3D types are included. And use the draw program and clip art library to add snap to any slide.

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On-screen prompts, obvious menus, and context sensitive on-line help make it easy to learn Pinstripe Presenter in record time. The quick start guide will take you through your first presentation in under 1 hour.

#### Rush jobs welcome.

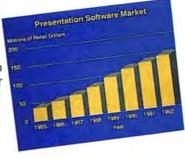
Save time by selecting the menu option to transmit your presentation via modem to a MAGICorp slide center for 24-hour delivery. Pay less than half the typical price per slide charged by commercial slide making services. And you can use your printer to create overheads and paper copies in minutes.

#### Price: \$199.95









"Stunning is the best way to describe the speed and efficiency in which (Pinstripe Presenter) performs its tasks."

Infoworld



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Circle 69 on reader service card



Protect yourself from catastrophic hard disk crashes with Emerald's new 5¼-inch tape cartridge drives—the LAN 60-2000 and LAN 150-2000—that require only half the space of most tape drives.

LAN 150-2000—can help safeguard your work and provide low-cost storage. And they do it in half the space and with lower power consumption than traditional 5¼-inch devices.

The new drives come in 60MB and 150MB capacities, as their names suggest. Both models can be configured to run under DOS, Xenix, or Novell and other DOS-based networks. Emerald's ASP software offers nifty features for DOS and network users like unattended backups at night. (Just shift ASP into learn mode and it saves all of your ensuing commands in a batch file, which you can set to start executing by using ASP's clockinterrupt command.)

Emerald has packed the same capacity in half the space its existing full-height tape backup systems require, and the new half-heights consume only about 70 percent of the power. That may not be a big deal for owners of 200-watt systems, but it could be a plus if your system is fully loaded with floppies or more power-hungry

hard disks.

Emerald will keep supplying its full-size models in 60MB, 150MB, and twin-drive 150MB versions for those who prefer them; but at \$14 to \$21.50 per megabyte, the new half-heights cost 8 to 14 percent less than their full-size cousins. The 60MB internal half-height drive goes for \$1295, while the 150MB version lists at \$2095. Emerald Systems Corp., 4757 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117; 800/553-4030. -Mark Henricks Reader service no. 753

Who Works When

#### **Labor Organizer**

Anyone who's faced the nightmare of manually scheduling and rescheduling employee shifts knows the meaning of frustration. A small change in one variable can ripple through them all and pull your entire schedule down around your ears. It's for chores like this that computers were invented, and Newport Systems has just the electronic manager for the job.

For only \$895, Who Works When gives you scheduling capabilities typically found with \$30,000 systems. There is one caveat: Who Works When differs from those more expensive counterparts in its 200-employeeper-file limit. You can schedule more employees by creating a separate file for the overflow, but the schedules of the two groups can't be merged electronically.

On the plus side, Who Works When can schedule up to 26 shifts in increments from 6 minutes to 24 hours for up to 20 departments with five substations in each. For example, if you were responsible for a hospital's radiology department, you could create separate but coordinated schedules for both front-desk staff and X-ray technicians.

Who Works When works through four basic modules: facility, department, employee, and schedule. Department names and shift descriptions are entered into the facility module. In the department module, you set up the period of time your schedule covers-from one day to six weeksand enter job codes, stations, employee teams, and up to ten holidays. The department module is also where you establish the number of employees each shift requires.

The employee module lets you factor in hiring dates (for assignments that depend on seniority), the number of consecutive days an employee can work, an employee's first and second scheduling choices, and even a cap on hours for part-timers. When you're ready to compile schedules, the department module pulls the data in from the employee module and finds the most appropriate people for a given shift.

The result appears in the schedule module. If you're not satisfied, you can enter that module with a touch of the <Space> bar and edit the entries. Moving between modules is a matter of two keystrokes—the <Esc> and an identifier: F for fa-

cility, E for employee, and so on. Newport Systems offers 30 days of free telephone support. Thereafter you can purchase 90 days of telephone support for \$160.

Who Works When will print out separate schedules for your department and for each employee, and its files can be exported in ASCII format to in-house payroll systems. It runs on either classic PCs or PS/2s, and requires 640K of memory and a hard drive. The program supports CGA, EGA, and VGA. Newport Systems, 636 120th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98009-3705; 206/451-0537. -Ronnie Gunnerson Reader service no. 754

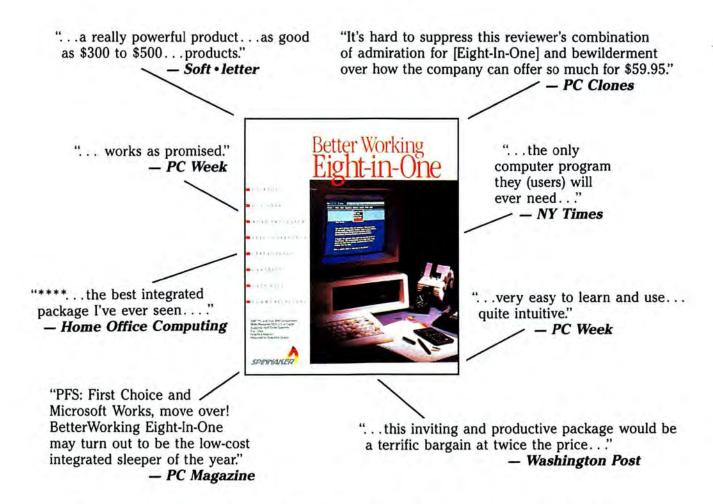
LINK

#### Stepping Stone for the LAN-Locked

Connectivity sounds great in principle, but installing a local area network can be scary. Some small businesses have hooked PCs and peripherals together with simple serial networks, but serial cable isn't free, and it's useful primarily for connecting nearby devices. Reconfiguring a network and moving cable around represent such prohibitive costs in time, money, and hassle that many budgetconscious work groups find themselves LANlocked.

NetLine has solved the serial-cable jumble by taking advantage of a resource that's as close as your nearest wall socket.

# Here's What People Are Saying about EIGHT-IN-ONE™...



BetterWorking Eight-In-One comes complete with every productivity tool you could ever need. It's a desktop organizer, outliner, word processor, spelling corrector, spreadsheet, graphics program, data base and communications package all rolled into one. Plus, Eight-In-One is integrated, allowing you to pass work smoothly among all eight applications. The reviews are in...isn't it time you looked at BetterWorking's Eight-In-One?

Price: \$59.95

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- Requires: 384K/DOS 2.1 or higher
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Available at fine software dealers, Or: For orders only call 1-800-826-0706



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NetLine's LINK solves the LAN cable jumble by using the electrical wiring already in your walls as a transmission medium. The token-passing bus network has a 2000-foot range and moves data at 19,200 bits per second.

NetLine's LINK is a lowpriced connectivity solution that saves time and money by relying on the electrical wiring already in your walls. It won't knock Novell's Netware off its throne, but it's an ideal first step toward fullblown networking for the accounting work group, office members who want to share a laser printer, or co-workers who occasionally need to pass around files and electronic messages.

LINK comes in two forms. One's a box about 91/2 inches square and 3 inches high that can sit under your monitor; it's equipped with its own power supply and connects to the PC via an internal serial card. The other comes as an internal card with serial connector and power line interface but without its own power supply. Either way, LINK translates data from a computer or printer into electronic signals that can travel through building wiring, and then sends them out along its own power cord to other LINKs. The system has a

2000-foot range, depending on the power of your office transformer.

The LINKs form a proprietary token-passing bus network that moves data at 19,200 bits per second between LINK-equipped devices, including PCs, minicomputer terminals and hosts, file servers, printers, and other peripherals.

The external unit retails for \$595, the internal version for \$495. Each PC also needs a \$165 copy of ManyLink for PC, which allows two LINKed computers to share data files, printers, and other peripherals in the background and to conduct one-line chat sessions. This software also lets you lock any disk or subdirectory on any node and is available as ManyLink for Work Groups (\$495) for up to eight users. NetLine, Inc., 85 W. Center St., Provo, UT; 801/373-6000. —Jennifer Beaver

Reader service no. 755

SoftCode

# Have It Your Way

Programming is as personal as writing. If you've developed many applications for yourself or your work group, you've probably also developed a personal approach to the way those applications execute. Some programmers feel so strongly about the way a list is checked, for instance, they won't touch a program generator that takes a different approach to the routine. Or they'll go in and make changes every time the application runs.

The Software Bottling Company has a program generator for people who hate program generators. SoftCode employs customizable templates for the most popular programming languages; once the template is customized. the program will execute the way you like it every time. SoftCode's fully documented programtemplate language lets you preserve all the tips and good programming habits you've developed over the years, so you can maintain your own programming approach even when you switch to another language.

Aimed primarily at corporate programmers who create accounting or data base applications, SoftCode comes with a screen editor you can use to specify fields, draw boxes, change colors, and set special parameters—such as validating data entry by checking against

a list or by defining an acceptable range of values.

SoftCode is ideal for those who develop programs in more than one language; if you've found the best way to set up a screen for data entry, but the language you're working in does it differently, SoftCode will arbitrate. It generates code for Borland's Turbo Basic, Turbo Pascal, and Turbo C; Microsoft's C, BASIC 5.0, QuickBASIC, and Pascal; and dBASE III Plus, Foxbase + , Quicksilver, and Clipper. Other templates are under development.

The program comes with the template of your choice for \$195. Additional templates are \$49 each. The code allows data entry using the full PC keyboard as well as calculated fields, data validation with file checking, list checking, and range checking.

SoftCode requires DOS 2.00 or a later version and 512K of memory. No royalties or run-time fees are required. Code generated can be integrated with Software Bottling's other products-Speed Screen, Flash-Up, and Flash-Up Developer's Toolbox. A \$19.95 upgrade is offered to owners of the firm's Screen Sculptor and Flash Code program generators. The Software Bottling Co., 6600 Long Island Expwy., Maspeth, NY 11378; 800/872-8787 (operator 311), 718/ 458-3700. -M. H. Reader service no. 757

24-wire print quality. 9-wire price.

Ho. Hum. Yawn. That's how people

react when your writing fails to keep them glued to the page. But you'll get readers' attention and keep it, when you write with appealing, fully-developed characters. Like the ones created by our Pinwriter® P2200 printer.

The P2200's 24-wire print head produces crisp, fully-formed characters for a 9-wire price. Which means you get print quality that people will stop and read. At a price that won't stop you.

Of course, stand-out print quality is just one reason the P2200 is so outstanding.

It sprints through 55 letter quality CPS

or 170 in draft mode. Dresses up memos, let-

ters, etc., with up to 128 type variations. And, like all our Pinwriters, it works with more software packages than any other 24-wire printer.

For more information about the entire Pinwriter Family, call 1-800-343-4418. And discover what a little character development can do for your writing.



NEC PRINTERS. THEY ONLY STOP WHEN YOU WANT THEM TO.





Epson's new 80-column FX-850 and 136-column FX-1050 9-pin printers are 10 percent faster than previous models and feature expanded paper-handling capabilities.



# Epson FX-850, FX-1050

Epson America, the leader in dot matrix printing, is phasing out its wellentrenched 9-pin FX-86 and 286E models in favor of the new 80-column FX-850 and 136-column FX-1050. Ten percent faster than their predecessors, the latest FX printers also feature expanded paper-handling capabilities that take the inconvenience out of switching between tractor-fed and single-sheet paper by enabling you to park both types in the printer at the same time.

The SmartPark feature reduces the waste of time and printing stock that results from tearing off multiple-copy forms or searching for the top-of-form. After you tear off a fanfold sheet, the printer automatically backs up to the top of the next sheet to begin the print job. Additionally, the FX-850 and

-1050 are quieter, each sporting a dual-walled, insulated chassis.

Both the FX-850 and -1050 offer print speeds of 264 characters per second (cps) in elite draft mode and 54 cps in elite near letter quality (NLQ) mode. Each comes with Roman and Sans Serif NLQ fonts a built-in parallel port, and an 8K buffer. Despite the improved features, the new printers cost the same as the ones they replace-\$549 for the FX-850 and \$799 for the FX-1050. Epson America, 23530 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance, CA, 90505; 213/549-9140. Reader service no. 758

# PubTech File Organizer

The PubTech File Organizer provides pulldown menus, icons, and a variety of utilities for managing files in the Microsoft Windows environment. You can speed computing by clicking on icons that represent files and programs and then moving them to other icons that represent actions. Pub-

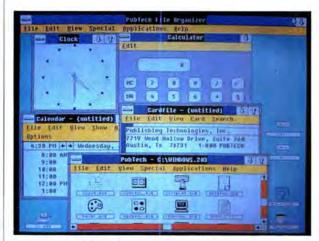
Tech File Organizer performs all the usual DOS file management functions—such as RENAME, MOVE, COPY, and DE-LETE—and offers unique ways to search for files across subdirectories and even to undelete them.

You can load groups of programs simultaneously, remap the keyboard to emulate your favorite software packages, or choose unique hot-key combinations to execute operations. The PubTech File Organizer includes an ASCII editor, the ability to replace or append text in the Windows clipboard, and extensive printer settings. It requires DOS 3.00 or a later version, Windows 2.03 or later, 512K of memory, and a hard disk. It retails for \$145. Publishing Technologies, 7719 Wood Hollow Dr. #260, Austin, TX 78731; 800/782-8324, 512/346-2835.

Reader service no. 760

# OnTrak

OnTrak is a flat-file manager with a Rolodex-like interface that runs under the Microsoft Windows environment. Designed to manage customer lists, sales prospects, and personal/business contacts, OnTrak lets you specify up to 20 fixed-length fields per Rolodex card and create 5000 cards per card file. You sort by only one field at a time, but you can append up to eight pages of notes to each card. You can exchange data between OnTrak and other applications via the Windows clipboard and print your data in a variety of formats, including mailing labels and file cards. OnTrak, which requires DOS 3.10 or a later version, Windows 2.03 or later, 640K of memory, and a hard disk, sells for \$195. Active Software Corp., 1208 Apollo Way #507, Sunnyvale, CA 94086; 408/732-1740. Reader service no. 763



Manage your hard disk with icons, load groups of programs simultaneously, and perform all the usual DOS file management functions in the Windows environment more quickly and easily with PubTech File Organizer.



# Great Performers, Superb Performance

# The QIC Research 80286 and 80386 machines.

These represent the latest in PC speed and compatibility for your Desktop Personal Computer. Made in the USA, burned in for 48 hours and available with NCS on site service contract, the QIC systems boast tenacious reliability. And the systems expandable memory, DOS and OS/2 capabilities

will allow your business to run virtually any word-processing, spreadsheet, graphic or networking package available. From the reliable 80286/8 MHz system to the very fast 80386/20MHz, QIC Research can provide the solution to all your business computing needs.

MODEL	CPU	WAIT STATE	16-bit	SLOTS 8-bit	32-bit	STANDARD MEMORY	MAX ON BOARD	POWER	VGA	EGA	MONO
QIC 386-20	386-20	0	5	2	1	1MB	16MB	200W	\$3,370	\$3,115	\$2,745
QIC 386-16	386-16	0	6	2	0	1MB	1MB	192W	\$2,899	\$2,515	\$2,145
QIC 286-12	286-12	0	4	4	0	1MB	1MB	192W	\$2,299	\$1,895	\$1,525
QIC 286-10	286-10	0	6	2	0	512K	1MB	192W	\$2,099	\$1,760	\$1,390
QIC 286-10	286-10	1	6	2	0	512K	1MB	192W	\$1,995	\$1,609	\$1,239
OIC 286-8	286-8	1	6	2	0	512K	1MB	192W	\$1,795	\$1,365	\$999

\*All Systems come with 1.2MB HardDisk/Floppy Controller, 101 key enhanced keyboard and complete documentation.

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1961 Concourse Drive Suite C North San Jose, California 95131 QIC is not affiliated with MDS Quanel, Inc.

QIC-09B 08/29/88

# Windows Manager

Windows Manager helps you organize the Windows desktop to get the full benefit of the environment. Accessible from any window via the Windows control menu, this utility lets you predetermine combinations of programs to be loaded concurrently—a spreadsheet and its add-ins, for example—and define the sizes, locations, and configurations of their windows.

Using Windows Manager, you can end your computing session from any window without returning to the DOS Executive. Work is automatically saved at regular user-defined intervals, and you can close all windows and save their contents simultaneously. Windows Manager lets you replace the DOS Executive with your own opening screen and customize both it and the background screen with a preferred design, color, and special effects.

Windows Manager includes a screen saver, an alarm clock with three alarms, and different viewers to show the fonts and memory available.

Windows Manager requires DOS 3.00 or a later version and Windows/286 or Windows/386, and retails for \$79.95. HDC Computer Corp., 15379 N.E. 90th St., Redmond, WA 98052; 206/885-5550.

Reader service no. 765

# EFAX-88

The overnight letter was a first step toward instantaneous information exchange, and it quickly became a hit. But today, personal facsimile machines can often do the job faster.

For those seeking the basics, the Avatex EFAX-88 personal copier/ fax unit may fill the bill. Its \$1149 price is about average for its range of capabilities, which includes a reasonably fast 20-second-per-page transmission speed, an adjustable scanning mode for transmitting graphics and photographs, and a manual switch that allows you to transmit documents in the midst of a phone conversation.

The EFAX-88's fallback feature guarantees error-free transmissions by automatically adjusting its rate from 9600 bps to 7200, 4800, 2400, and below if line problems crop up. Weighing less than 10 pounds, the EFAX-88 can perform as a personal copier. A 110/220 voltage selector and an optional acoustic coupler also make the EFAX-88 a practical unit on the road. Elec & Eltak (U.S.A.) Corp., 1230 Oakmead Pkwy. #310, Sunnyvale, CA 94086: 408/732-1181. Reader service no. 766

# Generic Estimator

Used in tandem with Generic CADD, Generic Software's Generic Estimator reduces the time and effort you spend determining costs or creating bids for construction projects by enabling you to itemize those costs. Generic Estimator is ideal for builders, landscape designers, interior decorators, and other CAD professionals. But now that low-cost CAD is being put to a variety of nontraditional uses, you don't have to be a professional to benefit from it.

Simply highlight an item such as carpeting on a Generic CADD drawing, and Generic Estimator will automatically calculate the quantity needed and the cost for materials, labor, and equipment based on the dimensions of the highlighted object. Generic Estimator draws prices from a data base of materials that you maintain, which can include up to 16,000 different items. If you change the price of an item, the program automatically recalculates all items related to it, so you can quickly prepare several estimates for the same job using alternative materials and prices. Generic Software is talking with major materials suppliers to obtain add-on data bases of their inventories for sale at a later date.

Generic Estimator costs \$295 as a standalone product and \$495 when bundled with Generic CADD Level 3. Both require DOS 2.00 or a later version, 512K of memory, and a graphics card. Generic Software, Inc., 8763 148th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98052; 206/885-5307.

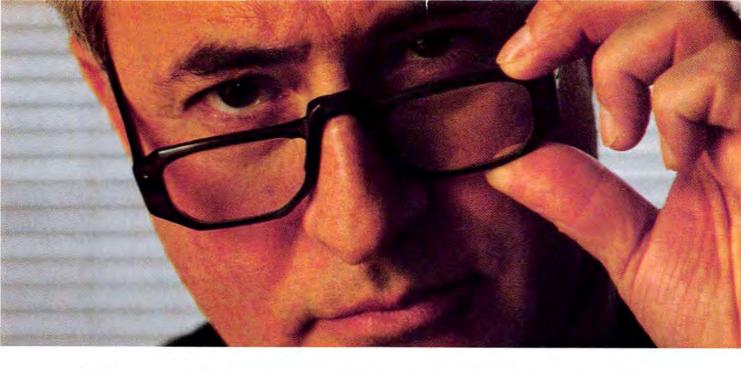
Reader service no. 767

# CrystalPrint WP

Hoping to lead the laser printer market in the same way Epson dominates in dot matrix devices, Qume has introduced an upgradable laser page printer at a rockbottom price. At \$1299, the stripped-down CrystalPrint WP costs about one-third less than competitors like the Okidata Laserline Plus (\$2000) and Epson GQ 2500 (\$2199), claims Qume. It should be noted, however, that those competitors all come with graphics capabilities built in. Graphics options that allow the Qume printer to emulate the HP LaserJet Plus or the Epson FX-85 dot matrix printer are priced at \$79 each. To take advantage of graphics upgrades, you also need to add a 128K memory module (for \$169), bringing the CrystalPrint's memory to 256K.

Designed primarily for text-based applications, CrystalPrint WP prints six pages per minute and emulates the Diablo 630. the de facto standard for daisy wheel printers. The Qume printer works with most word processing software but doesn't yet support a page description language (PDL) like PostScript. Bitstream soft fonts can be added via snap-in cartridges, but without a PDL they can't be altered using software commands.

Qume boasts that because it has fewer moving parts, the liquid crystal shutter design of its 300dpi printer provides greater reliability than do



# "Give me one good reason why we should buy Macola Accounting Software."

# "How about five great ones."

Choosing the <u>right</u> accounting software can be a complicated process. And due to the time and money invested, this decision should be made only once—regardless of how much your business grows.

There's plenty of excellent reasons to buy Macola Accounting Software. Here's five great ones.



Reason 1: Flexible and Powerful. In the words of PC Magazine, Macola Accounting Software "is at the top

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Manufacturing Bill of Material Processor—Material Requirements Planning—Master Scheduling— Shop Floor Control—Job Costing

That's not all. There's a Report Writer that allows customized reporting and can easily transport data files to popular spread sheet, word processing and database programs.

Reason 3: The best multi-user LAN compatibility. No other software can match Macola's 15 years of maturity in mini and micro Local Area Network (LAN) environments. Today, Macola is the most advanced accounting software for LANs. No limitations, no compromises.

Reason 4: Unparalleled Speed and Data Integrity. Macola Software is the <u>only</u> high-end accounting software written in Micro Focus COBOL...for maximum speed and data integrity. Source code is available. IBM has licensed Micro Focus COBOL as its SAA standard for the new PS/2 and OS/2.

**Reason 5: Comprehensive Support.** Toll-free 800-line support is available from Macola. Or, utilize Macola's nationwide network of authorized resellers for local training, cus-

tomization and hands-on support.

These are just five of the many great reasons why Macola Accounting Software is the right choice for your business. For more detailed information, "live" demonstration modules and an authorized reseller in your area, call today:

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Circle 252 on reader service card

most laser printers. Similarly, the CrystalPrint WP functions without the rotating mirrors standard on laser printers. Qume claims this reduces scanning distortion and makes for a sharper on-page image. The CrystalPrint WP also is up to 50 percent smaller than many other laser printers, measuring 15.7 by 13.4 by 9.1 inches. Qume Corp., 500 Yosemite Ave.. Milpitas, CA 95035; 408/942-4000.

Reader service no. 768



# **AboveBoard** Plus, AboveBoard Plus I/O, **AboveBoard** 2 Plus

Intel Personal Computer **Enhancement Operation** (PCEO) has added the ability to multitask and address more memory to new versions of its Above-Board expanded memory board. The company also has raised its prices. The AboveBoard Plus, which now retails for \$795 before adding memory, supports the multitasking feature of EMS 4.0. If you use Quarterdeck's Desqview 2.01 environment, the board lets you load and simultaneously execute multiple DOS applications. Microsoft Windows also multitasks programs written specifically for it. You can add up to 8MB of expanded memory to the Above-Board Plus in classic PCs using piggyback cards. A companion product, the

\$945 AboveBoard Plus I/O, gives you serial and parallel ports as well.

AboveBoard 2 Plus lets owners of IBM PS/2 Models 50, 50 Z, and 60 multitask and add up to 8MB of expanded memory on a single card. It supports IBM's guidelines for going beyond 2MB of memory in those machines, and sells for \$495 unpopulated. All AboveBoards come with software to create RAM disks, buffer printers, and diagnose memory-chip failures, Intel Personal Computer Enhancement Operation, 5200 N.E. Elam Young Pkwy., Hillsboro, OR 97124-6497; 800/538-3373. Reader service no. 769

# **PC-Write** Version 3.0

Menu changes, the ability to handle larger files, and support for multiple columns are among the improvements in version 3.0 of PC-Write. The popular shareware word processor now has a three-line, context-sensitive menu at the top of its screen and gives you a full-screen opening menu if you invoke the editor without specifying a file. New point-and-shoot menus simplify font and page layout selection, and margin-setting capabilities let you create tables, scripts, and numbered or bulleted paragraphs. PC-Write version 3.0 uses all available memory for editing, breaking its former 60K file limit. It has an improved spelling checker, supports file locking and read-only files for network users, and still responds to WordStar commands. PC-Write 3.0 requires DOS 2.00 or a later version, and 384K. PC Write has a registration price of \$89; the upgrade is free to registered users. Quicksoft, 219 First Ave. N #224, Seattle, WA 98109; 800/888-8088, 206/ 282-0452.

Reader service no. 770

# DeskMate 3.0, DeskMate Workgroup Companion

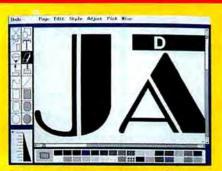
Tandy Corporation has consolidated all previous versions of its DeskMate environment/desktop utility into DeskMate 3.0 and its network extension, DeskMate Workgroup Companion. DeskMate 3.0 works on all IBM compatible machines and is ROM resident on the Tandy 1000 TL and 1000 SL. In addition to its graphic user interface, DeskMate 3.0 includes a text editor with a 90,000-word spelling checker, a spreadsheet, a communications module, a draw program, a card file, an auto-dialer, a calendar, and a to-do list. On a local area network, DeskMate Workgroup Companion adds a shared address book, the ability to direct output to different printers, remote access to your office com-



In version 3.0, the popular shareware word processor PC-Write gets a new point-and-shoot menu system and the ability to handle larger files. Now it's easier to lay out pages, and you can even create tables in columnar format.

# Publisher's Paintbrush

# The art of desktop publishing



This masthead was created using the fonts and typographic features of Publisher's Paintbrush.



Gray scale technology gives your images amazing clarity – with up to 256 shades of gray.

# Z-SOFT

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> Voted "Best Desktop Publishing Utility."



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# Gray scale publishing: For the ultimate image.

Gray scale technology is a major advance over the conventional "dithering" technique, which simulates shades of gray by varying the density of black dots.

Gray scale images, composed of dots in up to 256 intensity levels, have distinct shades of gray much cleaner than "dithered" images.

Now you can edit a gray scale image with all the features that made Publisher's Paintbrush the premier package of its class. Then export your masterpieces to Ventura Publisher', PC PageMaker® or business presentation software.

# Fonts galore!

Publisher's Paintbrush offers 25 popular

fonts – including a selection in Compugraphic outline format. Hundreds of other perfectly formed outline fonts are available from ZSoft. So your desktop publishing documents gain impact with razor-sharp type.

You have complete flexibility with your type. Adjust leading (line spacing) and kerning (character spacing). Adjust type size – from 1 to 200 point. Adjust italic slope or line slope in 1-degree increments.

# Many other popular features.

Publisher's Paintbrush provides the most extensive hardware support in the industry and your images can be used in all major desktop publishing packages.

With zoom out editing, all your editing is done at the resolution of the print device – not the screen. Result: Incredibly smooth edges.

And, our new import utility converts Hewlett-Packard printer files to PCX for post-process editing.

# Join the graphic era of desktop publishing.

Give your documents and presentations the classy look they deserve. With Publisher's Paintbrush. Clearly, it's the art of desktop publishing.





Tandy's DeskMate Workgroup Companion environment/desktop utility gains a shared address book for LAN members, central phone messaging, and a capability that lets multiple work group members comment on a topic in a single file.

puter by modem, and a central phone messaging capability. Also incorporated is an "action item" capability, which allows several work-group members to comment within a single file. DeskMate 3.0 retails for \$99.95; Desk-Mate Workgroup Companion is \$149.95. Owners of previous versions can get a \$50 credit toward the purchase of DeskMate 3.0 by taking the cover of the manual to a Radio Shack store. DeskMate 3.0 requires DOS version 2.00 or a later version and 384K of memory; DeskMate Workgroup Companion needs DOS 3.00 or a later version and 512K of memory. Both require a CGA or better graphics adapter. Tandy Corp., 1700 One Tandy Center, Fort Worth, TX 76102; 817/390-3700. Reader service no 771

# LetterMaster 4.0

An ability to organize a list of business contacts enhances version 4.0 of the LetterMaster mail management/data base program. The contact management feature lets salespeople and others include the first, previous, and next dates of contact with their clients. Combined with LetterMaster 4.0's extensive note-making and keyword-search capabilities, contact management lets vou keep complete records of client contacts and quickly retrieve them by name, subject, date, and other parameters. LetterMaster 4.0 has a full mail-merge capability for letters. forms, and labels. It makes summaries of calls. notes, and clients; a follow-up log; a phone directory; an address book; and Rolodex cards. LetterMaster 4.0 follows the guidelines for IBM's Systems Application Architecture screen design and can export files directly to dBASE III Plus, WordStar, Microsoft Word, and other formats as well as ASCII text. The package also directly imports dBASE .dbf files. It is compatible with DOSbased networks including Novell, 3Com, and IBM products. The \$149 singleuser version requires DOS version 2.0 and 512K of memory. The network version requires DOS 3.10 and costs \$349 for an unlimited network license. Research Development Systems, P.O. Box 110216, Arlington, TX 76007; 800/338-9181, 817/ 860-0155.

Reader service no. 772

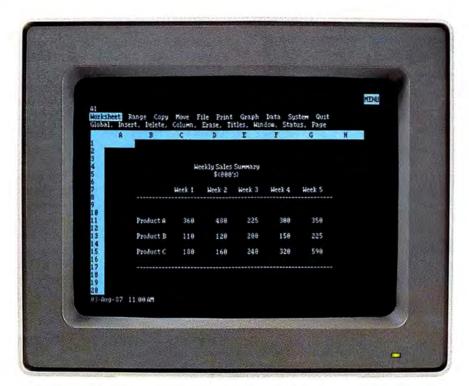
# Publisher's Type Foundry Version 1.1

Z-Soft, manufacturer of PC Paintbrush for Windows, has strengthened its Publisher's Type Foundry version 1.1 with a Windows screen-font translator that lets you

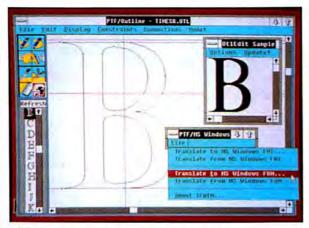
have on screen the same fonts that you create for your printer with the program's bit-map editor. Version 1.1 lets you create or capture fonts, logos, and special symbols from the company's eight different typeface outlines and modify them pixel by pixel before downloading them to your laser printer. The program compresses your data between 10 percent and 90 percent, conserving disk space and speeding the loading and saving of bit maps by as much as 400 percent. Version 1.1 also offers a virtual memory manager disk cache to handle large, complex images and fonts. For example, you now can hold in memory a full 300-dpi image created with Z-Soft's paint program or a 90point bit-mapped font. The outline editor can hold in RAM up to 1200 line segments of a specific font. Both the bit-map and outline editors let you preselect character height and width for more uniform fonts and preview



With version 4.0 of LetterMaster, you can track the first, last, and next dates of contact for your clients; keep complete records of those contacts; and quickly retrieve one or more client records by name, subject, date, and other parameters.



Quick-turn the page.



What you get from the printer will be in the same font you see on screen, thanks to the Windows screen font translator that Z-Soft has added to Publisher's Type Foundry 1.1.

your creations before printing them. Version 1.1 of *Publisher's Type*Foundry sells for \$495, and upgrades are free to registered users. The program requires DOS 2.00 or a later version, Windows 2.0 or later, 640K of memory, and a hard disk. Z-Soft Corp., 450 Franklin Rd. #100, Marietta, GA 30067; 404/428-0008.

Reader service no. 773

# pcANYWHERE III

Dynamic Microprocessor Associates has upgraded its pcANYWHERE III remote computing package with an automatic call-back feature. It lets a remote computer control another PC connected to it via modem or serial port and ensures security by having the host call back the remote PC to set up the link. The software also enables the user to control which party absorbs the phone charges. pcANYWHERE III has a built-in dial directory for making phone connections with a single keystroke and logs the length of a call on both sides of the connection. The same line handles data and voice. An automatic record and playback feature lets you trace a communications session back through every keystroke for diagnostics or training. The program works at speeds of up to 19,200 bps. pcANY-WHERE III retails for \$145 and requires DOS 2.00 or a later version. Dynamic Microprocessor Associates, 60 E. 42nd St. #1100, New York, NY 10165; 212/687-7115. Reader service no. 774

# Pro3D/PC version 1.1

Pro3D/PC, the 3-D presentation graphics program that gives you several different views of a single design, now lets you create transparent "wire frame" views of your graphics for faster renderings. Enabling Technologies claims that with this feature, version 1.1 of Pro3D/PC lets you build complex and detailed graphs three times faster than you could with version 1.0. The new version of the competent modeling program provides three other rendering options and printing enhancements that gain still more speed. Additionally, Pro3D/PC takes full advantage of the faster graphics interface, overlapped windows, and extended memory support in Windows/286 and Windows/386. You can create shaded graphics such as logos or product prototypes and rotate, resize, and light the images for presentation or analysis well beyond the capabilities of most draw or paint programs. Pro3D/PC images can be exported in 13 common file types; and, using popular data bases. 3-D images can be tagged with up to five fields of information for easier record keeping. Version 1.1. which ships with a runtime version of Windows/286, retails for \$495 and is free to registered users of version 1.0. It requires DOS 2.00, 640K of memory, and a hard disk. Enabling Technologies. Inc., 600 S. Dearborn St. #1304, Chicago, IL 60605; 312/427-0386.

Reader service no. 776

# **Draw Plus**

Draw Plus, Micrografx's new version of Draw, features a tool-kit menu appearing at the left side of the screen from which you can select from a baker's dozen of drawing primitives such as curves and other shapes. Other drawing aids include the ability to smooth a polyline or unsmooth a spline curve in your sketches. You now can rotate objects in increments as small as 1 degree, and select nonadjacent objects for manipulation. Draw Plus includes a cross-hair cursor (in addition to its pointer), various end-of-line styles such as arrowheads, and the ability to specify a wider-than-before range of page sizes and rulers. You also gain greater capability to manipulate graphics from other applications placed in the Windows clipboard as metafiles. You can choose from eight different predefined color palettes. Draw Plus ships with a run-time version of Windows/286 and requires DOS 3.00 or a later version, 640K of memory, and a hard disk. It retails for \$395; upgrades are available to registered users for \$99. Micrografx, 1820 N. Greenville Ave., Richardson, TX 75081; 800/272-3729, 214/234-1769. Reader service no. 777

For more information about any product, contact the manufacturer or circle the number on the reader service card.

Jennifer Beaver is a Los Angeles writer; Glenn Grant is a freelancer based in San Diego; Ronnie Gunnerson is a Los Angeles writer; and Mark Henricks is a PC World contributing editor.



# That's how much effort it takes to turn data into graphs with Graphwriter II.

Actually, it may take even less effort than that. You see, Lotus\* Graphwriter\* II is the only graphics software that lets you automatically generate large quantities of quality graphs based on current spreadsheet and database information. All with a single command.

Do you regularly need to create a variety of graphs from continually changing data such as daily inventory, monthly P&L or quarterly head count? With Graphwriter II you can create a direct link to data in your 1-2-3,\* Symphony,\* dBase\* or ASCII files. So whenever you update your data, you can automatically update your graphs with a single command. What's more, with one keystroke you can toggle back and forth between your data source and Graphwriter II to view and select the data to be graphed. No more printing out files and time-consuming rekeying.

Graphwriter II is a full-fledged production system. You can automatically output up to one hundred charts at a time with a single command. You can even print multiple charts on a page.

And Graphwriter II offers you 24 different graph types—more than any other PC graphics package. So you can choose the chart type that best represents your data.

What's more, you have control over hundreds of style settings such as type font, heading location, bar width and color.

So if you need to create and frequently update graphs from ever-changing data, you need Lotus Graphwriter II.

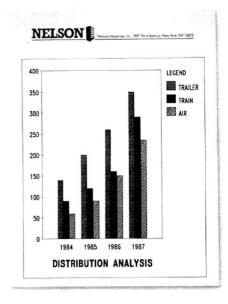
To get a free self-running Graphwriter II demonstration kit, call 1-800-345-1043 and ask for demo kit AEQ-2524, for 5.25" format, or demo kit AEQ-2664 for 3.5" format.\*

Then you can turn this page too.

Lotus Graphwriter II







# Looking good on this paper



# doesn't take a lot of this paper.

Star's new NX-2400 Multi-Font printer gives you the high resolution of 24-pin printing, so you can create compelling reports and letters. Attention-grabbing charts and graphs. And all kinds of distinctive print-outs. Without having a lot to pay out.

The NX-2400 is the latest member of the Star Signature Series. Its four built-in fonts and

over 20 typestyles give you all the ImagePower you need to

look your best.

The NX-2400 produces draft quality text at 170 characters per second. Letter quality at 57 cps. And it offers superb 360 x 360 dots per inch graphics resolution that surpasses most laser printers.

Among the many other built-in features are friction and tractor feeds. A push button control panel that puts a wide range of functions at your fingertips. And a paper parking mechanism that lets you feed single sheets

while keeping sprocket paper in place. So for high-resolution printing without the high price, take a look at Star's NX-2400 Multi-Font. For your nearest dealer, call 1-800-447-4700.



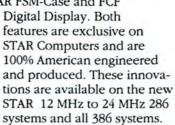




low price.

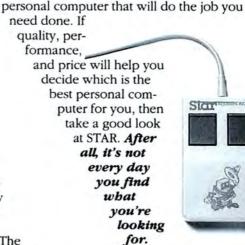
If a picture is worth a thousand words then seeing is unbelievable. After nearly a year of new design and research technology, STAR Industries introduces it's American made 286 & 386 based personal computers which

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# Surprise Values at 20 MHz

When it comes to balancing price and performance, PCs from the best-known companies don't always come out on top.

We play "run the gauntlet" with six 20-MHz 80386 PCs and discover some unexpected winners.



Eric Knorr

ho needs the power of a 20-MHz 80386 PC? Desktop publishers, developers, CAD users, and those looking for network servers demand high performance—but so do many business users. To get performance you can live with using multitasking environments like OS/2 and Windows/386, it's quite possible you won't be satisfied with anything less than 20-MHz speed.

The problem with any kind of multitasking, however, is that it requires a lot of RAM. And for the past year, RAM has ranged from expensive to unavailable.

This roundup of six 20-MHz 80386 systems pays special attention to memory issues. We can't tell you how much RAM will cost when you read this, but we *can* give you an idea of which memory upgrade schemes are best for you.

As usual, PC World also tells you which systems are the fastest. According to the results from application-based tests performed by National Software Testing Laboratories (NSTL), the machines in this roundup fall into two performance classes: Those PCs with memory caching—like the winning Everex Step 386/20—are significantly faster overall than those without.

This review also features the NSTL Crash Test, a rigorous set of compatibility benchmarks using 272 functions from 12 programs. While most machines passed this test with flying colors, one displayed a major compatibility problem.

For the purpose of head-to-head price comparisons, we've developed a standard *PC World* configuration that provides enough mass storage and graphics punch to match 20-MHz CPU power. Thus, the prices quoted in the reviews include 2MB RAM, an ESDI

hard disk (as close to 100MB as possible), a 1.2MB floppy drive, a VGA board and monitor (if available), one parallel and one serial port, and a 101-key keyboard. The selection of hard disks and the availability of VGA graphics vary from case to case; the exceptions to the standard configuration are noted.

For more information on shopping for high-performance PCs, see the "Buyers' Guide: 20-MHz 386 Systems" in this issue.

# Acer 1100/20

Healthy performance, a stiff price, and free on-site service distinguish the Acer 1100/20 from the average 20-MHz clone. Although the 1100/20 uses a memory interleaving scheme instead of memory caching, it beat IBM's PS/2 handily in the speed tests. It's a pretty fast ride, but not a free one. In the standard PC World configuration, the 1100/20 retails for \$8650, making it the most expensive unit in the roundup.

The 1100/20's memory options are a mixed bag. On the upside, the system comes with 2MB of 256-kilobit, 85-nanosecond (ns) RAM already installed on the motherboard (which has sockets for an additional 2MB). The downside is that the board designed for the system's sole high-speed 32-bit slot holds just 4MB; this can be raised to 8MB (but no more) with an optional daughterboard. (Upgrades come in 2MB increments; at press time they cost a reasonable \$1195 each.)

A 12MB maximum of 32-bit RAM might sound like a lot, but in fact, room for OS/2's limit of 16MB is desirable, especially if you plan to use the machine as a server or multiuser host. Acer plans to raise the 32-bit RAM ceiling to 16MB in early 1989 by introducing a 12MB board. However, this board will use Single In-line Memory Modules

The Everex Step
386/20's top
performance
and moderate
price place it
smack in the
middle of the
winner's circle.
Add server
bonus points
for a scalable
memory cache
and superior
expandability.



Although the Acer 1100/20 performs respectably, its price is the highest in the roundup.

(SIMMs), so you won't be able to cannibalize any of the chips on the existing board.

The AT-size 1100/20 system unit looks identical to its 16-MHz brother, the Acer 1100 (see "Beware the Cutting Edge," *PCW*, November 1987). A reset button still sits on the front panel and is a bit too easy to bump. The best feature of the casing is external access to three half-height drives. Install a 3½-inch floppy drive along with the essential 1.2MB floppy drive and tape backup, and you have a bridge between disk formats.

The 1100/20's externally accessible halfheight bays combined with an internal fullheight bay add up to ample device support.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## Acer 1100/20

20-MHz 80386 computer

High in price and midrange in performance, the Acer 1100/20 includes four months of on-site service in the selling price. The main shortcoming is a 12MB limit on 32-bit RAM, a drawback the company plans to rectify in early 1989.

180%	福	6000	Steller	1
Memory-bus capacity		_	•	_
Expandability			•	
Ergonomic design		•		
Performance			•	
Overall value			•	

In the review unit, the full-height bay held a fast 100MB ESDI Micropolis hard disk with a 23-millisecond (ms) average access time.

Expansion board capacity is typical of ATtype boxes that don't build graphics, disk controllers, and the like onto the motherboard. The ESDI controller and the 16-bit VGA fill two of the five 8/16-bit slots, while the two 8-bit slots are filled by the floppy controller and the serial/parallel board.

Like the Acer 1100, the 1100/20 enables you to select from among six clock speeds—from 20 MHz down to 4.77 MHz—using keyboard commands. The machine also offers a smart mode, which automatically slows the system to 8 MHz for floppy I/O (perfect if you often use older, copy-protected software).

Although the 1100/20's manual is clearer and more complete than the 1100's, and Windows/386 is now included with the system, configuring an Acer machine still is not a high-tech experience. A setup program in ROM improves little on the IBM AT's barebones routine, and a DIP switch block and several jumpers may require your attention during configuration.

After-sale support, however, is impressive. Acer provides a toll-free tech support line plus a one-year warranty on parts and labor, which includes four months of on-site service from TRW.

The 1100/20 distinguishes itself in another way—its lineage. Acer is a subsidiary of the Acer Group, an enormous Taiwanese conglomerate that's not likely to let its U.S. foothold slip. The 1100/20 isn't the fastest or most expandable 20-MHz PC around, but respectable performance, moderate price, and solid support make it a sensible choice.

# AT&T 6386 WGS

If you're hungry for fast, 32-bit RAM, AT&T's 6386 WGS (Work Group System) has it. Although this system's memory interleaving scheme yields mediocre performance for a 20-MHz unit, the 6386 WGS can hold a grand total of 48MB of 32-bit RAM on the motherboard—the largest such capacity we've encountered. Moreover, AT&T recently reduced its prices; the standard *PC World* configuration (except with an 80MB rather than a 100MB hard disk and EGA instead of

# FEATURES EVALUATION

# More 20-MHz Computing for the Money

The prices listed here are for ready-to-run systems, with high-end graphics and mass storage to match 20-MHz 80386 CPU power. All six PCs are considerably less expensive than comparable entries from IBM and Compag.

Yes	1100/20	WG2 6386	286/20	Fortron plus	BY 730	386-30 A
O No	3	5	32	6.3	8 3	88
0 149	0	8	1	0	3/	*
Standard features	1	1		£ /		2
Price 1	\$8650	\$7539 <sup>2</sup>	\$8292 3	\$5534 4	\$7995	\$5821 5
Coprocessor support	80387; Weitek 1167, 3167	80387	80387, Weitek 1167	80387	80387	80387
Disk caching software	•	•	•	•	•	0
Built into motherboard						
Parallel port	0	•	0	0	0	0
Serial port	0	•	0	0	0	0
Floppy disk controller	0	•	0	0	0	0
Mouse port	0	0	0	0	•	0
Memory-bus capacity <sup>6</sup>	12MB	48MB	16MB	10MB	16M3	10MB
expandability						
8/16-bit expansion slots/number free	5/3	2/1				
	-, -	2/1	6/5	6/4	6/4	6/4
8-bit expansion slots/number free	2/0	2/1	6/5 2/0 <sup>7</sup>	6/4	6/4	6/4
8-bit expansion slots/number free Half/full-height storage device bays <sup>8</sup>			7.5			
	2/0	2/1	2/07	1/0	2/1	1/0
Half/full-height storage device bays <sup>8</sup> 300MB or larger hard disk available from manufacturer	2/0	2/1 5/2	2/07	1/0 5/2	2/1 6/2	1/0
Half/full-height storage device bays <sup>8</sup> 300MB or larger hard disk available from manufacturer	2/0	2/1 5/2	2/07	1/0 5/2	2/1 6/2	1/0
Half/full-height storage device bays <sup>a</sup> 300MB or larger hard disk available from manufacturer irgonomic design	2/0 5/2	2/1 5/2	2/0 <sup>7</sup> 5/2	1/0 5/2	2/1 6/2	1/0 5/2
Half/full-height storage device bays <sup>8</sup> 300MB or larger hard disk available from manufacturer  (rgonomic design  Switchless setup	2/0 5/2	2/1 5/2	2/0 <sup>7</sup> 5/2	1/0 5/2 •	2/1 6/2	5/2
Half/full-height storage device bays <sup>8</sup> 300MB or larger hard disk available from manufacturer irgonomic design Switchless setup Compact footprint	2/0 5/2 •	2/1 5/2 •	2/0' 5/2 •	1/0 5/2 •	2/1 6/2 •	1/0 5/2 •
Half/full-height storage device bays <sup>8</sup> 300MB or larger hard disk available from manufacturer  irgonomic design  Switchless setup  Compact footprint  Complete documentation	2/0 5/2 •	2/1 5/2 •	2/0' 5/2 •	1/0 5/2 •	2/1 6/2	1/0 5/2 •

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The price listed is based on the standard PC World configuration for 20-MHz 80386 systems, which includes 2MB RAM, a 100MB ESDI hard disk, a 1.2MB floppy drive, a VGA board and monitor, one parallel and one serial port, and a 101-key keyboard. Not all machines were available in this configuration, and exceptions are noted.

VGA graphics) lists for a moderate \$7539.

Low prices for memory upgrades complement the monster RAM capacity. The 6386 WGS has three 32-bit slots; the basic configuration fills one of those slots with a board holding a 1MB SIMM populated with 100ns

256-kilobit chips. Adding another 1MB SIMM costs a mere \$549.

The 6386 WGS's standard memory board holds up to four 1MB SIMMs, yielding a system total of 12MB with all 32-bit slots filled. However, a recently released board can hold four 4MB SIMMs populated with 1-megabit chips, resulting in the humongous 48MB ca-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> With an 80MB ESDI hard disk and EGA graphics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> With a 160MB ESDI hard disk and EGA monitor.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>With a 150MB ESDI hard disk and EGA graphics.

<sup>5</sup> With a 90MB ESDI hard disk.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Includes motherboard memory and RAM installable in proprietary 32-bit slots accessed at full CPU speed.

<sup>7</sup> If no 32-bit memory board is present, you can use the single 32-bit slot as an 8-bit slot and still have room for 4MB on the motherboard.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> In most cases, two half-height bays can be converted to one full-height bay

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Monitor available through dealers only.



The AT&T 6386
WGS offers slick
setup and an
amazing 48MB
memory capacity but mediocre
performance.

pacity. With one 4MB module, the new board costs \$2999; additional 4MB SIMMs cost \$2899 each. The high-capacity boards are available now, and although you can't mix 1MB and 4MB SIMMs on the same board, you can install both standard and large-capacity boards in the same machine.

Liberal RAM options aside, the 6386 WGS displays more inventiveness than the average AT-style 80386 box. To begin with, the footprint is a bit smaller than that of the IBM AT. And like its PS/2 competitors, one parallel and one serial port are built into the motherboard, as is the floppy controller.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# **AT&T 6386 WGS**

20-MHz 80386 computer

The 6386 WGS supports up to 48MB of 32-bit RAM, the largest amount of any machine tested. Software-based configuration eases setup, but you can find better-performing systems for a lower price.

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	14 60/	

You'll find the power switch, a reset button, and a speaker volume control conveniently located on the front panel. When you open up the system (by loosening two screws), you'll discover that the motherboard has been flipped; to get at it you remove a panel on the bottom of the machine. This allows complete access to the motherboard without removing drives or ribbon cables.

One of the machine's two 8/16-bit slots is filled with the ESDI controller, while one of the two 8-bit slots holds the video board. Even taking into account the built-in features, this is less expansion board capacity than most AT-class machines offer.

Device capacity, however, is fully up to snuff. Like the Acer 1100/20, the 6386 WGS provides three externally accessible half-height bays, plus an internal full-height bay. The review unit's full-height 20ms ESDI hard disk was mounted in a protective metal cage that made access difficult.

The setup program is one of the few that rival the PS/2's elegant Reference Diskette software. System configuration is completely software-driven, and as with the Acer 1100/20, you can instruct the machine to slow to 8 MHz for floppy access only. In addition, the first-rate diagnostics enable you to individually test system components using a simple menu-driven routine.

Unfortunately, the NSTL Crash Test indicated that the 6386 WGS's BIOS could stand another revision. Although *Windows/386* is bundled with the machine, the Crash Test revealed that when you close a *Windows/386* window containing *PFS: Professional Write 1.0*, the 6386 WGS bounces you back to the DOS prompt. At press time, AT&T was looking into the problem.

With its competitive price and inexpensive RAM, the 6386 WGS could be a first choice for users who need all the RAM they can get—such as those setting up their machines as multiuser hosts. The painless setup and configuration are also a boon for the nontechnical. This is a classy machine, but others in the roundup, including the Acer 1100/20, deliver better performance.

# Everex Step 386/20

The Everex Step 386/20 is the fastest 20-MHz machine *PC World* has ever tested. Its speed, large memory cache, and jumbo expansion capacity make it an excellent server. At \$8292 in the *PC World* configuration (but with a 160MB instead of a 100MB ESDI hard disk and an EGA rather than a VGA monitor), the Step 386/20 is priced a bit higher than the average system in this roundup, but you won't be wasting your money.

While most PCs with memory caching use Intel's 82385 cache controller to manage 32K of 35ns RAM, the Step 386/20 employs its own cache architecture and algorithm. More important, cache size begins at twice that of most others and is expandable in proportion to the number of SIMMs installed.

The Step 386/20's large memory cache promises special advantages in a multiuser environment. Many experts claim that a small cache gets clogged when a system is flooded with simultaneous terminal requests; the larger the cache, the smaller the chance it will become a bottleneck.

Far more controversial is whether multitasking will benefit from a large cache. Current test data is inconclusive, but it's possible that cache size was a factor in the Step 386/20's victory over six other 20-MHz PCs in NSTL's OS/2 tests (see "Is Your PC Ready for OS/2?" PCW, October 1988).

The SIMMs for the Step 386/20 hold either 256K in 256-kilobit chips or 1MB in 1-megabit chips. With four SIMMs installed—which results in either a 1MB (\$4599) or a 4MB (\$7699) system, depending on the chip type—the cache size stands at the minimum 64K. Ramp up to eight SIMMs, and you get 2MB or 8MB (for \$5199 or \$11,099, respectively) and a 128K cache. Beyond this, you must install a 32-bit memory board with its own 128K of cache RAM and eight more SIMMs, for a system total of either 2MB (\$6698) or 16MB (\$19,598).

Depending on the upgrade, the cost per megabyte is a reasonable \$600 to \$800, static RAM included. The only fly in the ointment is that you can't mix 256K SIMMs with 1MB SIMMs, and few Everex dealers are likely to let you trade in your 256K SIMMs. So if you plan to run memory-intensive applications, start with 1MB SIMMs.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# Everex Step 386/20

20-MHz 80386 computer



The Everex Step 386/20 sits at the head of the 20-MHz class, offering an ingenious variablesize memory cache that yields top performance for any application. LED diagnostics and

large expansion capacity add luster to the

package.	200	福	6000	Stelle	1
Memory-bus capacity					•
Expandability					•
Ergonomic design	- 5			•	
Performance					•
Overall value					•

The Step 386/20's originality doesn't stop with the motherboard. Behind a sliding plastic door on the machine's front panel you'll find a reset button, a speaker on/off switch, a three-position clock-speed switch, and an eight-character LED readout.

The clock switch offers a choice of 20-MHz and 7-MHz speeds plus a middle position labeled 10 MHz; when you boot at this setting you're able to switch among all three speeds from the keyboard. Oddly, if you boot at either the 20-MHz or 7-MHz positions, the 10-MHz setting is disabled.

The LED display tracks the power-on tests of RAM, processor, and peripherals. Error messages alert you to any problems, a particularly useful feature if your machine bombs out before the video comes up. It also helps tech support solve your problems.

Like many AT-size boxes, the Step 386/20 can hold five half-height devices. However, its bays are all externally accessible, making its support for floppy drives and tape backups as extensive as that of many towers. The slot count is also high; of the six 8/16-bit slots, one holds the ESDI controller, one holds the floppy controller, and the rest are free. The 32-bit slot doubles as an 8-bit slot when unoccupied by a memory board, yielding a total of

The cheapest system in the roundup, the rough-cut Fortron 80386-20 offers impressive speed—along with some clonelike irregularities.

two 8-bit slots, one filled by the video board and the other by the serial/parallel board. You can move one of these boards to an 8/16-bit slot if you want to use the 32-bit slot to add memory.

Taking advantage of this generous expandability can mean tight quarters. All the slots are full length, but as the manual warns, thick, full-length boards could graze a SIMM and cause a short. Another difficulty involves the coprocessor. You can install either a 20-MHz 80387 or a Weitek 1167, but you better have your dealer do it; welded-on drive cages overhang the socket, so access requires removing the motherboard.

The ROM-based setup routine for the Step 386/20 is unimpressive. Press < Delete > as the machine boots, and you get a generic-looking list of peripherals on screen. To set the graphics, you need to flip a switch on the

## NSTL BENCHMARK TESTING

The exclusive test facility for PC World, National Software Testing Laboratories (NSTL), is an independent organization that specializes in evaluating personal computer hardware and software. A recognized pioneer in state-of-the-art test design. NSTL believes that the most useful benchmark tests measure how well products perform when executing typical business tasks. NSTL testers follow detailed test plans that simulate normal operating conditions. A controlled testing methodology ensures objective, accurate, and consistent results and gives consumers a sound basis for making purchase decisions. NSTL publishes its test results in Software Digest Ratings Report® and PC Digest." Neither publication accepts advertising. NSTL is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

motherboard; configuring the coprocessor involves moving a jumper. Both RAM disk and disk caching utilities are included.

Whether you use it as a server or as a powerhouse workstation, you're unlikely to find a faster 20-MHz PC than the Step. What's more, the unit received a clean bill of health on the NSTL Crash Test. Its few clonelike rough edges are more than made up for by extras like the front-panel LED display, inexpensive memory upgrades, and plenty of room for boards and drives. The Step 386/20 is clearly the best 20-MHz PC for the money in this roundup.

# Fortron 80386-20 Plus

Best known for its power supplies, Fortron is a relatively new system vendor—and an aggressive one. Its new Fortron 80386-20 Plus is a budget-priced clone with a memory caching architecture that tied for second place in the speed tests. Board and device support are above average, memory upgrades are the cheapest in the roundup, and software compatibility is good enough to withstand the NSTL Crash Test.

What's more, the *PC World* configuration (with a 150MB instead of a 100MB ESDI hard disk and EGA rather than VGA graphics) is dirt cheap at \$5534—which, incredibly, includes a year's on-site service.

Unfortunately, Fortron's quality control also seems to be low budget. The first unit we received had a defective ESDI drive that actually performed worse than a standard AT drive, a fact that Fortron's own subsequent tests confirmed. Fortron replaced the drive and performance revived.

The 80386-20 Plus uses an American Megatrends motherboard, the same one found in the Proteus Model 386-20, also reviewed here. You can't vary the size of the cache on the American Megatrends motherboard, as you can with the Everex Step 386/20, and there's no Intel 82385 cache controller. This is budget memory caching, and the numbers clearly show that the more expensive Compaq and Everex schemes provide faster memory access.

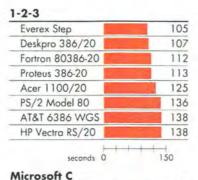
Aside from the 64K cache of 25ns static RAM, all system memory goes on a board that fits in a special 32-bit slot. The board

# NSTL TEST REPORT

# 20-MHz 80386 Systems

The three fastest systems—the Everex Step 386/20, Proteus Model 386-20, and Fortron 80386-20—all use high-performance memory caching. However, only the top-rated Step 386/20 beat the standard-setting Deskpro 386/20. The Acer 1100/20 held a clear lead among the machines that do not employ memory caching and even outperformed the PS/2 Model 80-111.

## Microsoft Word Everex Step 60 Deskpro 386/20 61 Proteus 386-20 64 Fortron 80386-20 65 Acer 1100/20 72 AT&T 6386 WGS 80 PS/2 Model 80 80 HP Vectra RS/20 84 seconds 0 100



AutoCAD	
Deskpro 386/20	52
Fortron 80386-20	56
Proteus 386-20	56
Everex Step	57
AT&T 6386 WGS	63
Acer 1100/20	64
HP Vectra RS/20	64
PS/2 Model 80	64

dBASE III Plus	
Everex Step	57
Deskpro 386/20	63
Fortron 80386-20	65
Proteus 386-20	65
Acer 1100/20	68
PS/2 Model 80	69
AT&T 6386 WGS	74
HP Vectra RS/20	82

	1 1 1	-2-6 F
	seconds 0	100
and had a 10 was tested with a 10 disk. The of RAM and 1 80386-20 plu 117MB hard tested with 3/	00/20 was tested with 16MB hard disk. The A tith 4MB of RAM and I e Everex Step was tested and an 89MB hard disk. The HP Vectra R MB of RAM and had a seem 4MB of RAM and had	T&T 6386 WGS had an 80MB ted with 1.6MB isk. The Fortron RAM and had a RS/20 was a 103MB hard

# Microsoft Word 4.0

A Microsoft Word macro loads a 35-page, 140paragraph document and performs search-and-replace and spell-checking operations. The first page of the document is then printed. Although the results of the benchmark depend primarily on processor and memory access speeds, display adapter and hard disk speeds are also contributing factors.

2MB of RAM and had an 89MB hard disk.

Everex Step	232
Deskpro 386/20	249
Proteus 386-20	254
Fortron 80386-20	261
Acer 1100/20	277
AT&T 6386 WGS	309
PS/2 Model 80	312
HP Vectra RS/20	320
seconds 0	350
3000103	000

## dBASE III Plus 1.1

The dBASE III Plus test measures the time required to prepare and print a report of past-due invoices The report includes calculated fields and is based on three files: a 500-record customer file, a 1000record invoice file, and a 2000-record item file When disk caching is not used, the random access speed of the hard disk is, after processor speed, the most significant factor in this benchmark. With disk caching, sequential read performance becomes more important than random access.

## 1-2-3 2.01

In this benchmark, a 1-2-3 macro executes a series of recalculations using five different formulas within a 75-by-75-cell matrix. Because there are few screen updates and no disk access is required, the results depend almost entirely on processing and memory access speeds

## Microsoft C 5.0

The Microsoft C benchmark measures the time required to compile and link XLISP, a publicdomain program composed of 25 C source code files. The most important factors in this benchmark are processor and memory access speeds. The performance of the hard disk is also a factor; generally, disk caching has little effect.

## AutoCAD 9

In this benchmark, a three-dimensional sample drawing is retrieved and displayed using CAD's EGA driver. The zoom function is used to display the drawing from various perspectives; then the full drawing is printed. The results of the benchmark depend primarily on the speeds at which the processor and coprocessor operate and at which memory is accessed. The performance of the display adapter and the hard disk also have some effect

Data based on tests designed and conducted by National Software Testing Laboratories (NSTL). All rights reserved.



The nearly indestructible tower chassis of the HP Vectra RS/20 is the machine's greatest asset.

holds up to 2MB of 32-bit RAM in 256-kilobit chips, but an optional daughterboard raises system capacity to a fair-to-middling 10MB—the same as the Acer 1100/20. The daughterboard uses 1-megabit chips and can be populated with either 4MB (for \$1200) or 8MB (for \$2400). You can even leave the basic memory board empty or half empty and still use the daughterboard, giving you a wide choice of memory configurations.

Aside from a front-mounted reset button, the exterior of the 80386-20 Plus is so generic you expect to find a universal price code on the backplane. The footprint is standard AT size, and only two half-height devices are externally accessible.

The box has the usual mix of space for one full-height device and three half-height units. The slot count is nearly as generous as the Step 386/20's, with six 8/16-bit slots and one 8-bit slot. (The 32-bit slot is designed to double as an 8-bit slot, but that would leave no 32-bit RAM in your system.)

Two loose ends put the 80386-20 Plus squarely in the no-name-clone camp. First and most important is that the keyboard socket has no visible means of support other than its pins, which are soldered into the motherboard. This means that these connections—as well as the motherboard itself—withstand the full force of plugging and unplugging the keyboard. In the case of the 80386-20 Plus, the corner of the motherboard where the keyboard socket resides isn't even

anchored properly, which could result in serious motherboard damage.

The second problem is radio frequency emissions. The 80386-20 Plus has an FCC rating of Class A, instead of the more restrictive Class B. Class A machines are approved for business use but not for homes, because the high level of emissions can interfere with TV reception—even on the TV next door.

Other clone trappings prevail. The 80386-20 Plus's generic, unfriendly system setup software is nearly identical to that of the Everex Step 386/20. You also need to set jumpers to install a math coprocessor (80287 as well as 80387 support is provided) and set DIP switches to change the default memory configuration. Furthermore, novice users will find the documentation woefully obscure, and no disk caching software is provided.

The one bright spot in system software is the American Megatrends ROM-based diagnostics. While some tests are on the technical side, the suite is quite complete, from a hard disk media test to a character attribute test of the video board. Only the AT&T 6386 WGS's diagnostics are easier to use, and those are on disk rather than conveniently placed in ROM. And you have the year's free on-site support to back you up.

The real story here is about American Megatrends. The motherboard design en-

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# Fortron 80386-20 Plus

20-MHz 80386 computer

The cheapest PC in the roundup, the 80386-20 Plus provides zippy performance, memory caching, and a year's free on-site service. Its 32-bit RAM is limited to 10MB, however, and some

rough edges remind you that this is a

lowball clone.	1	1,	(BI)
Memory-bus capacity			
Expandability			
Ergonomic design		•	
Performance			
Overall value		•	

3 1 8 8

ables the 80386-20 Plus to beat all the non-caching systems handily while keeping costs down and memory expansion flexible. Fortron, on the other hand, seems to be from the slap-it-together school. The Fortron 80386-20's price is eye-popping and the system's performance is very good, but without the year's free on-site service we wouldn't be able to recommend it. As it stands, it's a good buy for technically competent users willing to check a machine thoroughly at the outset.

# Hewlett-Packard Vectra RS/20

Tower PCs offer two basic advantages over desktop units: greater expansion capacity and an under-the-desk footprint. The Vectra RS/20 delivers on both counts, but its performance is the slowest in the roundup, and it's one of the more expensive units reviewed. In the standard *PC World* configuration the machine costs \$7995.

The most unusual feature of the Vectra RS/20 is a removable CPU board at the bottom of the tower. A cage on the board, designed to curb RF emissions, holds the CPU, a socket for a 20-MHz 80387 math coprocessor, and several support chips. Slipping the board in and out is a snap, raising the possibility of future CPU upgrades.

All system memory, in the form of either 256K or 1MB SIMMs, fits on the CPU board. The RS/20 holds a maximum of 16MB of 32-bit RAM, but getting there is more expensive than with the other systems in the roundup, and the configurations are none too flexible. The 256K SIMMs come in bundles of four, or 1MB, for \$649; to go beyond the 4MB limit on the 256K SIMMs you must buy eight 1MB SIMMs for a whopping total of \$7995. And, of course, you can't mix SIMMs of different densities.

The RS/20's tower chassis is built like a tank. Weighing in at over 60 pounds, the unit is the most durable tower we've encountered, including the PS/2 Model 80. Once you pull off the key-locked outer cover, you must remove a sheet-metal plate to access the machine's interior. In addition to adding

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# Hewlett-Packard Vectra RS/20

20-MHz 80386 computer

The Vectra RS/20 might not wow anyone with its speed, but room for a full 16MB of 32-bit RAM, a 60-pound tower chassis, and support for two full-height drives could make the machine a de-

cent server.	34 14	6000	SEE	1
Memory-bus capacity	1		1	•
Expandability			•	
Ergonomic design			•	
Performance		•		
Overall value			•	

strength, the plate also helps ensure the unit's FCC Class B rating.

The capacity of this monolith is somewhat disappointing. It can hold two half-height and two full-height devices, the usual accommodations for a tower. And with six 8/16-bit slots (two filled) and two 8-bit slots (one filled), the board capacity is no more than that of most desktop ATs.

The only integrated feature is a Human Interface Link (HIL) port for special HP devices, such as mice, digitizing pads, touch screens, and the like. Two special 32-bit slots are built into the motherboard, but no options are currently available to fill them.

The RS/20 had one small compatibility problem. Befuddled by the copy protection scheme, the system wouldn't load 1-2-3 release 2 without shifting to 8 MHz, the CPU's only alternate clock rate.

Unlike most systems, the RS/20 also offers a switchable expansion bus, which runs at either 8 MHz or 10 MHz. Fortunately, to maintain compatibility with expansion boards, the default speed is 8 MHz; HP recommends that you use the 10 MHz setting with caution.

Although the operating system is sold separately, HP Vectra DOS offers more extras than any other system software in the roundup. You get the Personal Applications Manager (a DOS shell and file manager) along with a complicated utility for using extended



Basically the same machine as the Fortron 80386-20, the Proteus Model 386-20 has a more polished act.

character sets on HP printers. However, the documentation for this software is so extensive and labored that many users may not want to make the effort.

The setup utility for the RS/20 is similar to that for the AT&T 6386 WGS, but unlike with the AT&T unit you may have to set DIP switches for some configuration tasks. If possible, do it yourself; HP charges \$45 per problem solved.

What you pay for when you get an RS/20 is support for a full 16MB of RAM; namebrand reputability; and a bulletproof, reasonably expandable tower chassis. The HP's performance is not particularly good for a 20-MHz unit, however, and the RAM upgrade scheme may make you pay for more memory than you need. There are better machines for the money.

# Proteus Model 386-20

The Proteus Model 386-20 is essentially the same machine as the Fortron 80386-20 Plus. It has the same American Megatrends motherboard (down to the revision letter), and NSTL's 1-2-3 tests returned virtually identical results. The main difference was that the Proteus unit offered slightly better construction, and we encountered no reliability problems.

Sharp-eyed shoppers will also notice a difference in price. In a configuration identical to that of the Fortron unit, the Proteus costs about \$300 more than the 80386-20 Plus. (This is partly offset by Proteus's free onsite service, which lasts for 15 months—three months longer than Fortron's, or anyone else's for that matter.) In the standard *PC World* configuration but with a 90MB ESDI hard disk, the system costs \$5821.

Identical motherboards mean identical slot counts (six 8/16-bit slots and one 8-bit slot), coprocessor support, and capacity for a passable 10MB of 32-bit RAM. Memory upgrade increments are also the same, but prices are slightly higher.

Like the 80386-20 Plus, the Proteus rates an FCC Class A, which means it's unsuitable for home use. Another 80386-20 Plus failing shared by the Proteus is an unreinforced keyboard socket. However, the corner of the motherboard where the socket sits is properly attached, so damage to the motherboard is less likely than with the Fortron.

The Proteus has a couple of other small advantages going for it. Although the chassis has the 80386-20 Plus's room for one full-height and three half-height devices, the Proteus makes three half-height bays rather than two externally accessible. In addition, the Proteus offers a turbo switch and indicator light next to a front-mounted reset button. Too bad the switch doesn't work, although the indicator light does go out when you backpedal to 6 MHz using a keyboard command.

Proteus plans to remedy the turbo-switch problem by refitting the Model 386-20 with a new chassis, which will include an LED readout similar to that of the Everex Step 386/20. Hopefully, the company will also revise its sketchy documentation. In the meantime, the Proteus enjoys the same first-rate, ROM-based diagnostics as the 80386-20 Plus.

A choice between the Proteus and the 80386-20 Plus is close to a toss-up. Judging by the more secure motherboard and three more months of on-site service, the \$300 extra for the Proteus may add up to a bit more peace of mind. When you get down to it, though, both systems are good clone values, and both offer better price/performance than machines lacking memory caching. As always, the only lingering question is whether

these little-known companies will be around to make good on their excellent service agreements.

## **Head of the Class**

It's easy to spot the top machine in this roundup. With excellent expansion capability, an ingenious approach to memory upgrades, and better benchmark times than even the Compaq Deskpro 386/20, the Everex Step 386/20 is one of the best high-performance PCs you can get for any application.

Tied for second place are the Fortron 80386-20 Plus and the Proteus Model 386-20. Although they're slower than the Deskpro 386/20, these machines are among the first to offer memory-cache performance at budget prices. Both also have excellent service agreements. With 10MB ceilings on 32-bit RAM and fixed 64K caches, however, these units are recommended as workstations rather than multiuser hosts. Also remember that both machines are recommended for technically knowledgeable people who are willing to forgo good documentation and risk their fortunes with a no-name vendor.

For less ambitious users, the superior documentation and quality control offered by larger companies is more appropriate. The Acer 1100/20, the AT&T 6386 WGS, and the HP Vectra RS/20 all inspire more confidence, even though their service agreements aren't as comprehensive.

Provided Acer fulfills promised support for 16MB of 32-bit RAM, the 1100/20 stands (next to the Everex Step 386/20) as the second-best server or multiuser host in the roundup. It costs (in *PC World* configuration) between \$600 and \$1000 more than the AT&T 6386 WGS or the HP Vectra RS/20, but the 1100/20 beats both the AT&T and the HP units by about 10 percent in the speed tests.

For the small minority of users who envision enormously RAM-intensive, multiuser applications, the 6386 WGS, with its support for 48MB of 32-bit RAM, may be the only choice. The 6386 WGS is also by far the easiest machine to configure. The Vectra RS/20's principal attraction is an indestructible chassis and a server-like tower configuration. However, the RS/20 is also the slowest machine in the roundup.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## Proteus Model 386-20

20-MHz 80386 computer

For \$300 more than the Fortron 80386-20 Plus, you get basically the same high-performance machine in the Proteus. But the free on-site service lasts longer than

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Not every system can be a winner, but users can be. The prices of memory upgrades for several of the machines dropped as this article was being written, an early indication that the memory drought may be easing. The 20-MHz 80386 PC's performance makes multitasking and other high-end applications feasible; if we're lucky, chip prices will fall to the point where such RAM-intensive computing is also affordable.

Eric Knorr is a senior editor for PC World.

# WHERE TO BUY

## Acer 1100/20

Acer Technologies Corp. 401 Charcot Ave. San Jose, CA 95131 408/922-0333

List price: Model 70 with 2MB RAM, 1.2MB floppy drive, 70MB hard disk, one parallel and two serial ports, 101-key keyboard, mouse, MS-DOS and GW BASIC 3.30 \$6695; Model 100 with 100MB ESDI hard disk \$7495; Model 135 with 135MB ESDI hard disk \$7995; Model 340 with 340MB ESDI hard disk \$7995

# Accessories: 2MB

RAM in 256-kilobit chips \$1195; unpopulated 32bit memory board with 4MB capacity \$720; unpopulated 32-bit daughterboard with 4MB capacity \$99; 20-MHz 80387 math coprocessor \$1095; VGA color monitor \$655, VGA monochrome monitor \$225, VGA graphics board \$500

Warranty: one year parts and labor including four months on-site service from TRW; remainder of service via authorized dealerships

## Extended warran-

ty: \$225 per year for parts and labor, fiveday turnaround; \$285 for two-day turnaround Technical support: unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M—F 7:30—6

Other support services: tech support through CompuServe For more information, circle 860 on reader service card.

## **AT&T 6386 WGS**

AT&T 4513 Western Ave. Lisle, IL 60532 312/971-6000

List price: Model 373 with 1MB RAM, 80MB ESDI hard disk, 1.2MB floppy drive, one serial and one parallel port, 101-key keyboard \$5995; Model 374 with 135MB ESDI hard disk \$6895

Accessories: 32-bit 1MB SIMM \$549; 32-bit 4MB memory board \$2999: 32-bit 4MB SIMM \$2899; 300MB ESDI hard disk \$11,395; EGA monitor \$745, EGA graphics board \$250; 40MB tape backup \$995, 60MB tape backup \$1495, 125MB tape backup \$1795; intelligent I/O board with eight serial and two parallel ports \$1195; mouse \$150; DOS 3.30 \$120 Warranty: one year parts and labor

**Extended warran-**

ty: on-site service available through AT&T (cost depends on configuration)

Technical support: unlimited phone support, toll-free number, 24hour hot line

Other support services: BBS For more information, circle 861 on reader service card.

Everex Step 386/20

Everex Computer Systems Division 48431 Milmont Dr. Fremont, CA 94538 800/356-4283

List price: with 1MB RAM (plus 64K cache), 1.2MB floppy drive, one parallel and one serial port, 101-key keyboard, DOS 3.30 \$4599; with 2MB (plus 128K cache) \$5199; with 4MB (plus 64K cache) \$7699; with 2MB (plus 256K cache) \$6698; with 8MB (plus 128K cache) \$11,099; with 16MB (plus 256K cache) \$19,598

Accessories: 40MB hard disk \$600, 80MB hard disk \$795, 160MB hard disk \$1995, 160MB ESDI hard disk \$2295, 330MB ESDI hard disk \$3495; VGA board \$399, EGA monitor \$399, EGA board \$160; 20-MHz 80387 math coprocessor \$995; Weitek 1167 math coprocessor \$1895

Warranty: one year parts and labor

Extended warran-

ty: on-site service available, cost depends on dealer

**Technical support:** unlimited phone support, no toll-free number, M-F 8-5

Other support services: BBS For more information, circle 863 on reader service card. Fortron 80386-20 Plus

Fortron Corp. 2380 Qume Dr., Ste. E/F San Jose, CA 95131 800/821-9771, 408/432-1191

List price: with 1MB RAM, 1.2MB floppy drive, one parallel and two serial ports, 101-key keyboard \$2800; with 1MB RAM, 40MB hard disk, monochrome board and monitor, 1.2MB floppy drive, one parallel and two serial ports, 101-key keyboard \$3400; with 1MB RAM, 40MB hard disk, EGA board and monitor, 1.2MB floppy drive, one parallel and two serial ports, 101-key keyboard \$3780

Accessories: 1MB RAM upgrade \$400; 4MB daughterboard \$1200; 4MB upgrade for daughterboard \$1200; 28ms 40MB hard disk

\$495, 28ms 80MB hard disk \$760, 18ms 150MB ESDI hard disk \$1790, 18ms 300MB SCSI hard disk \$2350; EGA monitor \$385, EGA board \$159; 20-MHz 80387 math coprocessor \$690; 1.44MB floppy drive \$129; 60MB internal tape backup \$595; board with one parallel and one serial port \$75; DOS and BASIC 3.30

Warranty: one year on-site service from PC ServNet

Extended warranty: continuing on-site service available through ServNet (cost depends on configuration)

**Technical support:** unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M-F 8-5

Other support services: none For more information, circle 864 on reader service card. **HP Vectra RS/20** Hewlett-Packard

**Business Computing** Systems 19091 Pruneridge Ave. Cupertino, CA 95014 800/752-0900

List price: Model 40

with 1MB RAM, 40MB hard disk, 1.2MB floppy drive, one serial and one parallel port, mouse port, 101-key keyboard \$6595: Model 100 with 2MB RAM, 103MB ESDI hard disk, 1.2MB floppy drive, one serial and one parallel port, mouse port, 101-key keyboard \$7595; Model 106 with 2MB RAM, 103MB ESDI hard disk, VGA board and monitor, 1.2MB floppy drive, one serial and one parallel port, mouse port, 101-key keyboard \$7995; Model 150 with

2MB RAM, 155MB ESDI hard disk, 1.2MB floppy drive, one serial and one parallel port, mouse port, 101-key keyboard \$8195; Model 300 with 2MB RAM, 310MB ESDI hard disk, 1.2MB floppy drive, one serial and one parallel port, mouse port, 101-key keyboard \$10,495; Power User PC with 4MB RAM, 20-MHz 80387 math coprocessor, 103MB ESDI hard disk, 512K VGA board and monitor, 1.2MB floppy drive, 1.44MB floppy drive, 40MB tape backup, one parallel and three serial ports, mouse port, mouse, 101key keyboard, HP Vectra DOS 3.30 \$13,795 Accessories: 1MB memory expansion kit \$649, 8MB memory expansion kit \$7995; VGA graphics board \$445 (with 512K \$595), VGA color monitor \$695, VGA monochrome monitor \$250; 1.44MB floppy drive \$325; 20-MHz 80387 math coprocessor \$1195; I/O board \$150; HP Vectra DOS

\$120, Vectra BASIC \$89 Warranty: one year parts and labor; \$45 per problem solved (by phone or on site) **Extended warran-**

ty: \$45 per month for parts and labor after one-year warranty expires

**Technical support:** toll-free phone support (M-F 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m.) only with extended warranty

Other support services: none For more information, circle 865 on reader service card.

## **Proteus Model** 386-20 Proteus Technology

Corp.

\$6702

377 Rte. 17, Airport 17 Center Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604 201/288-8629 List price: with 1MB RAM, 40MB hard disk, 1.2MB floppy drive, VGA board and monitor, one parallel and two serial ports, 101-key keyboard \$4155; with 80MB hard disk \$4326; with 90MB ESDI hard disk \$5255: with 150MB ESDI hard disk \$5684; with 330MB ESDI hard disk

Accessories: 1MB memory upgrade \$566, unpopulated daughterboard \$189, 4MB upgrade for daughterboard \$1548; 40MB 28ms hard disk \$507, 80MB 28ms hard disk \$721, 100MB 18ms hard disk \$1169; 150MB 13ms ESDI hard disk \$2064, 330MB 13ms ESDI hard disk \$3229; VGA monitor \$475, VGA board \$259, EGA monitor \$399, EGA board \$129; 1.44MB floppy drive \$121; 20-MHz 80387 coprocessor \$543; 60MB internal tape backup \$895; DOS and BASIC 3.30 \$79

Warranty: 15 months on-site service if within a 100-mile radius of a city with a population of 25,000 or more

Extended warran-

ty: additional 9 months on-site service \$245, 12 months on-site service \$345

**Technical support:** unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M-F 9-5

Other support services: bulletin board tech support For more information, circle 866 on reader service card.



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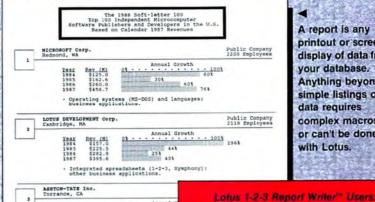
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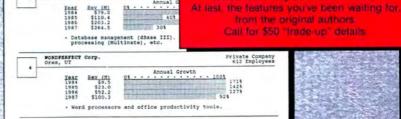
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A Lotus database is a range or an entire worksheet having field names in the first row and records of data in rows below.



A report is any printout or screen display of data from your database. Anything beyond simple listings of data requires complex macros, or can't be done with Lotus.



A report writer is a tool that lets you specify what data to select, what additional calculations to perform, where to place everything, and exactly how it should look.

# Laptops With Storage to Spare

You don't have to give up desktop performance when you hit the road.

> PC World picks the best of seven full-featured, battery-powered hard disk laptops.

nce you become accustomed to fast, powerful desktop PCs, going on the road for even the shortest business trip can produce acute withdrawal symptoms. While a floppydrive laptop with a hard-to-read LCD screen is better than nothing, many business users consider those machines little more than instruments of exquisite torture.

Help seems to be at hand. Over the last 18 months or so, several companies have introduced shockproof hard drives small enough and light enough to fit in a laptop. The bad news is that these hard disks eat battery power fast and can be woefully slow. The good news is that laptops are starting to offer RAM expansion up to 4MB and beyond, which allows users to create RAM disks large enough to ameliorate the slow disk problem. A few 80286-based laptops are making their debut as well-some with new, high-speed, low-power hard disks. With 2400-bps internal modems, easy-to-read backlit displays, and CPU speeds in the 10-MHz range also becoming more common, business users can finally buy laptops that combine portability with serious computing power-if they buy carefully.

To help you choose, *PC World* looks at seven of the most popular hard disk laptops: the Data General/One 2T, the Epson Equity LT, the Grid Gridlite Plus, the Hewlett-Packard Portable Vectra CS Model 20, the Sharp PC-4521, the Toshiba T1200H, and the Zenith SupersPort 286 Model 20. Three machines are outstanding values: Zenith's SupersPort 286, Epson's Equity LT, and Toshiba's T1200H.

For this roundup, we set up the machines (with a few exceptions) in a standard *PC* World laptop configuration: at least 640K of RAM, a 20MB hard disk, a built-in 3½-inch floppy drive, an internal modem, a backlit LCD display (CGA compatible, with minimum resolution of 640 by 200), support for an external CGA monitor, at least one serial and one parallel port, a carrying case, and DOS. All the laptops except one featured automatic head parking.

Since weight is a major issue for laptop users, all laptops were weighed in traveling mode—with battery, charger/power supply, modem, and carrying case. Traveling

John Diebold weights ranged from 14 to 25 pounds; 18 pounds was average.

Battery life was tested in two modes: normal, with the hard drive, backlighting, and modem on; and power saving, with hard drive and modem turned off (if possible). While backlighting uses power too, turning it off entirely makes the screen almost impossible to read, so power-saving tests were made with backlighting dimmed but still readable. The shortest battery life was slightly under 2 hours; the longest, nearly 7. Under "normal" use, 2 hours was about average. Finally, one problem worth noting is that with the exception of the HP Vectra, software compatibility was not too hot. All but one laptop failed the National Software Testing Laboratories (NSTL) Crash Test for Microsoft Windows, and several other software problems were found as well. To make sure you don't get stung, always try essential software before you buy.

# Data General/One 2T

The guiding philosophy behind the \$3939 Data General 2T seems to be "less is more." Although it's fairly inexpensive, it is one of the slowest machines in the roundup, with the shortest battery life. Moreover, you get only 512K of RAM, and there's no external control for adjusting the display's brightness or contrast.

The 2T weighs in at a bit over 18 pounds, but its 12-by-15-by-3-inch frame is a tad on the large side. A 4.77/7.16-MHz zero-wait-state 80C88 CPU runs the show, and the machine can handle a 7.16-MHz 8087 math coprocessor. The 2T packs 512K of 150ns RAM out of the box, making it the only machine in the roundup with less than 640K. Memory is upgradable to 2.5MB on the motherboard, but the next increment over 512K is 768K, which means you may end up paying for more RAM than you want. A 720K floppy drive is mounted on the right side of the machine; a 75ms 20MB hard disk and a 2400-bps modem complete the package.



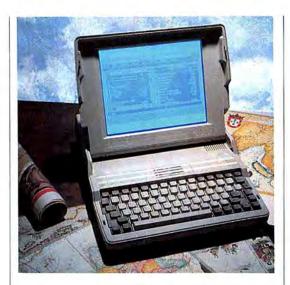
Two proprietary expansion slots are built in, but if you want to connect an external CGA monitor and a 5¼-inch disk drive, kiss those slots good-bye.

The 2T did quite poorly on NSTL's benchmarks: It came in next to last in every test. Furthermore, the NSTL Crash Test found that the machine had major problems with Windows, Excel, and SideKick.

The 2T's battery life is underwhelming. In normal use, power failed in less than 2 hours—the worst score of any laptop in the round-up. Turn off the hard disk, modem, and backlighting, and the 2T will do better, running a decent 3½ hours. A low-battery warning pops up on the screen, but there is no audible alarm.

The 2T's large display is bright, clear, and crisp. Unfortunately, brightness and contrast can be controlled only via keyboard commands. The 80-key keyboard is a bit cramped, the function keys are small, and the "clicky" touch is a bit disturbing. As is true of many laptops, the numeric pad is emulated by letter keys used in combination with the <Spcl> key. In fact, these toggled

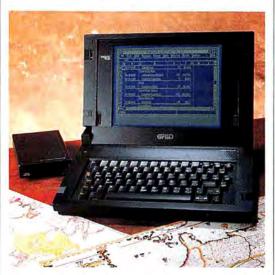
The Data General/One, based on the 80C88 CPU, is inexpensive, but it's fairly slow and suffers from software incompatibilities.



The fast, lowpriced Epson Equity LT sports a 10-MHz V30 CPU and runs at zero wait states —but cannot be expanded past 640K.



The Gridlite Plus weighs less than 14 pounds—but there's no floppy. Adding an external drive raises the weight—and the price.



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# Data General/One 2T

PC-compatible laptop

Despite 2MB of RAM expandability and a good screen, the Data General is an undistinguished machine. Slow performance, software incompatibilities, and brief battery life are its biggest fail-

ings, and at over 18 pounds it's no lightweight.	3 1	6000	FRAIR	*
Memory capacity			•	
Expandability	•			
Portability		•		
Ergonomic design				•
Performance	•			
Overall value				

keys are the prime suspects in a number of Crash Test incompatibility problems.

In addition to DOS 3.20, the Data General includes a ROM-based utility that enables power-saving options, sets COM port parameters, and so on. Documentation is poorly organized, and while most of the information seems to be there, there's no one place to look for a complete tour of controls and features.

The Data General/One 2T is a less-thandistinguished machine whose poor performance, software incompatibilities, short memory count, and brief battery life recommend against its purchase. In this case, less is less.

# **Epson Equity LT**

The Epson Equity LT is a fast, solid machine—and at \$3846 it boasts the next-to-lowest price in the roundup. Its only serious drawbacks are a 640K RAM limit and a cooling fan that sucks power (and can't be turned off).

At 18 pounds plus, the LT is no featherweight, and at 14 by 12 by 3 inches, it's best described as a midsize model. A 4.77/10-MHz, 16-bit V30 CPU runs at zero wait states; there's no coprocessor socket. The 640K of 120ns RAM is standard, with no ex-

# FEATURES EVALUATION

# **Laptop Lineup: Feature by Feature**

Seven hard disk laptops go head-to-head. Prices are calculated for the standard PC World laptop configuration. The Epson, Toshiba, and Zenith systems provide the best values for their price.

• Yes	Data Gemeral/	695	Gridline Plus	Neura CS Neura CS	Sha	Toshiba T1200MB	SEP TON
O No	36	3	1	7 01	3	ON	3 3
→ Deficient	To Take	alt.	PE	C. B.	3	8-	of
tandard features	5	Epson Equity LI			Sharp PC-A521	\	Lemith 186 Supersport 286
Price 1	\$3939	\$3846	\$4580	\$4615	S3724	\$4098	S4857
CPU	80088	V30	80086	V30	V40	80086	80C286
Clock speed (MHz)	4.77/7.16	4.77/10	4.77/8	4.77/7.16	4.77/7.16	4.77/9.54	6/12
Wait states	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Coprocessor support	8087	0	8087	0	0	8087	80287
Parallel port	•	•	• 1 M		•	•	00107
Serial port	•	•	•	O <sup>2</sup>	•	•	•
Floppy/hard disk controller	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
External monitor connector	⊖2	•	•	•	•	•	•
External floppy drive connector	⊖2	•	•	0	•	•	•
Mouse port	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Modem speed (bps)	2400	1200	2400	2400	1200	1200	2400
					- 100 100	-	
Amount shipped with basic unit	512K	640K	640K	1400	640K	1MB 3	1MB
Maximum installable	2.5MB	640K	1.6MB	640K 4.5MB	1.6MB	1MB	2MB
Maximum insidiable	Z.3MB	DAUK	1.0mb	4.3MB	1.0MB	IMB	ZMB
xpandability							
AT-compatible slots	0	0	0	0	0	54	3 4
Proprietary slots/number free	2/1	0	0	4/1	2/0	0	0
40MB or larger hard disk available from maker	0	0	0	0	0	0	•
ortability							
Weight (pounds) 5	18.2	18.3	16.0	25.1	14.9	14.3	18.8
Size (inches)	12x15x3	14x12x3	13x12x3	16x14x4	12x14x3	12x12x3	12x15x3
Battery life (minutes)							
Normal use	110	115	115	280	125	120	300
Power-saving mode	200	215	125	280	140	295	405
Turns off hard disk	•	•	0	0	0	•	•
Turns off modem	•	0	•	0	•	•	•
Turns off backlighting	•	•	•	n/a	•	•	•
Automatic head parking	•	•	0	•	•	•	•
rgonomic design						- Committee of the Comm	100
ROM-based setup software	•	0		0	•		•
Screen tilt (degrees)	180	135	120	165	180	180	180
Front-panel reset button	0	•	0	0	0	0	0
							_

Price based on standard PC World laptop system configuration: 640K of RAM; 3½-inch floppy drive; 20MB hard disk; backlit LCD screen; internal modem; serial, parallel, and RGB ports; battery charger; DOS; and carrying case. Exceptions: The DG/One was configured with 512K; the Gridlite's floppy drive is external; and the HP Portable has a supertwist LCD screen (backlighting is not available).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> On optional board.
<sup>3</sup> 384K as expanded memory only.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> With optional expansion unit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Traveling weight, including battery, charger/power supply, modem, and carrying case.

pansion capability. A 720K floppy drive is located on the right side of the box; in the standard *PC World* setup, you also get a 78ms 20MB hard disk and a 1200-bps internal modem.

The Equity's performance is outstanding. It came in second overall (after the 80286-based Zenith) in every NSTL test except dBASE III, where it slipped to third place. Its compatibility rating is less impressive. The NSTL Crash Test encountered major problems when running Windows and SmartCom II.

The Equity delivers about 2 hours of battery power in normal use. You can turn off the hard disk and backlighting, but unfortunately there seems to be no straightforward way to shut down the modem or the built-in cooling fan. With as many features disabled as possible, the LT ran for a respectable  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Unlike most laptops, the Epson's battery is not user-replaceable, so carrying spares may increase your forearm muscles but won't do you any good.

The LT's screen is small (9 by 4 inches), but it's admirably clear and sharp. Brightness and contrast controls are conveniently

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** 

# **Epson Equity LT**

PC-compatible laptop



The Epson Equity LT is an outstanding bargain, combining very strong performance with one of the lowest prices (\$3846) in the roundup. RAM is limited to 640K, battery life is merely

acceptable, and the machine weighs 18 pounds plus; but its compact case, readable screen, and full 85-key keyboard

are sufficient compensation.

Memory capacity
Expandability
Portability
Ergonomic design
Performance
Overall value

located right next to the screen. Epson provides an 85-key keyboard with a full numeric keypad—a reasonable facsimile of an AT layout—though I found the keys a bit too bouncy for my taste.

The LT comes with a diagnostics disk; a utility for setting power-saving options, COM port parameters, and so on; DOS 3.20; and GW BASIC. Documentation is unspectacular but complete, including a user guide and separate manuals for DOS and BASIC.

The Epson Equity LT offers impressive value. While it could be lighter, price and performance are outstanding, battery life is acceptable, and its highly readable screen makes working with it a pleasure.

# **Gridlite Plus**

With its all-black case and keyboard, the Gridlite Plus is quite stylish. At less than 14 pounds, it's also one of the lightest laps in the roundup. There's only one catch: It has no built-in floppy drive! While an external  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch drive is available, this represents a major loss in portability, raises the weight to 16 pounds (still on the light side), and boosts the price to \$4580.

The Gridlite Plus is a compact 13 by 12 by 3 inches in size. Its 80C86 CPU runs at 8 MHz with zero wait states (software switchable to 4.77 MHz), and an 8-MHz 8087 coprocessor is available as a factory-installed option. It comes with 640K of 150ns RAM, upgradable to 1.6MB on the motherboard. A 78ms 20MB disk and a 2400-bps modem round off the package.

The Gridlite has tried to compensate for its missing floppy drive with a number of ROM-based software options. For instance, DOS 3.21 is available on a ROM chip, as is *Crosstalk*. Four empty ROM sockets for custom software chips are also provided.

The Grid's performance is decent but unimpressive. While it came in near the bottom on NSTL's processor-intensive 1-2-3 benchmark, it did a little better on disk-intensive tests like dBASE III, with a fifth-place showing. Like most of the other laptops, it had major problems with Windows but did fine on the rest of the NSTL Crash Test.

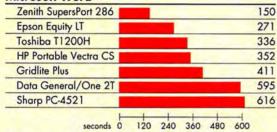
Two hours of battery life is all you'll get from the Gridlite Plus in normal use. Its cus-

# NSTL TEST REPORT

# **Laptop Roundup**

Predictably, the 80286-based Zenith SupersPort walks away with every event. The Epson Equity LT comes in second in all tests except dBASE III Plus, where it slides to third place.

#### Microsoft Word



## ARASE III Plus

Zenith SupersPort 286	212
Toshiba T1200H	313
Epson Equity LT	515
HP Portable Vectra CS	586
Gridlite Plus	723
Data General/One 2T	813
Sharp PC-4521	822

All systems were tested with 640K of conventional RAM. Expanded memory was used for disk caching for those machines that had expanded memory. All machines had 20MB hard disk drives, but none were equipped with coprocessors. The Toshiba T1200HB was not available

No disk caching was used for the 1-2-3 benchmark. For the other tests, Super PC-Kwik was used to provide a 64K disk cache in conventional memory for all systems except the T1200H, which had a 256K disk cache in expanded memory, and the SupersPort 286 and HP Vectra CS, each of which were tested with a 64K disk cache in conventional memory provided by their own disk-caching programs.

#### Microsoft Word 4.0

A Microsoft Word macro loads a 35-page, 140-paragraph document and performs search-and-replace and spell-checking operations. The first page of the document is then printed. Although the results of the benchmark depend primarily on processor and memory access speeds, display adapter and hard disk speeds are also contributing factors.

#### dBASE III Plus 1.1

The dBASE III Plus test measures the time required to prepare and print a report of past-due invoices. The report includes calculated fields and is

#### 1-2-3

Zenith SupersPort 286	244
Epson Equity LT	451
Toshiba T1200H	585
HP Portable Vectra CS	608
Gridlite Plus	704
Data General/One 2T	1042
Sharp PC-4521	1054
H	
seconds 0	240 480 720 960 1200

Zenith SupersPort 286	603
Epson Equity LT	1075
Toshiba T1200H	1303
HP Portable Vectra CS	1313
Gridlite Plus	1551
Data General/One 2T	2184
Sharp PC-4521	2278

based on three files: a 500-record customer file, a 1000-record invoice file, and a 2000-record item file. When disk caching is not used, the random access speed of the hard disk is, after processor speed, the most significant factor in this benchmark. With disk caching, sequential read performance becomes more important than random access.

## 1-2-3 2.01

In this benchmark, a 1-2-3 macro executes a series of recalculations using five different formulas within a 75-by-75-cell matrix. Because there are few screen updates and no screen access is required, the results depend almost entirely on processing and memory access speeds.

### Microsoft C 5.0

The Microsoft C benchmark measures the time required to compile and link XUSP, a public-domain program composed of 25 C source code files. The most important factors in this benchmark are processor and memory access speeds. The performance of the hard disk is also a factor; generally, disk caching has little effect.

Data based on tests designed and conducted by National Software Testing Laboratories (NSTL). All rights reserved.

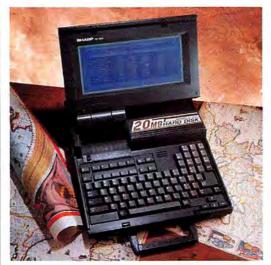
tomized DOS MODE command lets you turn off the modem and the backlighting, but the hard disk cannot be disabled; hence, you can't push the edge of that 2-hour power envelope very far. This is unacceptably short for power-saving mode.

The 8-by-6-inch display is bright and attractive. Contrast and brightness controls are conveniently located right next to the display. The Gridlite's 71-key keyboard, however, is the most confusing of any in the roundup. While its feel is adequate and the keys are full size, no fewer than 26 keys are

HewlettPackard's Portable Vectra CS is
big, heavy, and
expensive—but
boasts long battery life and
top software
compatibility.

Sharp's PC-4521, with a 7.16-MHz V40 CPU, is the slowest laptop in the roundup —but it's very light and very low priced.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Gridlite Plus**

PC-compatible laptop

The Gridlite Plus is small and light. Unfortunately, it has no built-in floppy disk, which means you'll need to carry an awkward external unit. Performance is decent but unimpressive, as is battery life, and the lack of automatic power-down head-againg resisce the

parking raises the possibility of lost data.

Memory capacity

Expandability

Portability

Ergonomic design

Performance

Overall value

forced to do double duty in combination with the <Code> and function keys.

The Gridlite Plus comes with a rudimentary utility that reports on what hardware is currently installed. DOS (on disk) is also included in the price of *PC World*'s standard configuration, but you'll have to pay extra for a package of integrated desktop utilities, which includes a basic telecommunications program, spreadsheet, and word processor. The documentation is decent, including a useful owner's guide and a DOS manual.

The Gridlite has one serious problem: While the hard disk parks its heads automatically after a short period of inactivity, heads are *not* automatically parked when power goes off—whether you throw the switch or run out of power. This can lead to disk damage and lost data.

Aside from its light weight and ROM software capability, the Gridlite Plus has little to recommend it. Performance is unimpressive, the external floppy drive requirement is awkward, head-parking is less effective than it should be, and the battery lasts only 2 hours. You can do better.

# Hewlett-Packard Portable Vectra CS Model 20

The \$4615 HP Portable Vectra CS is the biggest, heaviest laptop in the roundup. It's also one of the most expensive—only \$242 below the 80286-based Zenith SupersPort. However, its battery life is impressive, and it's the only laptop in the roundup to pass the NSTL Crash Test without a single problem.

The Vectra CS weighs in at a shoulder-bruising 25 pounds and measures 16 by 14 by 4 inches. It comes with a 4.77/7.16-MHz, zero-wait-state, 16-bit V30.

Unfortunately, there's no support for a math coprocessor. The standard 640K complement of 120ns RAM is upgradable to a generous limit of 4.5MB via proprietary RAM expansion boards that also provide a serial port. Expansion RAM is accessed at full CPU speed. A 1.44MB floppy drive and the 78ms 20MB hard disk are mounted in the same pop-up module, located just above the keyboard. The modem runs at 2400 bps.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# HP Portable Vectra CS Model 20

PC-compatible laptop

The HP Vectra CS is big and heavy, has a hard-to-read screen, and costs a bundle. Nonetheless, it boasts a generous 4.5MB RAM ceiling, excellent battery life, and a handy fuel gauge to show battery charge. It is also the only laptop to pass

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	•		
	34 4	103 14 103	43   14   63   14     • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

The CS has four proprietary expansion slots, but between the modem, the hard disk controller, and a serial port board, three are used up. Two handy compartments in the case flip out to provide plenty of room for disks.

Performance is fairly good. The CS falls squarely in the middle of the pack on most tests, and it aced the NSTL Crash Test without a single glitch.

The CS's heft is due, in part, to a powerful battery with enough juice for almost 5 hours of normal use—one of the best ratings in the roundup. While the system provides no battery-saving options, it does include an extremely useful, case-mounted fuel gauge to show you how much battery time is left.

No backlighting is available, which makes the screen difficult to read despite its relatively large size (9 by 7 inches). The full-size 92-key keyboard has a familiar AT-style layout; the touch is adequate but a bit mushy.

Disk caching software is included with the machine. DOS 3.30 is sold separately and includes a utility to translate ASCII text files from one character set to another for printing on various HP plotters and printers. Documentation is excellent, complete with plenty of helpful illustrations.

The HP Vectra CS is a something of a mixed bag. Strong suits include excellent software compatibility, RAM expandability, and a long battery life. Drawbacks include a crummy screen, heavy weight, high price, and awkward size. You'll have to decide if its pluses outweigh its minuses.

# Sharp PC-4521

The Sharp PC-4521 enjoys the dubious distinction of being the slowest laptop in the roundup. However, at \$3724 it's also the cheapest, and at just under 15 pounds it's the second lightest.

Inside its medium-size 12-by-14-by-3-inch case, the Sharp sports a 4.77/7.16-MHz, one-wait-state V40 CPU. It does not support a math coprocesser. The system comes with 640K of 150ns RAM expandable to 1.6MB via a memory board. A 720K floppy drive is mounted on the right, and in *PC World*'s standard laptop configuration you also get a 78ms 20MB hard disk and a 1200-bps modem. There are two proprietary expansion slots; the modem occupies one, leaving the second available for expansion RAM or a connector for an external monitor.

The Sharp came in dead last on every performance test. The NSTL Crash Test found a minor problem running *Excel* and major problems with *Windows*.

Two hours of battery life is all the Sharp delivers under normal operation. You can turn off the modem and the backlighting, but there's no provision for turning off the hard disk or built-in fan. In any case, even in power-saving mode, slightly more than 2 hours was the best I could get. This is among the worst power-saving ratings in the roundup.

The 9-by-4-inch screen is small but readable; however, contrast and brightness controls, placed low on the side of the console, are hard to reach. The 88-key AT-style keyboard is unusually large and includes a full numeric pad, a separate 4-key cursor pad, and a special key to invoke the power-saving options.

The smallest and lightest laptop in the roundup, the Toshiba T1200H(B) is relatively inexpensive and its performance is decent.

Zenith's SupersPort 286, with its 12-MHz 80C286 CPU, is the fastest laptop here—and (as you might expect) the most expensive.



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## Sharp PC-4521

PC-compatible laptop

The Sharp PC-4521 is the slowest laptop in the roundup—but it's also light, small, and extremely inexpensive. A clear screen and a large, 88-key keyboard are addition-

al pluses, but battery life is unimpressive.

Memory capacity

Expandability

Memory capacity		W- 11		
Expandability	•	1		
Portability		148	•	1
Ergonomic design		1	•	
Performance	•			13
Overall value		12	•	

In *PC World*'s standard laptop configuration, the Sharp comes with a diagnostics disk, DOS 3.21, and GW BASIC. It also includes a nifty option that sets the computer to turn itself on when its modem receives an incoming call. Documentation is minimal; you get a basic guide to the features of the machine, plus brief sections on DOS and BASIC. Full DOS and BASIC manuals are extra.

Low price and light weight are convincing arguments for buying the Sharp PC-4521. On the other hand, poor performance and an unimpressive battery life argue against it. If the bottom line is your highest priority, this machine makes sense, but most business users will find it a bad choice.

# Toshiba T1200H(B)

The Toshiba T1200H(B) is the smallest, lightest laptop in the roundup; boasts a long battery life; and is fairly inexpensive. It even includes an automatic, goof-proof data-saving feature in case of battery failure.

The T1200 comes in three flavors: vanilla (with floppies), H (with a hard disk), and B (with backlighting). Toshiba was unable to provide a backlit HB model, so a T1200H was tested. With backlighting, in the standard *PC World* configuration, the T1200HB costs \$4098.

The T1200H weighs only 14 pounds and stands a mere 12 by 12 by 3 inches. It uses a 4.77/9.54-MHz, one-wait-state 80C86 CPU and is socketed for a 9.54-MHz 8087 coprocessor. It comes with 1MB of 120ns RAM, with no provision for additional memory; 384K of that RAM can be used as expanded memory. (Toshiba supplies an expanded memory RAM disk utility.) There are no expansion slots. However, an optional expansion chassis provides five 8-bit, XT-compatible slots. A 720K floppy drive sits just above the 78ms 20MB hard drive on the right side of the case. The modem runs at 1200 bps.

The T1200H performs quite respectably. It places in the middle of the pack on the processor-intensive 1-2-3 benchmark and

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# Toshiba T1200H(B)

PC-compatible laptop



The Toshiba T1200H is the smallest, lightest laptop in the roundup (we were unable to test the backlit HB model). Performance is excellent, battery life is outstanding, and its price is fair-

ly low. A "hard RAM" safety feature saves data in case of an unexpected battery power failure. A

1MB memory ceiling is its only serious drawback.	3 1 1 8	a Fall	*
Memory capacity			
Expandability	•		
Portability			•
Ergonomic design			•
Performance		MALL	•
Overall value		1 6	•
			_

takes a strong second place (right behind the 80286-based Zenith) on the disk-intensive dBASE test. The NSTL Crash Test uncovered a minor problem with Excel and a major one with Windows.

Although Toshiba's laptops have a reputation for a long battery life, the T1200H seems to have a shorter normal endurance span than many others in the roundup. Even with a low-power LCD screen, normal battery life was a mediocre 2 hours; presumably, the backlit screen would reduce this time to under 2 hours. On the other hand, hard disk and modem can be switched off, and in power-saving mode the T1200H ran happily for nearly 6 hours—an impressive figure exceeded only by the Zenith 286. Battery monitoring facilities include a pop-up charge-level display, a flashing low-battery light, and an audible warning.

The smallish, 9-by-4-inch, supertwist LCD proved somewhat difficult to read in dim light. An 82-key keyboard is laid out to resemble the standard IBM keyboard but lacks the IBM's numeric pad and good feel.

One of the Toshiba's most attractive features is its "hard RAM." If the juice runs low, the system automatically shuts down and switches to an auxiliary battery, which is good for about three days. Recharge within that time, and you won't lose the contents of the 384K expanded memory RAM disk. If the T1200H's "resume" feature is active, you won't even lose a keystroke; just recharge, turn the power back on, and you can pick up right where you left off. Toshiba provides a pop-up utility to enable the power-saving options and change system configuration; DOS 3.30 is included too. Documentation is extremely meticulous, with separate user, DOS, and modem manuals.

While the Toshiba is no speed demon, it combines a low price with extremely light weight, long battery life (at least in powersaving mode), and a tempting hard-RAM safety feature. It may not be flashy, but it's solid.

# Zenith SupersPort 286 Model 20

At the moment, there are only two 80286-based battery-powered laptops readily available: the GridCase 1520 (see *The Hardware Shelf, PCW*, September 1988) and the Zenith SupersPort 286. The SupersPort sets a new standard for laptop performance and battery life. Its 12-MHz 80C286 CPU and high-speed, 28ms 20MB hard drive make it the fastest laptop in the roundup by a wide margin. Furthermore, since its hard drive draws very little current, the 286 enjoys unusually long battery life. Naturally, this kind of performance doesn't come cheap; the Supers-Port 286 lists at \$4857, making it the most expensive machine in the roundup.

This powerhouse system weighs in at 18 pounds and change, and at 12 by 15 by 3 inches it's rather bulky. A 6/12-MHz 80C286 CPU runs at zero wait states, and there's a socket for a 10-MHz 80287 math coprocessor. The system comes standard with 1MB of 100ns RAM expandable via a proprietary expansion board to 2MB; expansion RAM is accessed at full speed. A 1.44MB 3½-inch floppy drive is mounted on the right side of the machine. A 28ms 20MB hard disk and a

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# **Zenith SupersPort 286**

AT-compatible laptop



Zenith's SupersPort 286 will set you back a cool \$4857, but that buys an 80C286-based speed demon with an unusually fast hard disk and an excellent display. Disk-caching software is

included at no extra cost. This laptop is clearly the top performer in the roundup.

Battery life is outstanding, too.	100	事	800	Tage	
Memory capacity					•
Expandability				•	
Portability				•	
Ergonomic design				100	•
Performance					•
Overall value					•

2400-bps modem fill out the features. An optional expansion chassis provides three 8-bit AT-compatible slots.

The SupersPort 286 performs every bit as well as you'd expect. It took first place on every NSTL benchmark. While it ran into problems with *Windows* on the NSTL Crash Test, it handled everything else easily.

The SupersPort delivers an exceptional 5 hours of battery life in normal use. The backlighting, modem, and hard disk can all be shut down, and in power-saving mode the 286 runs for an amazing 7 hours, the best score in the roundup.

The Zenith's large display (8 by 6 inches) is extremely easy to read. The 79-key keyboard is very close to the standard IBM layout, except that the numeric keypad is emulated by letter keys combined with a special function key. <Page Up>, <Page Down>, <Home>, and <End> keys are emulated by the cursor keys in a similar fashion. Despite these limitations, the keyboard is easy to use and has a responsive touch.

To speed throughput even more, Zenith includes disk-caching software at no extra

cost, along with DOS 3.21 and a ROM-based utility that includes an assembly language debugger.

Documentation is excellent, including both a user guide and an extensive DOS manual.

The Zenith SupersPort 286 Model 20 is pricey, but if you are willing to pay the cost to be the boss, it's the only choice. With its high-speed CPU, fast hard disk, and long battery life, it is undoubtedly the most powerful battery-powered laptop on the market today. For many business users, however, it may be somewhat overqualified.

#### **Power to the Portables**

Three laptops make it to the top of the heap. The 80286-based Zenith SupersPort 286 is the clear winner in two out of four categories: performance and battery life. Unfortunately, at \$4857 it is quite expensive. The \$3846 Epson Equity LT is also quite fast, second only to the Zenith, and is very inexpensive. However, it is limited to 640K of RAM. The compact Toshiba T1200HB is the lightest laptop in the roundup, and at \$4098 the backlit T1200HB model is only \$252 more expensive than the Epson. It boasts good battery life in power-saving mode and an easy-to-read screen, but like the Epson, it allows no RAM expansion.

Two machines, the HP Portable Vectra CS and the Sharp PC-4521, are mixed bags. The \$4615 CS is heavy and expensive, with a murky screen, but it delivers outstanding battery life, RAM expandability, and software compatibility. The Sharp is very slow and the battery life is short, but it's admirably light, and at \$3724 it's the cheapest system in the roundup. The Data General/One 2T and the Gridlite Plus are poor performers with short battery life and little to redeem them.

The most exciting news here is that the best of these hotshot hard disk laptops deliver more power than many desktop units. The golden age of laptop computing has dawned at last. ●

John Diebold is a marine geophysicist specializing in computer analysis of seismic data.

#### Data General/One Model 2T

Data General Corp. 4400 Computer Dr. Westboro, MA 01580 800/343-8842

List price: with 512K RAM, 20MB hard disk, 720K floppy drive, serial and parallel ports, backlit LCD, DOS 3.20 \$3195

Accessories: 256K **RAM \$200, 1MB RAM** \$495, 2MB RAM \$895; RBG monitor adapter and port \$245; 2400bps modem \$500, 1200bps modem \$400; external 51/4-inch floppy disk drive \$795; 51/4-inch floppy disk controller and port \$155; extra battery pack \$95; quick charger \$95; external numeric keypad \$125; soft carrying case \$99 Warranty: one year

limited parts and labor **Extended warran-**

ty: service contracts available

**Technical support:** toll-free number, M-F 9-5

Other support services: none For more information, circle 780 on reader service card.

#### **Epson Equity LT**

Epson America Inc. 2780 Lomita Blvd. Torrance, CA 90505 213/386-8776 List price: with 640K RAM, 20MB hard disk, 720K floppy drive, serial and parallel ports, backlit LCD, DOS 3.20, GW BASIC \$3498 Accessories: 1200-

bps modem \$299, external 13-inch CGA monitor \$449, soft carrying case \$49

Warranty: one year parts and labor

Extended warrantv: none **Technical support:** 

toll-free number, M-F

Other support services: none For more information, circle 781 on reader service card.

#### **Gridlite Plus**

Grid Systems Corp. 47211 Lakeview Blvd. Fremont, CA 94537-5003 415/656-4700 List price: with 640K, 20MB hard disk, serial and parallel ports \$3425 Accessories: 512K **RAM \$395, 1MB RAM** \$495; 8087 coprocessor \$195; 2400-bps modem \$595; DOS 3.21 (31/2inch disk) \$150, DOS 3.21 (ROM chip) \$200; soft carrying case \$60; external 720K 31/2-inch floppy drive \$350, external 51/4-inch floppy drive \$395; extra battery \$70; external battery charger \$90; Diconics portable

printer \$495 Warranty: 90 days parts and labor **Extended warran-**

ty: service contracts available

Technical support: no toll-free number, M-F 9-5

Other support services: none For more information, circle 782 on

reader service card.

## **HP Portable Vectra** CS Model 20

Hewlett-Packard Co. 1820 Embarcadero Rd. Palo Alto, CA 94303 800/367-4772

List price: with 640K RAM, 20MB hard disk, 1.44MB 31/2-inch floppy drive, parallel ports, supertwist LCD, disk-caching software \$3675

Accessories: 1MB expansion board and serial port \$595, 2MB expansion board and serial port \$1195; serial port \$220; 2400-bps modem \$695, 1200-bps modem \$450; soft carrying case \$150; DOS 3.30 \$120

Warranty: one year limited parts and labor **Extended warran**ty: \$45 per month **Technical support:** toll-free number, M-F 7 a.m.-9 p.m.

Other support services: none For more information, circle 783 on reader service card.

#### Sharp PC-4521

Sharp Electronics Corp. Sharp Plaza Mahwah, NJ 07430-2135 201/529-8200

List price: with 640K, 20MB hard disk, 720K floppy drive, serial and parallel ports, backlit LCD, DOS 3.21, GW **BASIC \$2995** 

Accessories: 1MB RAM board \$599, 1200bps modem with extra serial port \$399, extra serial port \$99, RGB video adapter \$255, external 51/4-inch floppy drive \$499, soft carrying case \$75, DOS and BA-SIC manuals \$65

Warranty: one year parts and labor

**Extended warran**ty: choice of service

contracts **Technical support:** no toll-free number,

M-F 9-5 Other support ser-

vices: none For more information, circle 784 on reader service card.

## Toshiba T1200H(B)

Toshiba America Inc. 9740 Irvine Blvd. Irvine, CA 92718 714/583-3000 List price: T1200H with 1MB RAM, 20MB hard disk, 720K floppy drive, serial and parallel ports, DOS 3.30, soft carrying case \$3499; T1200HB in same configuration plus backlighting \$3699

Accessories: 1200bps modem \$399, expansion chassis \$1298, 51/4-inch external floppy drive \$499, battery quick charger \$279, extra battery \$79, 17-key numeric keypad \$99

Warranty: one year parts and labor **Extended warran**ty: two years **Technical support:** toll-free number, M-F 7-5

Other support services: CompuServe forum, in-house bulletin board For more information, circle 785 on reader service card.

#### **Zenith SupersPort** 286

Zenith Data Systems 1000 Milwaukee Ave. Glenview, IL 60025 312/699-4848

List price: with 1MB RAM, 20MB hard disk, 1.44MB floppy drive, serial and parallel ports, backlit LCD, DOS 3.21 \$4499

Accessories: 1MB RAM board \$1299; 80C287 coprocessor \$525; 2400-bps modem \$449, 1200-bps modem \$299; expansion chassis \$449; external 51/4-inch floppy drive \$399; extra battery pack \$159; external battery charger \$89; 24-key numeric keypad \$129; soft carrying case \$59

Warranty: one year parts and labor

**Extended warran**ty: yes **Technical support:** through dealers only Other support ser-

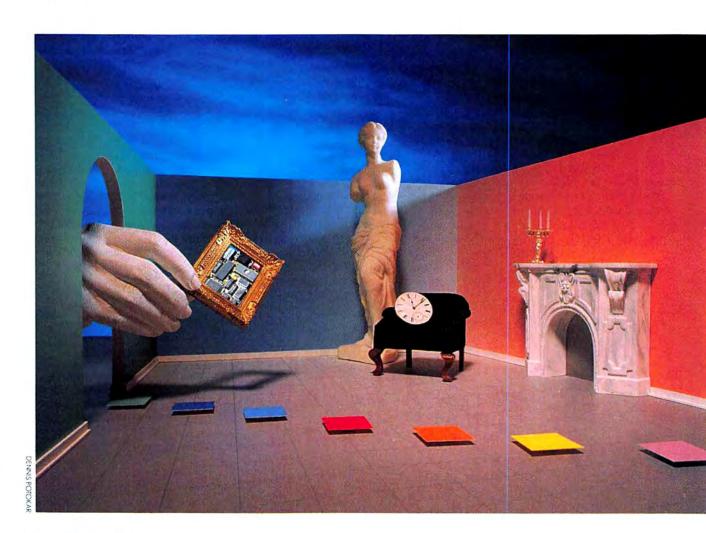
vices: in-house BBS For more information, circle 786 on reader service card.

# VGA Boards— The Second Generation

With more colors, more pixels, and more extended modes, why wait?

Ten VGA boards prove that you can enjoy a first-rate display without having to buy a PS/2.

TJ Byers



ot long ago the EGA was *the* video status symbol, but already users and software developers are turning in droves to the larger palette and greater resolution offered by the Video Graphics Array (VGA). Although IBM created the VGA standard, you don't need a PS/2 to enjoy it; there are dozens of VGA-compatible adapters for the PC, and many offer features missing from the PS/2's built-in VGA circuitry.

This review examines ten VGA adapters for the PC with base prices ranging from \$399 to \$799. With EGA boards currently selling for about \$150 (and offering 640 by 350 resolution and 16 colors), budget-minded buyers may question the value of VGA's marginally higher 640 by 480 resolution. But keep in mind that most of the reviewed boards go well beyond VGA's standard 17 modes, offering higher resolution graphicsand text-mode drivers for many popular programs. Many of the boards offer drivers that expand VGA's 320 by 200 resolution (with 256 colors from a palette of 262,144) to an impressive 640 by 480 or even 800 by 600. Want to run AutoCAD at 1024 by 768 resolution? Open Windows at 800 by 600? Work with a 1-2-3 spreadsheet in 132 columns? Pick the right board, and you can get all that and then some.

VGA boards herald a significant shift from digital to analog video technology. Analog monitors driven by VGA boards not only cost less than digital displays but can generate a virtually unlimited number of hues and shades. If you're worried about obsolescence, a VGA board/analog monitor combination is the smart long-term buy (see "VGA Monitors—Cheap and Smart" in this issue).

Just remember two things: Tapping graphics modes with resolutions of 800 by 600 and above means buying a multiscan monitor, and very high resolution modes (1000+) demand an interlace monitor such as the IBM 8514. If you're willing to bite the golden bullet, then shop for a VGA board offering the extended-mode drivers that support your applications. (Don't get conned by boards that offer lots of extended modes but no matching drivers.) Then consider the niceties: digital output (if you want to drive your old mono-

chrome or color display), a better warranty, and support for Hercules monochrome graphics.

#### **Compatibility Assured**

Early VGA boards attempted to emulate the PS/2's VGA circuitry by means of BIOS-level compatibility—with decidedly mixed results. The VGA boards reviewed here, however, expand upon this software-based scheme by claiming 100 percent register-level compatibility. This means the boards imitate every register in the IBM board and thus should run any VGA-compatible application without a hitch.

For the most part, National Software Testing Laboratories (NSTL) Crash Tests bear out such claims. After exhaustive testing with ten tricky applications, only the Everex EVGA exhibited notable compatibility problems. NSTL tested each adapter in an 8-MHz Compaq Deskpro 286 and a Deskpro 386/20 connected to an IBM 8513 analog monitor, then ran VGA-configured applications through their paces. The programs-Splash, AutoCAD, Microsoft Word, PC Paintbrush, IBM Storyboard Plus, Microsoft Windows/ 286, Windows/386, Ventura Publisher, and SideKick Plus-and Compaq's OS/2 passed by the boards with only a few stumbles. Control tests were also run on a 10-MHz IBM PS/2 Model 50 and a 16-MHz PS/2 Model 80-071.

Although the VGA standard embraces all previous IBM video modes, a few programs (such as 1-2-3 release 1A and Flight Simulator) refuse to work with IBM's VGA emulation of CGA or EGA. All the reviewed adapters except IBM's solve the incompatibilities with proprietary emulators that bypass the VGA BIOS. In most cases you must load these utilities manually, but several boards offer an auto-switching feature that senses troublesome software and automatically loads the correct emulator. This is not to be confused with the automatic mode switching shared by all the products tested, which lets them work with 99 percent of non-VGA software.

# FEATURES EVALUATION

# **VGA Boards Compared**

IBM's VGA board is soundly routed in the features wars, as rivals heap on the extras.

1	E 3 2	2 8	8 8	E / E	9 6	\$ 1	E 13	爱 显	E 2	2
• Yes • No	ETHIO EW	paradise von	Gemon Adur	Amdek VGA	Orchid von	Sigma Non	RI PIN	Video-1	IBM PS/2 plor	Everex
andard features		1								
Price	\$399	\$599	\$429	\$445	\$545	\$399	\$599	\$799	\$595	5399
Warranty (years)	2	3	1	. 1	2	1	2	5	1	1
TTL output	•	0	•	0	•	•	0	0	0	•
512K RAM	• 1	•	0	0	•	0	• 1	• 1	0	0
Slot size required	half	half	half	half	half	3/4	holf	full	full	full
hanced features										
16-bit interface	0	•	0	0	0	0	•	•	0	0
Auto-switching	0	0	0	0	0	•	0	•	0	•
BIOS relocation	•	•	0	•	•	•	•	•	0	0
Zoom	•	0	0	•	•	0	0	0	0	
Custom fonts/editor	0	0	0	•	•	0	0	0	0	•
oprietary emulators										
EGA	0	0	0	•	•	•	•	0	0	•
CGA	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	0	•
MDA	0	•	•	•	•	0	•	0	0	•
HGC		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	0	

Requires extra-cost memory upgrade.

Almost all major applications support the VGA, but even if your program doesn't, you may be in luck. Most of the reviewed units come with standard 640 by 480, 16-color VGA drivers for 1-2-3, Symphony, Auto-CAD, Ventura Publisher, and Windows, although selections vary. If there's no driver for your program, you can still run it, but you'll have to settle for CGA or EGA colors and resolution.

# More Than Meets the Eye

As the following reviews and accompanying table demonstrate, most of these VGA boards are pretty similar. Installation is a matter of popping a board into a slot and running configuration software; you flip switches only on boards that support both digital and analog monitors. Output is gener-

ally sharp and crisp, with a few exceptions.

The key feature that distinguishes one clone from another is support for extended mode drivers, which is largely a factor of memory. Half of the reviewed adapters are limited to 256K; three start at 256K but can be upgraded to 512K at extra cost, and two ship with 512K as standard.

Using a VGA board with anything but an analog monitor is like ladling caviar on a hot dog. Yet some users may not be able to afford both components at once. Fortunately, half the VGA boards reviewed can drive digital TTL monitors, so you can still use a monochrome, CGA, or EGA display.

Half the boards are also built around Tseng's VGA chip, which offers two interesting features that the boards may or may not support. The zoom feature is just the ticket for CAD users, since it allows you to zoom, pan, and scroll images. While Tseng's zoom is somewhat faster than software-based

zoom features, it merely magnifies the image, rather than increasing resolution. Furthermore, the function doesn't work with text screens and is incompatible with some graphics applications, including *Ventura 1.1* and *AutoCAD 9.0* (it does work with other *AutoCAD* versions).

Tseng's BIOS relocation feature copies the board's video BIOS into system RAM, which should boost performance—whenever software developers get around to supporting the function. Some boards can relocate the BIOS only on 16-bit systems, while others support both 8- and 16-bit machines. If performance is crucial right now, turn to one of the three reviewed boards that offer a 16-bit interface, which quadruple screen refresh rates when plugged into a 16-bit slot.

# STB VGA Extra/EM



PROS: Very high resolution mode, cheap

CONS: Requires upgrade to 512K for most extended modes

The STB VGA Extra/EM is the best deal in the roundup. The board supports a fairly generous assortment of extended modes and sports 8/16-bit BIOS relocation, zoom functions, and TTL output. Priced at \$399, the STB is clearly a Best Buy.

In its minimum configuration, the VGA Extra/EM supports 132-column mode for 1-2-3 and Symphony and 800 by 600 extended graphics modes for AutoCAD, GEM, Ventura, and Windows. If you buy the \$499 512K version (and an interlace monitor), you can enjoy the STB's very high resolution 1024 by 768, 16-color graphics mode for all the graphics-based programs listed above. However, Ventura and Windows are limited to 2 and 8 colors, respectively, rather than 16. You also get two 256-color drivers for AutoShade, AutoDesk's color-shading add-on for AutoCAD.

# Paradise VGA Professional



PROS: 16-bit interface, 256-color Windows driver, money-back guarantee

CONS: No TTL output, no very high resolution drivers

If you use *Windows*, you're going to love the Paradise VGA Professional. Thanks to its built-in 512K of RAM, you can enjoy *Windows* applications in 256 colors at 640 by 480 resolution. The roster of drivers is thorough and well thought out and the warranty superb. In a 16-bit slot, the board rapidly refreshes the screen. Despite its \$599 price tag and lack of very high resolution drivers, these many assets earn the VGA Professional a Best Buy rating.

The Paradise offers an excellent library of 800 by 600 graphics drivers for AutoCAD, Cadvance, Excel, GEM, Ventura, and Windows, plus a 132-column driver for Framework II. Although it doesn't have a Tseng chip, the Paradise offers 8/16-bit BIOS relocation.

The VGA Professional's warranty is the best in the roundup. If any VGA-compatible application fails to run with the adapter—but runs on the same PC with the IBM PS/2 Display Adapter—Paradise will replace the board or refund your money.

# Genoa SuperVGA

PROS: Cheap

CONS: No very high resolution mode

The Genoa SuperVGA offers numerous extended video modes but only a moderate number of drivers to support them. If 800 by 600 resolution is enough and you're on a budget, this \$429 board bears consideration.

The SuperVGA's 800 by 600 graphics mode drivers cover AutoCAD, Framework II, GEM, Ventura, and Windows; 132-column drivers for 1-2-3 and Framework II are also part of the deal. Despite its Tseng chip, however, the SuperVGA lacks both BIOS relocation and a zoom function.

# FEATURES EVALUATION

# **VGA Standard and Extended-Mode Drivers**

(in number of colors per driver)

2-3 2.0	dok B	/	Gen	0100	hid	Sign	-	1	1.00-T		GEM
640 x 480	0	16 16 <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0	0	161	0	0	0	640 x 480
132 column	16	161	161	16	16	0	0	16	16	0	720 x 540
100 column	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	800 x 600
80 column	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	- Second Second
720 x 540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	0	1024 x 76
800 × 600	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	Ventura Publisher
		161							256 <sup>2</sup>	_	640 x 480
mphony											720 x 540
640 x 480	0	16	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	-
132 column	16	16	0	0	16	0	16	16	16	0	800 x 600
100 column	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	1024 x 76
80 column	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	A SAVE ALLEGA
720 x 540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	0	640 x 480
800 x 600	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	0	752 x 410
amework II									200	_	640 x 350
640 x 480	0	0	0	16	0	16	0	0	0	0	720 x 540
132 column	0	16	0	16	0	16	0	0	0	0	720 x 340
800 x 600	0	16	0	16	0	16	0	0	0	0	800 x 600
ccel										_	1024 x 76
7.1. 7.504				-31	12	16				-	1280 x 60
640 x 480	0	0	0	0	0	256	0	0	0	0	800 x 560
800 x 600	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	AutoShade
indows 2.0											640 x 480
640 x 480	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	83	16	163	16 256	163	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	0	752 x 410
720 x 540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	640 x 350
752 x 410	0	0	83	0	0	0	0	0	256 <sup>2</sup>	0	720 x 540
800 × 600	16	16	8 <sup>3</sup> 16 <sup>4</sup>	16	16	16	16	8	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	0	800 x 600
1024 x 768	0	0	0	0	163	0	0	8,83	-	0	1024 x 76
1280 x 600	0	0	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	512 x 480

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Requires extra-cost memory expansion. <sup>3</sup> Windows 1.03/1.04 driver.

1	9 2	1		01110	Pai d	Sign	1		180.7	1
GEM	*	1	*	-		8			-	
640 x 480	0	0	0	16	16	0	16	0	0	C
720 x 540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
800 x 600	16	16	16	16	16	16	0	16	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
1024 x 768	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 <sup>2</sup>	0	C
Ventura Publisher										
640 x 480	0	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	16	C
720 x 540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
800 x 600	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	2	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
1024 x 768	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	4,162	C
AutoCAD										
640 x 480	16	0	8	16	16 256	16	16	165	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
752 x 410	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	16	C
640 x 350	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	C
720 x 540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
800 x 600	16	16	16	16	16 256	16	165	165	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
1024 x 768	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	162.5	4,16 <sup>2</sup>	C
1280 x 600	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	C
800 x 560	0	0	0	0	0	0	165	0	0	C
AutoShade										
640 x 480	0	0	0	0	256	0	0	256 <sup>2</sup>	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
752 x 410	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	C
640 x 350	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	C
720 x 540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
800 x 600	0	0	16	0	256	0	0	256 <sup>2</sup>	16 256 <sup>2</sup>	C
1024 x 768	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,162	C
512 x 480	0	0	256	0	0	0	0	0	0	C
640 x 400	0	0	256	0	0	0	0	0	0	C
Cadvance										
640 x 480	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	C
800 x 600	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	C

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Windows 2.1 driver. <sup>5</sup> AutoCAD 9.0 driver.

# Amdek VGA Adapter/132

PROS: Custom screen fonts, cheap

**CONS:** No TTL output, no very high resolution modes

For a reasonable \$445, Amdek's VGA Adapter/132 delivers the basics and some nice extras such as custom screen fonts and support for 1-2-3 release 1A graphics without an emulator. Although it lacks a TTL connector and has a somewhat limited list of standard drivers, the Adapter/132 is a solid value.

The Amdek's catalog of extended-mode drivers is above average. It offers 132-column drivers for 1-2-3 and Symphony and 800 by 600 drivers for AutoCAD, Windows, GEM, and Ventura. Zoom and 16-bit BIOS relocation are included.

The Amdek is the only adapter that doesn't mimic IBM's VGA character set, but this limitation doesn't affect software compatibility. Amdek provides eight custom fonts plus a font editor that lets you create your own for character-based applications.

# **Orchid Designer VGA**

**PROS:** Very high resolution mode, good warranty, custom screen fonts

CONS: Minor compatibility problem

In its high-resolution extended modes, Orchid's Designer VGA generates the most vibrant images in the roundup. The \$545 price tag is reasonable when you consider the board's 512K RAM, numerous standardand extended-mode drivers, and a generous two-year warranty that can be extended to four years. Word 4.0 users should note, however, that the board peppers that program's screen with small colored dots. If not for this flaw, the Orchid board would be a top contender.

With the help of an interlace monitor, the Designer VGA boasts an impressive 1024 by 768, 16-color graphics mode for *Windows* and *AutoCAD*. It also offers the usual 132-column modes for 1-2-3 and *Symphony* and delivers

800 by 600 support for AutoCAD, GEM, Ventura, and Windows. For extra thrills, one driver lets AutoCAD sparkle in 256 colors. At press time Orchid announced 640 by 480 and 800 by 600 drivers for Dr. Halo, Generic CADD, and PC Publisher's Paintbrush.

Like the Amdek, the Designer VGA features eight custom fonts and a font editor, plus BIOS relocation and zoom.

# Sigma VGA/H

PROS: Cheap; auto-switching

CONS: Limited extended-mode drivers

Priced at a trim \$399, the Sigma VGA/H offers a solid list of features, including TTL output and a decent lineup of standard drivers. Unfortunately, despite the many extended modes, extended drivers only support a 132-column text mode for *Symphony* and 800 by 600 graphics modes for *AutoCAD* and *Windows*. Until Sigma expands its driver list, this is a board for bargain hunters only.

# **AST VGA Plus**

**PROS:** 16-bit interface, 256-color Windows driver

CONS: Expensive, no TTL output

The AST VGA Plus matches the Paradise VGA Professional's price and chip and, like the Paradise, it throws in a 256-color, 640-by-480 *Windows* driver to boot. The only snag: You'll have to pony up \$350 extra for the necessary 256K RAM option. Considering the stiff RAM tariff and the board's lack of very high resolution modes, the VGA Plus is only marginally recommended.

The board offers speedy screen refresh when it's in a 16-bit slot, as well as 8/16-bit BIOS relocation. The basic package also delivers a respectable set of drivers, with 800 by 600 modes available for *AutoCAD*, *GEM*, *Ventura*, *Windows*, 1-2-3, *Symphony*, and *Framework II*.

# Video-7 V-RAM VGA

**PROS:** Fast screen refresh, numerous drivers, very high resolution mode, 16-bit interface, five-year warranty

**CONS:** Expensive, hardware incompatibilities, fuzzy text output, no TTL output

If you're a speed-hungry *AutoCAD* or *Ventura* user, Video-7's V-RAM VGA is likely to intrigue you. With its super high resolution drivers, speedy RAM, and 16-bit interface, the V-RAM VGA is the most sophisticated board in the roundup. The downside: It's priced at \$799 (currently \$1099 for the 512K version), generates somewhat fuzzy text, and won't work with certain systems and expansion boards.

Thanks to its dual-ported video RAM, which lets the CPU and the screen access video memory simultaneously, and its 16-bit interface, the V-RAM VGA offers the fastest screen refresh of the reviewed units. Autoswitching is available, as is 8/16-bit BIOS relocation.

The V-RAM VGA's list of drivers is more than twice as long as those of its tested rivals. The drivers for *AutoCAD*, *AutoShade*, and *Ventura* are exhaustive, including 4-color, 1024 by 768 graphics modes. Other high-resolution drivers support 1-2-3, *Symphony*, *GEM*, and *Windows*. Upgrade to 512K, and you can boost most of the high-resolution modes to 256 colors and the very high resolution modes to 16 colors. Another plus: The board's software permanently attaches the appropriate drivers to *AutoCAD*, so you don't have to load them every time you run the program.

But the bad news may put you off: The V-RAM VGA failed to work on an AMT 286 computer, and Video-7 warns that the adapter may conflict with some EMS boards, such as Intel's AboveBoard.

# IBM PS/2 Display Adapter

PROS: None

**CONS:** No standard or extended modes, no TTL output, not Hercules compatible

BM's VGA board is already showing its age. The first board to clone the PS/2's VGA standard is a pricey \$595, and it's devoid of emulators and extended video modes. You don't even receive any standard 640 by 480 drivers. Despite its heritage, it can't be recommended.

IBM's offering is the only board reviewed that doesn't support the Hercules Graphics Card mode. Although the board claims perfect VGA compatibility, it still can't cope with CGA and EGA emulation lawbreakers such as 1-2-3 1A in graphics mode and Flight Simulator.

# **Everex EVGA**

**PROS:** Very high resolution mode, custom fonts, cheap

**CONS:** Uneven scrolling, slightly fuzzy text, not OS/2-compatible

The Everex EVGA delivers a bounty of features for a scant \$399, but it's not recommended. Why? Of the units reviewed, the Everex EVGA gave the most headaches.

The EVGA has some attractive features, including auto-switching, a library of 22 fonts, and a custom font editor. You can display 1-2-3 1A graphics without a special emulator, and the repertoire of extended-mode drivers is impressive. Notably, you get 1280 by 600 drivers for AutoCAD and Windows and two 256-color AutoShade drivers.

Unfortunately, the EVGA's performance leaves much to be desired. Jerky scrolling makes you feel like you're at a nickelodeon, and images lack the sharp edge produced by the other adapters reviewed. In addition, the EVGA is the only board in the roundup that suffers from major software compatibility problems. Word 4.0 is limited to 8 colors instead of 16, and the EVGA colors don't

match Word's default colors. Worse, as demonstrated by the NSTL Crash Test, you can't view the far left and right areas of the screen when running Compag's OS/2, and after you load several sessions with Compag OS/2, the screen splits in two. A low price and superb features can't compensate for such fundamental flaws.

#### Never a Dull Screen

Because compatibility is generally not an issue in this roundup, extended-mode support and pricing played the major roles in PC World's evaluation. The STB VGA Extra/EM and the Paradise VGA Professional strike the best balance between price and performance and accordingly share the Best Buy label. Genoa's low-priced SuperVGA and the Amdek VGA Adapter/132 are also good purchases, taking third and fourth place, respectively. Only the IBM and the Everex units receive an unqualified thumbs-down.

Although this second generation of VGA clones is plainly superior to the first, not all 100-percent-register-level-compatible boards are created equal. Some are more equal than others-so keep your eyes wide open.

TJ Byers is a contributing editor for PC World.

#### WHERE TO BUY

#### Amdek VGA Adapter/132

Amdek Corp. 3471 N. First St. San Jose, CA 95134 408/922-5700 List price: \$445

Warranty: one year parts and labor

Extended warrantv: none Technical support:

unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M-F 8-5

Other support services: none For more information, circle 790 on reader service card.

# **AST VGA Plus**

AST Research 2121 Alton Ave. Irvine, CA 92714 714/863-1333 List price: \$599 with 256K, \$949 with 512K Warranty: two years

parts and labor Extended warran-

ty: none **Technical support:** 

unlimited phone support, no toll-free number, M-F 8-5

Other support services: company BBS For more information, circle 791 on reader service card.

# **Everex EVGA**

Everex Systems, Inc. 48431 Milmont Dr. Fremont, CA 94538 415/498-1111 List price: \$399

Warranty: one year parts and labor **Extended warran-**

ty: none Technical support: unlimited phone support,

no toll-free number, M-F 8-5 Other support ser-

vices: company BBS For more information, circle 792 on reader service card.

## Genoa SuperVGA

Genoa Systems Corp. 75 E. Trimble Rd. San Jose, CA 95131 408/432-9090 List price: \$429

Warranty: one year parts and labor **Extended warran-**

tv: none **Technical support:** unlimited phone support, no toll-free number, M-F 8-5

Other support services: none For more information, circle 793 on reader service card.

#### IBM PS/2 Display Adapter

**IBM** 900 King St. Rye Brook, NY 10573 800/IBM-2468 List price: \$595

Warranty: one year parts and labor

Extended warranty: none **Technical support:** 

unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M-F 8-5

# Other support services: none

For more information, circle 794 on reader service card.

#### **Orchid Designer** VGA

Orchid Technology 45365 Northport Loop W Fremont, CA 94538 415/683-0300 List price: \$545 Warranty: two years parts and labor Extended warranty: four years with receipt of warranty card **Technical support:** unlimited phone support,

toll-free number, M-F Other support ser-

vices: none For more information, circle 795 on reader service card.

#### **Paradise VGA Professional**

Paradise Systems, Inc. 99 S. Hill Dr. Brisbane, CA 94005 415/960-3353

List price: \$599 Warranty: three years

parts and labor Extended warranty: none

# **Technical support:**

unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M-F 8-5

# Other support ser-

vices: none For more information, circle 796 on reader service card.

# Sigma VGA/H

Siama Designs 46501 Landing Pkwy. Fremont, CA 94538 415/770-0100 List price: \$399

Warranty: one year parts and labor

**Extended warran-**

**Technical support:** unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M-F

8-5

Other support services: none For more informa-

tion, circle 797 on reader service card.

#### STB VGA Extra/EM

STB Systems, Inc. P.O. Box 850957 Richardson, TX 75085 214/234-8750 List price: \$399 with

256K, \$499 with 512K

Warranty: two years parts and labor Extended warran-

tv: none **Technical support:** 

unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M-F 7:30-6:30

Other support services: none For more information, circle 798 on

#### Video-7 V-RAM **VGA**

reader service card.

Video-7 46335 Landing Pkwy. Fremont, CA 94538 415/656-7800, 415/656-0503 (BBS) List price: \$799 with 256K; upgrade to 512K

currently \$300, price announced daily Warranty: five years

parts and labor **Extended warran-**

ty: none Technical support:

unlimited phone support, toll-free number, M-F 8-5

Other support services: BBS For more information, circle 799 on reader service card.

# VGA Monitors— Cheap and Smart

When it comes to VGA monitors, it's hard to find a bad one.

PC World reviews 15 units and gives you the lowdown on the best values.

like brightly colored mushrooms that appear overnight, monitors compatible with IBM's Video Graphics Array (VGA) are popping up everywhere. With 640-by-480-pixel resolution and superior color capability (up to 256 simultaneous shades), the VGA clearly represents the new video standard. Software packages are rushing to support it, AT-compatible VGA boards abound (see "VGA Boards-The Second Generation" in this issue), and increasing numbers of systems include a VGA adapter on the motherboard. Furthermore, VGA monitors are affordable! Not only do they cost less than multiscans, they are even lower priced than the average EGA monitor.

To help you get the most for your money, *PC World* took a look at 15 of the most popular VGA monitors. Out of the 15, only 3 were lemons—and there were no fewer than 4 Best Buys: Amdek's 12-inch 732, Wyse's 12-inch WY-650, Tatung's 12-inch CM-1296, and the Relisys 14-inch RE9513. If price is no ob-

ject, Zenith's \$999, 14-inch ZCM-1490 has the best picture you can buy.

Ultimately, the most important factor in buying a monitor is image quality: brightness, color saturation, image stability, focus, and good color convergence (no bleeding of colors). All the monitors reviewed were stable, with bright, vivid colors. The significant differences were in focus and color convergence.

Although both focus and color convergence can be affected by the design and adjustment of focusing electronics, the biggest factor is dot pitch, the distance between the phosphor dots that cover the face of the monitor. All else being equal, the smaller the dot pitch, the sharper the image. Dot pitch on these monitors ranges from .28mm to .39mm.

Another consideration is glare. Deep bezels and tilt-and-swivel bases help keep ambient light from reflecting off the screen, but the best glare defeater is a flat screen. A flat-screen monitor also produces less geometric distortion. On the downside, flatscreen monitors cost more, and many have trouble maintaining sharp focus from corner to corner. The only truly flat screen in this

TJ Byers





roundup belongs to the Zenith ZCM-1490.

A word of caution before you read these reviews: Focus can vary significantly among otherwise identical monitors; even bumps in the road en route from the factory to the retailer to your office can affect sharpness. Thus focus problems we cite may pertain to the sample we tested rather than to the brand in general. The safest solution is to give the monitor you want to buy a close look before you put your money down.

# Amdek 632

PROS: Very low price

CONS: Soft focus, glare, hard-toreach controls, tilt-and-swivel base

The Amdek 632 is a bulky, 14-inch monitor with a slightly fuzzy image, due not to factory misadjustment but to a coarse dot pitch. A greater distance between dots is a common problem with larger monitors, but this unit has the coarsest dot pitch of all those reviewed. Worse yet, adjusting the brightness control causes the size of the image to change (a malady called blooming). The screen seems to reflect a lot of glare, too, and you'll pay an extra \$29 for a tilt-andswivel base. The 632's only saving grace is its \$595 list price, the lowest in the roundup.

# Amdek 732



PROS: Low price, razor-sharp focus, trackball controls, tilt-and-swivel base

CONS: Green-only text switch

The Amdek 732's image is so sharp and its colors so vibrant, only the pricey Zenith ZCM-1490 can surpass it—yet the Amdek costs only \$635. As a bonus, conveniently located trackball controls let you adjust brightness and contrast without taking your eyes off the screen. The only criticism: the pseudomonochrome text switch offers only green text, not a choice of text colors. But this is a cavil; the 12-inch 732 is a real find.

# CTX CC-2431P

PROS: Low price, decent image, tiltand-swivel base

CONS: Inconvenient controls, touchy vertical hold control

The 14-inch CTX CC-2431P is a low-priced monitor (\$625) with acceptable focus and color convergence. The brightness and contrast controls, located behind a lip on the side of the cabinet, are a bit inconvenient to reach. A vertical hold control, which keeps the screen from rolling as it shifts between CGA, EGA, and VGA modes, is in there too; it's a delicate adjustment, but once you've got it set, the monitor is steady. The CTX is a perfectly usable unit, even if it's no superstar. Left to right: 12-inch Amdek 732, 14-inch CTX CC-2431P, 14inch Amdek 632



Left to right:
14-inch imTEQ1453Q, 14-inch
Magnavox
Pro VGA, 14inch Mitsubishi
XC-1429C, 14inch Quimax
DM-3114, 12inch Princeton
PSC-28, 12-inch
Quimax DM-3112

# Leading Technology imTEC-1453Q

PROS: Convenient controls

**CONS:** Fairly expensive, fuzzy image, sticky tilt-and-swivel base

The 14-inch imTEC-1453Q is a big disappointment, especially given its relatively high \$695 price. Its worst failing is the image, which is noticeably fuzzy. On the upside, the controls are conveniently placed: Brightness and contrast knobs lie under the front apron, and the power switch is on the front panel. You get a free tilt-and-swivel base, but it sticks so badly it's worth exactly what it costs. All in all, this is not a unit to seek out.

# Magnavox Professional VGA Color Display

**PROS:** Convenient controls, tilt-andswivel base

**CONS:** Poor focus and color convergence

Buying the \$649 Magnavox Professional VGA is something of a gamble. Although the colors on this 14-inch monitor are good and its dot pitch is small, the review unit had

poor color convergence and strikingly bad focus. On the bright side, the controls are easy to reach behind a small hatch on the front of the monitor. Factory service may fix the focus, but then again it may not. Judged by the specs, a well-adjusted unit *should* be a top contender, so try before you buy.

# Mitsubishi XC-1429C

PROS: Sharp focus

**CONS:** Expensive, no tilt-and-swivel base, ineffective brightness control

At \$685, the 14-inch Mitsubishi XC-1429C is a bit pricey, and while its image is crisp and sharp, it has some problems. The large power switch is conveniently located on the front panel, but contrast and brightness controls are harder to reach under the front apron. Worse yet, the brightness control has virtually no effect, and Mitsubishi's high price doesn't include a tilt-and-swivel base. This is a usable monitor, but several units offer superior performance at lower prices.

# **Princeton PSC-28**

**PROS:** Excellent focus, text switch, tiltand-swivel base

CONS: Plug-in video cable

Princeton's \$695 PSC-28 is an impressive 12-inch monitor with a good, sharp image. Brightness, contrast, and on/off controls are



side mounted for easy access, and a text switch gives you a choice of white, blue, amber, or green characters. There are three small annoyances: The Princeton's video cable needs to be plugged into the monitor, its text colors are a bit washed out, and the

brightness control fogs the image if it's set too high. Nonetheless, given the unit's good image, these are problems you can live with.

# FEATURES EVALUATION

# **VGA Monitors**

Fifteen VGA color monitors range from \$595 to \$999 in price and from .28mm to .39mm in dot pitch. The best price | performance bargains are the Amdek 732, the Wyse WY-650, the Tatung CM-1296, and the Relisys RE9513.

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O No \ *	/ *	1 3	\ :	12.2	1 8	1 6	1 2	1 2	1 3	2	1 0	1	1	1 2	1
Yes No Deficient	Amdek 19	CIX CV-Jan	IMIEC 195	Magnavoral Ver		Princeton 1829C	Quimax bisc-28	3113	Rellists MA-3114	Talung Co.	Talung Car	W150 W1-1496	Tenith 13	Tenith The	1490
andard features	1	1	1	1	_	_	1		1	1	1	1	1		
Price	\$595	\$635	\$625	\$695	\$649	\$685	\$695	\$639	\$659	\$645	\$625	\$685	5669	5799	599
Diagonal measurement (inches)	14	12	14	14	14	14	12	12	14	14	12	13	12	13	14
Flat screen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	•
Tilt-and-swivel base	01	•	•	•	•	0	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	0	0
Dot pitch (millimeters)	.39	.28	.31	.31	.31	.28	.28	.28	.31	.31	.28	.31	.28	.31	.31
ternally accessible controls															
Horizontal phase	•	0	0	0	•	0	0	0	0	•	•	•	0	0	0
Horizontal size	0	0	0	0	•	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	•	
Vertical hold	0	0	•	0	0	•	0	0	0	•	0	0	0	0	0
Vertical size	•	0	•	•	0	•	0	0	0	•	0	0	0	•	•
Focus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	•	0

<sup>1</sup> Available at extra cost.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Some dealers charge extra.



Left to right: 13-inch Tatung CM-1496, 12inch Tatung CM-1296, 14inch Relisys RE9513

# **Quimax DM-3112**

**PROS:** Sharp focus, tilt-and-swivel base, excellent warranty

CONS: No text switch, crooked image

Aside from a few minor flaws, the low-priced (\$639) Quimax DM-3112 is a perfectly decent 12-inch monitor, with a sharp image, flawless color convergence, and an excellent warranty. The picture was a bit crooked, but this kind of problem is caused by factory misadjustment and can be fixed. Controls are conveniently placed: Brightness and contrast are under the front apron, and the power switch is on the front panel. Slight fogging occurs at higher brightness settings. Were it not for the crooked picture, this unit might have rated a Best Buy—especially considering the two-year warranty.

# **Quimax DM-3114**

PROS: Tilt-and-swivel base, excellent warranty

**CONS:** Blurry, bowed image; glare; inconvenient power switch

• f all the monitors reviewed, Quimax's \$659 14-inch DM-3114 had the most problems. The lower left corner of the screen was blurry, and the image was noticeably narrower in the center of the screen than at the top and bottom (a malady called pincushioning). Although brightness and contrast controls are conveniently located under the front

apron, the power switch location is awkward, and a shallow bezel admits objectionable glare. The only solid plus is that Quimax gives you the same two-year warranty it offers for its DM-3112.

# Relisys RE9513



PROS: Tilt-and-swivel base, convenient controls

CONS: Minor color convergence problem, retailers hard to find

The Relisys RE9513 costs \$645 and delivers one of the nicest pictures of any 14-inch monitor reviewed. The test unit had a slight color convergence problem near the top of the screen, but not enough to cause eyestrain. All the controls are conveniently located just below the screen. In fact, this monitor's only serious problem is that it is not widely distributed.

# Tatung CM-1296



PROS: Low price, excellent image, text switch, tilt-and-swivel base

CONS: None

The \$625 Tatung CM-1296 delivers an image so sharp and bright you'd think you were looking at a color slide. The side-mounted







controls (brightness, contrast, on/off) are easy to reach, and the range of brightness and contrast is excellent—although some fogging occurs when brightness is set too high. A text switch lets you choose white on black, amber on black, white on blue, or green on black. Given its low price, this is one of the best 12-inch monitors in the group.

# Tatung CM-1496

PROS: Text switch, tilt-and-swivel base

CONS: Slightly soft focus, minor color convergence problem

The 13-inch Tatung CM-1496 is a larger version of the outstanding CM-1296. It costs \$685, \$60 more than the 1296, and has a slightly coarser pitch, which makes it a bit fuzzier. Moreover, the review unit had a slight color convergence problem near the top of the screen. Is the extra inch worth the softer focus and the extra bucks? Probably not.

# Wyse WY-650



PROS: Low price, razor-sharp focus, trackball controls, tilt-and-swivel base

CONS: Curved screen, slightly more expensive than identical Amdek 732

The 12-inch Wyse WY-650 is more than a kissing cousin of the Amdek 732-apart from a slightly different cabinet, it's an identical twin. In fact, Wyse makes both units. The only significant difference is that the \$669 Wyse costs \$34 dollars more. However, if you can't find the Amdek 732, the Wyse still stands as a bargain.

# Zenith 1390

PROS: Sharp focus

CONS: Expensive, glare, no tilt-andswivel base

Zenith's 13-inch 1390 boasts impeccable focus and color convergence. Brightness, contrast, and on/off controls are conveniently located on the front apron. Unfortunately, its shallow bezel makes glare a problem. Moreover, the first 1390 test unit I looked at failed after 4 hours of operation. At \$799 this is also one of the most expensive monitors tested.

# Zenith ZCM-1490

PROS: Flat screen, unusually bright and crisp image, excellent contrast

CONS: Very expensive, noisy, heavy

The 14-inch flat-screen Zenith ZCM-1490 delivers a gorgeous picture, the best of any monitor in the roundup: bright, sharp, steady, remarkably free from glare. But

Left to right: 12-inch Wyse WY-650, 13-inch Zenith 1390, 14inch Zenith ZCM-1490

you'll pay for it; this monitor lists for a whopping \$999. Brightness and contrast controls are recessed on top of the unit, which is a bit inconvenient, and the power switch is a gorilla-stretch away on the back of the cabinet. A tilt-and-swivel base is available, but some retailers charge extra for it. The ZCM-1490 also needs its own cooling fan, which adds noticeably to the noise level. Finally, cuttingedge technology can be hard to mass-produce; some 1490s have focus and convergence problems that require adjustment before they are up to snuff. Still, this comes under the heading of paying the cost to be the boss. The ZCM-1490 puts out the best VGA image money can buy.

#### **Good News Continues**

The conclusion of this roundup is unmistakably upbeat: You'll have to work hard to find a really bad VGA display. Furthermore, the prices noted here are all list; you'll find many of the best monitors for sale at street prices from \$200 to \$400 lower. Just make sure you look before you leap. ●

TJ Byers is a contributing editor for PC World.

## WHERE TO BUY

#### Amdek 632 Amdek Corp.

1901 Zanker Rd.
San Jose, CA 95112
408/436-8570
List price: \$595
Warranty: one year
parts and labor
For more information, circle 701 on
reader service card.

#### Amdek 732

Amdek Corp.
List price: \$635
Warranty: one year
parts and labor
For more information, circle 702 on
reader service card.

# CTX CC-2431P

CTX Int'l
260 Paseo Tesoro
Walnut, CA 91789
714/595-6146
List price: \$625
Warranty: two years
parts, one year labor
For more information, circle 703 on
reader service card.

## imTEC 1453Q

Leading Technology 10430 S.W. Fifth Ave. Beaverton, OR 97005 503/646-3424 List price: \$695
Warranty: one year
parts and labor
For more information, circle 704 on
reader service card.

## Magnavox Professional VGA Color Display N.A.P. Consumer Elec-

tronics Corp.
P.O. Box 6950
Knoxville, TN 37914
615/521-4366
List price: \$649
Warranty: one year
parts and labor
For more information, circle 705 on
reader service card.

## Mitsubishi XC-1429C

Mitsubishi Electronics America, Inc. 991 Knox St. Torrance, CA 90502 213/515-3993 List price: \$685 Warranty: one year parts and labor For more information, circle 706 on reader service card.

# **Princeton PSC-28**

Princeton Graphic Systems 601 Ewing St., Bldg. A Princeton, NJ 08540 609/683-1660 List price: \$695 Warranty: one year parts and labor For more information, circle 707 on reader service card.

## Quimax DM-3112

Quimax Systems
844 Del Rey Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
408/773-8282
List price: \$639
Warranty: two years
parts and labor, additional year \$19.95
For more information, circle 708 on
reader service card.

#### Quimax DM-3114

Quimax Systems
List price: \$659
Warranty: two years
parts and labor, one additional year \$19.95
For more information, circle 709 on
reader service card.

## Relisys RE9513

Relisys 320 S. Milpitas Blvd. Milpitas, CA 95035 408/945-9000 List price: \$645 Warranty: two years parts, one year labor For more informa-

# reader service card. Tatung CM-1296

tion, circle 710 on

Tatung Co. of America, Inc.
2850 El Presidio St.
Long Beach, CA 90801
213/637-2105
List price: \$625
Warranty: one year parts and labor
For more information, circle 711 on

#### Tatung CM-1496

reader service card.

Tatung Co. of America, Inc.

List price: \$685
Warranty: one year
parts and labor
For more information, circle 712 on
reader service card.

# Wyse WY-650

Wyse Technology 3571 N. First St. San Jose, CA 95134 408/843-6614 List price: \$669 Warranty: one year parts and labor For more information, circle 713 on reader service card.

## Zenith 1390

Zenith Data Systems
Corp.
1000 Milwaukee Ave.
Glenview, IL 60025
312/699-4848
List price: \$799
Warranty: one year
parts and labor
For more information, circle 714 on
reader service card.

## Zenith ZCM-1490 Zenith Data Systems

Corp.
List price: \$999
Warranty: one year
parts and labor
For more information, circle 715 on

reader service card.

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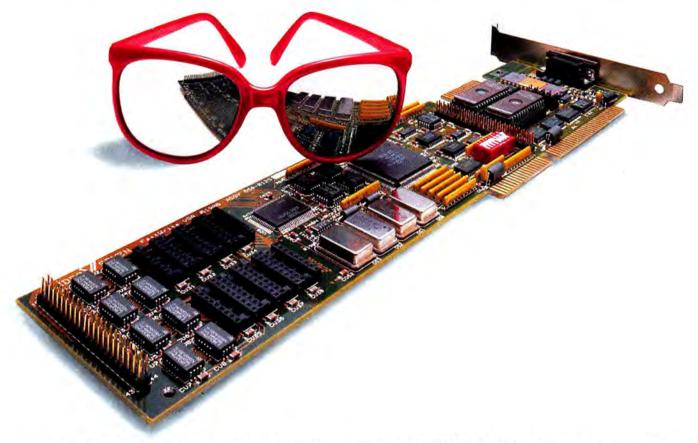
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Nentura Publisher 2.0	Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing	□Jet 2.1 (requires EGA or CGA)
XyQuest NCP	Sentinel Worlds	□Scenery Diskseach 15
□XyWrite III Plus 3.0 w/A-la-Carte Menus 239.	• Grand Slam Bridge	□San Francisco Star Scenery Disk 18
	Infocom NCP	□Japan Scenery Disk
RECREATIONAL/EDUCATIONAL	■Zork Trilogy	The Learning Company CP
	Lifestyle Publishing Group NCP	Math Rabbit (ages 4 to 7)
Accolade CP (reqs. graphics brd.)	•Golf Doctor (improve your game)	Reader Rabbit (ages 4 to 7) 26
BBubble Ghost	□Golf's Best Pinehurst #2 (play the best) 12.	
■Mean 18		XOR NCP
■Hardball (baseball simulation) 11.	Handicapper)27.	□NFL Challenge 2.0 69

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# PC Presents.

You better not pout! ('Cause Santa Dos is coming to town.)

ere in the yuletide town of Marlow, NH (pop. 556), most of our neighbors have rather traditional ideas of holiday gift giving. For software, a nice new pair of red thermal underwear would be a real hearth warmer. Hardware? Well, a chainsaw might be really sharp. And, as for utilities, a telephone and running water would be welcome additions to some homes. Nevertheless, being hip to the trendy tastes of the microcomputer age, our very presentable mascots are making sure that we're well-stocked with PC games and gadgets for the byte-bitten on your Christmas or Hanukkah list.

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People often ask us why we go to such lengths to satisfy customers. Well, our Customer Service Director thinks it's good business. Our Advertising Director thinks it makes good copy. Our mothers think it's their influence. But, actually, we give such nice (as opposed to naughty) service because of that famous list that Santa and his raccoons are making (and checking twice, we hear). But, frankly, we're a little worried about companies who don't give toll-free support, or who charge your credit card before they ship, or who don't ship backorders free, or who have developed any of those other naughty mail order habits. It's lump o' coal city for those dudes.

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order of \$500 or more by January 31st, and you will get your very own surprise present from PC Connection! Specially programmed to self-destruct if opened before Christmas.

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Manufacturer's standard limited warranty period for items shown is listed after each company name. Some products in their line may have different warranty periods.

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Advantage Premium 512k S/P	
(upgrades to 1 Meg or 2 Meg	
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w/Piggyback)	Jai
Advantage 2 512k (for PS/2 Models 50/60).	
Advantage 2-386 (for PS/2 Model 80)	cal
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RAMpage! Plus MicroChannel 512k	
(for PS/2 Models 50/60)	cal
Amdek 90 days	
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LaserDrive-2 (internal CD-ROM Drive) 6	29
Compucable 2 years	
	29
	39
• · • • · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	33
Cuesta 1 year	
Datasaver 400 Watt (standby power backup	
unit)4	59
Curtis lifetime	
ACCESSORIES	
Curtis Clip CC-1	6
Disk Holder DB-1 (holds 50 51/4" disks)	8
31/2" Disk Holder DB-2 (holds up 40 disks) .	8
31/2" Diskette Cleaning Kit CK-2	16
Printer Stand PS-1	18
	25
Claire mat on E	25
	25
	33
CABLES	
Smartmodem-to-PC Cable EC-7 (9 feet)	17
Printer-to-IBM cable EC-6 (9 feet)	17
	25
	25
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Safestrip SP-3 (6 outlets; 1 year warranty).	19
Filtered SafeStrip SPF-3	21
	29
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Ruby SPF-2 (6 outlets; EMI/RFI filtered; 6 ft	
00/0/11/11/11/11/11/11/11/11/11/11/11/11	55
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Mouse w/LogiCAD (bus or serial)	119.
ClearCase Mouse (serial only)	. 99.
ScanMan (hand held scanner)	199.
Microsoft lifetime	0.40
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Disk+Option (for Mach 20)	. 69.
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Mouse with Easy CAD (bus or serial)	125.
,	145.
Migent 1 year	
Pocket Modem (1200 baud, incl. software)	109.

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# THE SOFTWARE SHELF

#### 170 Agenda 1.0

Lotus's long-awaited personal information manager gives users power, but it's hard to learn. Among other tricks, *Agenda* automatically categorizes information according to parameters you define.

#### 172 IBM Interleaf Publisher

LAN work groups that need WYSIWYG, an intuitive interface, and graphics sleight of hand should consider this high-end publishing tool.

## 178 Framework III

Polishing an already excellent integrated package, Ashton-Tate melds a faster spreadsheet, an improved data base, and built-in E-mail into a definite Best Buy.

# 182 Flight Simulator 3.0

Visit exotic locales in a Learjet, fly by modem with a friend, and customize every detail of your flights with this update to a best-seller.

# 186 Mah Jongg 2.5

Hone your strategic skills with a handsome solitaire version of the ancient Chinese board game.

#### 186 Test Drive

The Highway Patrol is but a dim memory in your Lamborghini's rearview mirror as you finesse mountain hairpins and dodge clumsy big rigs at 173 mph. Choose from five dream machines.

## 190 Apollo 18: Mission to the Moon

Play both flight director and crew commander on recovery missions to the moon. Type A personalities will love the tricky landings.

# Agenda 1.0

Personal information manager

**PROS:** Automatically indexes text by user-defined categories, sorts information into multiple views

CONS: Hard to learn, poor file import/ export facilities, no windowing capability

Once you've created a program like 1-2-3, what do you do for an encore? When Lotus founder Mitch Kapor set out to create Agenda, a general-purpose tool that would let users manipulate text as freely as 1-2-3 users crunch numbers, he naturally took his cue from the best-selling spreadsheet. But now that Agenda is finally here, detail-crazed users hoping for the ultimate organizing program may be disappointed.

Certainly, the \$395 program can generate anything from a high-powered to-do list to a flexible archive of correspondence. Its wealth of controls lets you customize a data base in any number of ways. But *Agenda* is daunting to learn and single-minded in use. *Agenda*'s maximum file size is limited, yet it won't let you open more than one data base at a time. Nor can it display multiple views of the information on screen. *Agenda* requires *Windows* or *Desqview* to be truly useful.

Agenda is best known for launching the wave of personal information managers (PIMs) which includes Valor Software's Info-XL, Persoft's Ize, Symantec's GrandView (see The Software Shelf, PCW, August, September, and November 1988, respectively) and Micro Logic's Tornado. Though they all claim to organize scraps of information for busy users, these products have little in common beyond an ability to sort text for easy recall. Agenda beats most other personal information managers in versatility but not in ease of use.

Agenda offers a host of powerful tools for relating, filtering, and viewing information, and you can successfully adapt it over time to fit your personal working habits. What

Agenda gives in flexibility, however, it takes away in the lengthy setup process you're likely to endure when building a data base of any complexity.

The raw materials of any *Agenda* application are a combination of *items* and *notes*, indexed for retrieval by *category*. You enter text into an *Agenda* data base in items up to 350 characters in length, and you can tag any item with a note up to 10K long. (This works both ways: You can turn text from a note into an item, or gather multiple items into a note.) The trick to keeping related items and notes corralled is to group them by categories. You can define categories at two points: when working directly with an item, or in an outline view of the data base called the Category Manager.

The Category Manager, the key to Agenda's powerful data filtering techniques, lets you build a hierarchy of categories that the program uses for sorting the text in items and notes. You can define conditions and actions that tie categories together (or exclude them from each other), and you can narrow the data shown in any view by specifying a range of search dates. When you've defined these parameters Agenda starts to hum. It automatically assigns most incoming text to its appropriate categories and displays it in any number of customized views.

While *Agenda*'s conditions and actions are hard to grasp at first, they let you draw powerful relations between disparate pieces of information. For example, you can readily create views that duplicate those built into more structured programs like *Info-XL*. The hitch is that you have to do it all yourself.

Agenda's filtering tools are so numerous that you can spend hours tweaking a data base—and if you don't watch out, you will. It's possible to sink frightening amounts of time into defining a complex category hierarchy or building multiple views.

Some limitations are guaranteed to irk novices and power users alike. *Agenda* files top out at 4MB, yet you can keep only one data base file open at a time. To ease the space problem, you can attach note files to

items rather than importing them directly into the data base. Just be sure you don't intend to delete the attached file, and be aware that editing the file changes the information displayed in the data base.

Agenda also lacks GrandView's handy ability to place multiple views on screen in windows. The program doesn't support a mouse, but its rich keyboard interface speeds you through most chores once you've mastered the shortcuts. Macros are mediocre at best, failing to match those in Lotus's Metro. And unlike Ize's welcome-mat approach to outside files, Agenda awkwardly imports information in ASCII format only.

Finally, Agenda should really be RAM resident, at your fingertips whenever you need to add or find information. A Metro utility lets you enter data that can be imported into Agenda later, but you can't use it to examine the data base. Users should seriously consider running Agenda under Windows/386 or Desquiew. At press time a character-based OS/2 version of Agenda was slated to appear sometime in late 1988.

Considering *Agenda*'s complexity, the program's first release is remarkably bug-free. Documentation is well written and clear, except where the authors stumble over such arcane concepts as how to decide when it's better to apply a condition than an action to a





Agenda indexes items and notes by means of categories that you define either when working directly with an item or in an outline view of the data base called the Category Manager.

category. Context-sensitive help permits you to skip around from subject to subject almost as easily as you can with *Excel's* hypertext help facility. A demo and tutorial are also available.

For such a difficult application, however, Lotus should have given users a jump start by providing a library of useful templates that could be integrated into their own applications—for example, a phone book, appointment calendar, or project-tracking template. Agenda does include four applications that you can modify for your own use, but they're too simple to be of much value.

Agenda isn't a casual tool for users who need some software to organize their lives. If that's the object, then Info-XL, GrandView, or even SideKick Plus makes much better sense. Nor is it really suited, like Ize, to importing and sorting large volumes of text and numbers. Instead, Agenda offers dedicated users unprecedented flexibility in fashioning customized data bases out of text. But it will have to improve in both power and ease of use before its talents will be appreciated by more than a few. —Richard Landry

#### WHERE TO BUY

Agenda 1.0

Lotus Development Corp. 55 Cambridge Pkwy. Cambridge, MA 02142 617/577-8500

List price: \$395

**Requirements:** 640K, hard disk, DOS 2.00 or later version

Not copy protected

Technical support: unlimited, no toll-free number, M—F 8:30—8

Other support services: Compuserve forum (GO LOTUSB)

For more information, circle 720 on reader service card.

# IBM Interleaf Publisher

Desktop publishing program

PROS: 100 percent WYSIWYG display; excellent long-document handling; accessible interface; graphics editor; charting package

CONS: Expensive, requires a DOS/80386 system and 4MB RAM, weak word processing, can't display full page on most monitors

The IBM Interleaf Publisher is the DOS/80386-based scion of a family of high-priced UNIX programs long dominant in professional and technical publishing. While Ventura and PageMaker pick up where the word processor leaves off, Interleaf combines word processing, sophisticated graphics, page composition, document management, and LAN support in a single package. Furthermore, Interleaf can update a page of graphics as quickly as a word processor refreshes a screen of text, and its icon-driven interface makes the program easy to use.

However, *Interleaf* costs nearly \$2500, has stiff hardware requirements, and strays somewhat from PC desktop publishing standards. The program lacks such niceties as automatic kerning and text flow around graphics, for example, and won't let you preview an entire page.

IBM recommends that you run the 32-bit Interleaf software on an 80386 system with a 40MB (minimum) hard disk, 6MB of RAM, a mouse, and a PostScript-compatible laser printer. The program itself requires a minimum of 4MB of RAM. Yet driver support for graphics boards is weak. Although Interleaf supports the VGA and EGA, the only high-resolution graphics boards it currently supports are IBM's 1024-by-768-pixel 8514/A and the new 19-inch 1280-by-960 8507.



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Insilco

# FEATURES EVALUATION

# IBM Interleaf Publisher: A Complete PC Publisher

Except for some weaknesses in file importing, Interleaf Publisher offers a wealth of features not found in the competition.

\ ali	Ventura 1.1 Publisher 1.1 Publisher 3.0		
Pagination and layout controls			
Style sheets/templates	•	•	•
Automatic text flow across pages	•	•	•
Adjustable widow and orphan control	•	0	•
Automatic column balancing on last page	•	0	•
Column balancing above straddles	•	0	0
Vertical justification	•	0	0
Automatic table-of-contents generation	•	0	•
Automatic index generation	•	0	•
Automatic footnotes	•	0	•
Anchors graphics to text	•	0	•
Anchors captions to graphics	•	0	•
Master headers and footers	•	•	•
Typographic features			
Automatic and manual hyphenation	•	•	•
Exception dictionary	•	•	•
Automatic kerning	0	•	•
Tracking control	0	0	•
Automatic first-line indents	•	•	•
Reverse type	0	•	•
Includes scalable font outlines	•	•	0
Globally reformats tagged elements	•	0	0

\ WALL	Pademaker 3.0		
Text/graphics handling	an Interlegt	Publisher 3.0	11
Global search and replace	•	0	0
Automatic text flow around graphics	0	•	•
Draws lines and boxes	•	•	•
Isometric conversions	•	0	0
Freehand drawing	•	0	0
Scales/crops graphics	•	•	•
Automatic spot-color separations	0	•	01
Imports text files			
ASCII	•	•	•
dBASE	0	•	0
.WKS, .WK1	0	•	0
MultiMate	•	•	•
WordStar 3.x	•	•	•
WordPerfect 4.2	0	•	•
Microsoft Word	•	•	•
XyWrite III	0	•	•
Imports graphics files			
EPS	•	•	•
GEM	0	0	•
.PCX, .PCC	0	•	•
.PIC	0	•	•
TIFF	•	•	0
CGM	0	•	•
HPGL	•	•	•

<sup>●</sup> Yes ○ No ● Deficient

For document formatting, *Interleaf* has such advanced features as text flow across pages, column balancing, automatic list and header numbering, style sheets, and vertical justification. It supports only Bitstream fonts, in sizes ranging from 6 to 72 points. You can pluck bigger type sizes, letter by letter, from *Interleaf*'s clip art library.

Because of *Interleaf*'s fondness for icons, document management is a snap. The program's book icon, for example, lets you automatically group document icons into

chapters. To reorder chapters, you simply rearrange the document icons inside the book icon—and *Interleaf* instantly updates all internal references to the chapter number. An *Interleaf* book can be copied into another icon where other projects of the same scale are maintained. This is important on a LAN, where one icon can be used to give access to all projects in a department.

*Interleaf's* window is 100 percent WY-SIWYG, in the sense that what you see on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Requires significant document reformatting.

# HOWTOWRITE MOBY DICK

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#### 1. Call me Ishmael.

use them.

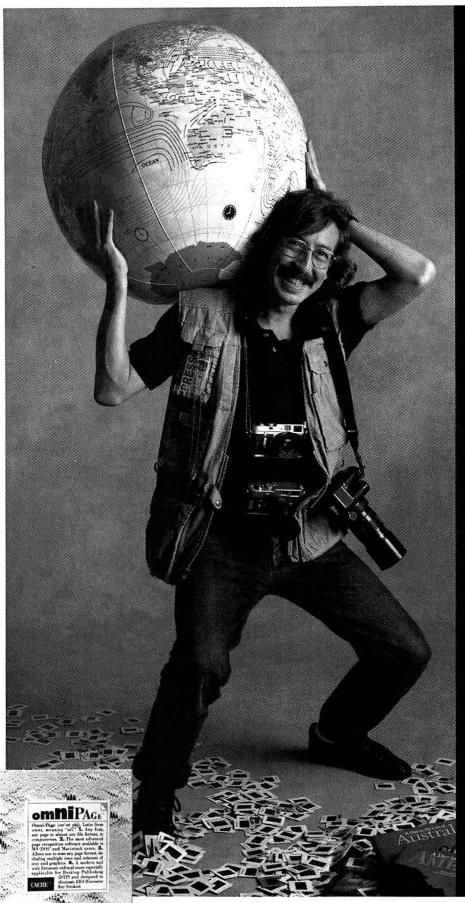
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2. Save the whales—make a note of that.

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### om**n** PAGE

**Customer Profile** 

#### Rick Smolan

Age: Withheld upon request.

**Profession:** World class photographer, entrepreneur and inspirational force behind the now famous Day in the Life of Australia; Day in the Life of the Soviet Union; Day in the Life of America you get the picture.

Hobbies: When he's not taking photos in exotic places like Bangkok, Nairobi or Cairo, Rick enjoys kicking back, relaxing, and possibly doing some serious scanning of articles related to one of his favorite subjects—Levitation as practiced by Tibetan monks.

#### **His Page Recognition Software:**

OmniPage, of course. Why else would we have him in our ad? According to Rick: "Coordinating 100 photographers in the Soviet Union for a one day photo shoot is no easy task for a small group like ours—despite what you hear about glasnost. Especially when you have to put an entire book together in a matter of weeks. When we're on assignment each photographer turns in notes—about a given shot—in whatever language he or sl speaks. You can imagine some of the type styles the we have to deal with. When do you guys think you'll be able to handle the Cyrillic alphabet?"

Favorite Quote: Jonathan Seybold summed it up best: "OmniPage is the first good reason to buy a scanner."

Things Disliked Most: "Scanner software that over promises. Being able to scan any font in almost any column format really makes a difference. I wish that our photographers had the time to submit captions that are 99.9% accurate, or even half as reliable as OmniPage."

Favorite Scan: "I'm developing a library of some of my favorite photography articles—serious professional stuff—and putting it into files that I ca get to and use. That's my idea of a meaningful scar

Future of Page Recognition: "The idea of making computers compatible with paper is long overdue. People like myself who are on the move need products like this to save time. Everyone coul stand a few less key strokes. I also see some real possibilities for OmniPage in the area of desktop publishing. Being able to scan specific sections frogeneral publications, even typed notes, provides a real benefit to anyone who has to quickly turn around a publication. Do you guys think OmniPag will ever be able to read my handwriting? Our stawould love that."

Caere Corporation 100 Cooper Court Los Gatos, CA 95030 Call: 1-800-535-SCAN

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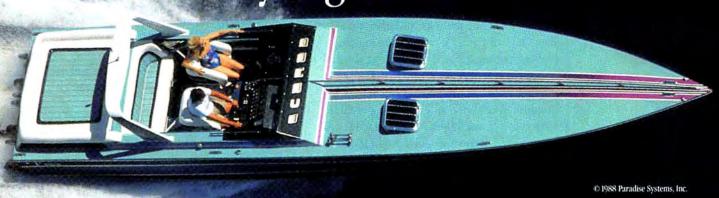
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†640 x 400 mode works with PS/2 and MultiSync monitors. VGA Plus 16, AutoSense, VGA Plus and VGA Professional are trademarks of Paradise Systems, Inc. \*18M is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corp.

screen exactly matches the printed page in text appearance (there is no greeking) and dimensions. However, on an EGA/VGA monitor, you can see only half the actual page; on the 8514/A and the 8507, you get about four-fifths. Since *Interleaf* doesn't provide a way to reduce page scale, you can't preview a full page as you can in *PageMaker* and *Ventura*.

Entering text is like using a word processor, with one difference: Paragraphs, illustrations, tables, headers, and other objects in a document are linked to style sheets. You can create a document template merely by cutting and pasting components into a fresh document, then saving it. *Interleaf*'s word processor lacks an undo command and macros, and it suffers from skimpy search and replace and awkward tab functions. On the plus side, you can cut and paste between documents very quickly, and hyphenation and mouse support are excellent.

Manipulating graphics in *Interleaf* is amazingly easy. You create graphics on the fly by opening a *frame* wherever you want in the document. A frame can be as small as a single letter or as large as the current page size. You can anchor a frame to an existing text component, place the graphic at the top or bottom of a page, or straddle it across multiple columns. Making global changes to graphics is easy, and *Interleaf* has graphics tools that approach those of a good CAD program. Some of the more advanced include 3-D isometric scaling, rotation, and a fully definable grid.

Compared with both PageMaker and Ventura, Interleaf is surprisingly weak on data exchange. Despite a built-in charting package, it accepts spreadsheet files only as data, and can't import .PIC files. Supported word processing formats include DCA, Microsoft Word 4.0, WordStar 3.x, MultiMate, and files from the Wang TTY, WPS, PC, and Xerox 860 dedicated word processors. A filter for WordPerfect may soon be added to the list.

Interleaf isn't perfect, but it's easy to learn, fast, and very sophisticated at manipulating graphics. Because of its cost, power, icon interface, and large-scale document handling, Interleaf is best suited to a LAN work group doing heavy-duty one-stop publishing. Mortals with lesser needs should stick to PageMaker or Ventura.—Alan Southerton

#### WHERE TO BUY

#### **IBM Interleaf Publisher**

900 King St.

Rye Brook, NY 10573 800/IBM-7257 ext. 58 (for dealer information)

List price: \$2495

Requirements: 80386-based system; 4MB RAM (6MB recommended); hard disk (40MB recommended); 1.44MB disk drive; EGA, VGA, or IBM 8514/A monitor and adapter; DOS 3.30 or later version

Not copy protected

**Technical support:** 90 days free, toll-free number, M–F 9–5; extended service \$200/year (includes toll-free number)

Other support services: free quarterly IBM newsletter; three-day IBM training in Boulder, Colorado, \$656 For more information, circle 721 on reader service card.

#### Framework III

Integrated package



PROS: Strong word processor and spreadsheet, outstanding interactive outline function, supports EMS 4.0 expanded memory

CONS: Data base limited to available RAM, weak spelling checker and graphics

With Framework III, Ashton-Tate has further enhanced a time-honored favorite. The package's spreadsheet calculates faster than its predecessor's, the data base is easier to use than ever, and best of all, a built-in E-mail facility has been added. File management and printing are improved, and for the first time Ashton-Tate shows off the whole program in EGA color.

There is still some room to grow, of course. The spelling checker is less than state-of-the-art, for example, and the import/export function could support more file formats. But overall, *Framework III* is more comfortable to use than either of its major competitors, The Software Group's *Enable* or Lotus's *Symphony* (see *The Software Shelf, PCW*, September 1988).

Once you get past a complex installation and learn a few odd function key commands, Framework III is remarkably easy to master. The package's basic structure is un-













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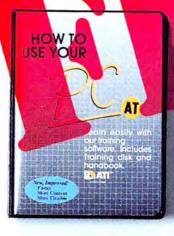


CONCEPT



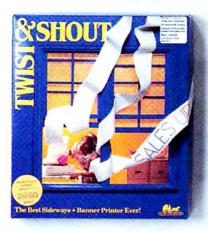


















Thanks to
Framework's
structure of
nested
"frames," a user
can quickly
gather an outline, a text
document, a
worksheet, and
a data base
within a single
file.

changed from earlier versions: A series of nested files—or "frames"—compose an integrated whole. To produce a multipart report, for example, you open an outline frame to organize the work, then append subframes containing the text and any related worksheets, data bases, and graphs. As before, the pulldown menu commands are common to all the application modules, but mouse support now makes file handling a point-and-shoot option.

Within Framework, file translation has never been an issue: A file from any module can be used by any other. The list of foreign formats supported now includes MultiMate 3.7, WordPerfect 4.2, WordStar 4.0, and SYLK 3.0. In addition, Ashton-Tate customer service will provide a free utility to convert Symphony files into Framework III.

Framework III's word processor has gained in speed, and you can now edit text in the cut and paste buffer. Automatic footnoting has been added, and it's so well integrated that a search and replace command scans the footnotes as well as text. Finally, the macro feature that automatically substitutes a piece of text when you type an abbreviation is much more convenient to use.

Changes to the spreadsheet module are few but significant. Recalculation is a good deal faster than in *Framework II*—although *Framework III* trailed *Symphony 2.0* in NSTL tests—and the program now supports EMS 4.0. Almost as important, you no longer need to calculate or sort an entire work-

sheet to update a range. Less impressive are Framework III's graphs, which remain a pale shadow of the 3-D graphs possible in Enable.

In Framework III's data base—as in the spreadsheet—cell formats can be set for specified or named ranges. Once the date, time, logical, formula, and character or numeric formats are assigned, you just type in the data. Other pluses include unlimited sort keys and the ability to lock multiple files. As before, Framework III's data base unfortunately is limited by available RAM.

A solid part of the package, telecommunications could still use a little more fine-tuning. Files can be received in the background, for example, but sending them ties up the program. And customizing the canned log-on scripts is a chore. In any case, most of the big communications news concerns Framework III's built-in electronic mail capability. By running Action Technologies' \$99 MHS Mail (the acronym stands for Message Handling Service) with Framework III's integrated E-mail facility, users can now dial into Novell's Netware and NETBIOS-compatible LANs from the outside, by modem. Once they are recognized as authorized users, they can do anything a true LAN member can: send and receive mail, queue messages, and use addressee nicknames and group lists. At press time, a five-user \$995 LAN version of Framework III was to have shipped October 31.

The biggest addition to Framework III is the E-mail facility, but nearly every module has been improved and the whole package made faster. Where Symphony and Enable users have to slog through menu systems that are complex or obtuse—or both—Framework III users can call up applications as quickly as they do files and transfer data between them instantly. With this upgrade, Ashton-Tate has continued to improve an already excellent integrated package.

-Stephen A. Blumenthal

#### WHERE TO BUY

#### Framework III

Ashton-Tate 20101 Hamilton Ave. Torrance, CA 90502-1319 800/437-4329, 213/329-8000, 213/538-6169 (BBS)



having to

HEADSTART III

buy any additional boards.

adstart 3-D Graphic

In addition, our PC Coach hotline is available to registered owners with questions about hardware, software or service.

To obtain more information about the HeadStart III and our full line of advanced computer systems, or to find the name of the nearest dealer 1-800-882-1888.

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Incredibly convenient. The

The HeadStart III has two internal drives: a 1.2 megabyte, 5.25-inch and a 1.44 megabyte 3.5-inch, both standard. So you don't have to

Both Standard choose between the two, you use either, depending on your software.

51/4" and 31/2" Diskdrive

Incredible performance. At the heart of the HeadStart III is a 12MHz 80286 processor with one megabyte of standard RAM, with the hard drive system delivering 32 megabytes of storage operating at 28 milliseconds with astonishing 1 to 1 interleave. Plus, true 16 bit built-in VGA Graphics is component matched for high speed and clarity.

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#### **SPECIFICATIONS**

MICROPROCESSOR: Intel 80286-12 SPEED: 12MHz/8 Switchable BIOS: Award BUILT IN RAM: 1 Megabyte EXPANDABLETO: 3 megabytes POWER SUPPLY: 145 watts 110/1220 switchable KEYBOARD: 101 key PS 2 compatible GRAPHICS: VGA Autosync FLOPPY DRIVES: one 5.25° 1.2 megabyte, one 3.5° 1.44 megabyte

HARD DRIVE: 32.1 megabyte, 28 milliseconds, 1:1 interleave BUILT IN INTERFACES: Parallel, 2- RS232 serial, mouse, joystick EXPANSION SLOTS: 3 available MOUSE: Standard SOFTWAR: DOS 3.3, GW Basic, HeadStart Advanced Environment Elegony Driver

MOUSE: Standard SOFTWARE: DOS 3.3, GW Basic, HeadStart Advanced Environment, Floppy Driver, Framework II., 3-D Graphics, Aff 1 and Computer-EEZ Tutorial Software, Xtree hard disk managet, Publish-it! Chessmaster 2000, Splash VGA paint program, Bookmark, plus Twist and Shout.

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# HEADSTART III

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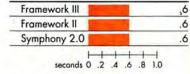
#### NSTL TEST REPORT

#### Framework III: Neck and Neck With Symphony

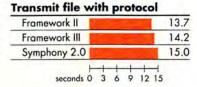
Framework III leads Symphony in word processing and communications speed but trails in spreadsheet operations.

#### Data base

#### Search for a record



#### Communications



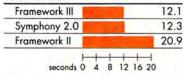
#### Spreadsheet (continued)

#### Insert, copy, and delete columns

Symphony 2.0		13.7
Framework III		17.4
Framework II		33.1
seconds 0	8 16 24 32	2 40

#### Word processor

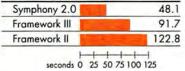
#### Print a file



#### **Spreadsheet**



#### Insert, copy, and delete columns (with EMS)



#### Global search and replace

Framework III	5.6
Framework II	5.9
Symphony 2.0	78.5

seconds 0 15 30 45 60 75 All tests were performed on a 12-MHz Compaq Deskpro 286 with 1.15MB of RAM and a 20MB

hard disk. A disk cache consisting of 256K of extended memory was used for all tests except the spreadsheet tests. A 10-MHz 80287 coprocessor was used for the EMS spreadsheet tests only, and a 2MB Intel AboveBoard was used for all EMS tests.

#### Search for a record

Records in a 200-record file were selected one at a time. Note: A 200-record file was used because of the high-end integrated packages' data base limitations.

#### Recalculate

# Symphony 2.0

#### Recalculate (with FMS)

weenicolaic ( in		,		
Symphony 2.0				17.2
Framework III	100			56.2
Framework II				76.6
seconds 0	15 30	0 45 6	50 75	

#### Print a file

An 8-page (480-line) document was "printed" to a device that simulates an infinitely fast printer, one not slowed by paper or printhead movement.

#### Global search and replace

With the cursor positioned at the beginning of the text file, the program was instructed to automati-cally replace all 238 instances of aaaa with AAAA.

Transmit file with protocol
Using the XMODEM CRC protocol, a 10K text file was transmitted at 9600 bps to an identically configured Compaq Deskpro 286/12 running the software being tested. The Deskpros were directly connected by a null modem.

#### Recalculate

With the cursor positioned at cell B18, a new value was entered and the spreadsheet recalculated. Recalculation was set to automatic. The test was executed again using EMS and a coprocessor.

#### Insert, copy, and delete columns

This test measures the time required to insert blank columns (P1..AD1), copy other columns into the new columns (AE1..AR2O4 to P1..AD1), then delete the copied columns. Each step was timed separately; then the times were added. The test was executed again using EMS and a coprocessor.

Data based on tests designed and conducted by National Software Testing Laboratories (NSTL). All rights reserved.

List price: \$695, upgrade from Framework II \$175

Requirements: 640K, two disk drives (hard disk recommended), DOS 2.10 or later version

Not copy protected

Technical support: 90 days free, no toll-free number, M-F 6-4:30; extended support \$50-\$150 per year

Other support services: user BBS; training materials and on-site training available

For more information, circle 722 on reader service card.

#### Flight Simulator 3.0

Flight simulator

PROS: Superb simulation, multiple views, panning, windowing, formation flying, instruction mode

CONS: Clunky menu system, doesn't always recognize joysticks, can't change screen colors, some bugs

# PCW\RLD Profile

#### TOPS tells why PC WORLD works for them.

"PC WORLD is a critical part of our marketing mix. We put a strong advertising emphasis on PC WORLD because we're convinced that the magazine reaches an important part of our market, especially the department manager for the workgroup and the power user."

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"We're pretty hot on the book. I think the best thing I can say about our involvement with PC WORLD is that it's a magazine that reaches a marketplace which is ready and waiting to adopt a solution like TOPS."

#### On readers who manage the buying process.

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#### On reaching readers who make decisions.

"We need the people who are directly affected by and interested in solutions TOPS provides. But often they are just part of the decision-making process. We also need to reach the business buyers and PC coordinators — people who need to understand what solutions are available in the marketplace and often determine what is actually purchased. PC WORLD delivers them for us."



Rich Shapero, VP and General Manager, TOPS division, Sun Microsystems, speaks on the value of PC WORLD as an integral part of their success. The TOPS division specializes in developing and marketing networking products for IBM-PC's, Apple Macintoshes and Sun Workstations.

# On TOPS and why PC WORLD is important to them.

"In the past twelve months, some amazing things have happened at TOPS. We've shipped more than 400,000 TOPS network nodes. We think we're seeing the emergence of a

new product category for the microcomputer industry—the plug-and-go LAN. My favorite statistic is that TOPS nodes now rival monthly Ethernet board volumes. We've gone to PC WORLD to continue to tell the TOPS story — the growing consumer acceptance of a network solution that makes sense. PC WORLD works for us."



Flight Simulator 3.0's multiple views let you land the plane while watching from the cockpit and the control tower at the same time. Flight Simulator used to be the game to play: Boot up a PC, and you were at the controls of a fully equipped Cessna 182 poised for takeoff. Thrills and spills were minimal, but mastering takeoffs, landings, navigation, and instrument flight was challenge enough for millions of users. Over time, though, more innovative programs like Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Simulator took center stage.

With version 3.0, *Flight Simulator* edges back into the spotlight, but it won't win a standing ovation. SubLogic, the program's designer, has built in an impressive array of features, but the update is hampered by a clumsy menu system and some irritating bugs.

On the plus side, Flight Simulator 3.0 is positively cinematic. Like Microsoft's Jet, it shows myriad views from the cockpit, and if you select the chase plane view, the program adroitly zooms and pans to keep the airplane in frame. You can even carve up the screen and simultaneously observe the airplane in flight, trace its course on a map, and watch it from the control tower.

In version 3.0, SubLogic has spruced up the scenery and added 118 airports; on VGA setups, images are vibrantly rendered as near-solid 3-D objects. The company also sells a number of detailed scenery disks covering the United States, Tokyo, and other locales. Moreover, Flight Simulator's designers have clearly studied Advanced Flight Simulator. You can now dynamically change views, aircraft, and flight conditions; replay

a session; tap an on-line instruction mode; chase an ace through various obstacle courses; and try out other aircraft—including a crop duster, a World War I biplane, or a "Gates" Learjet 25G.

Unlike its competitors, Flight Simulator permits total control over almost every flight factor, from wind to engine reliability. Online weather reports scroll across the screen, and if you want to fly with a human (instead of the program), dial up a friend with a modem and fly wing to wing.

Unfortunately, Flight Simulator's pull-down menu interface can be maddening, and operations from installing a joystick to sizing a window are awkward. The manual's haziness on how some important features work doesn't help much. There are bugs to watch out for, too. Zoom and the <Esc> key don't always register, joysticks work fitfully, overlapping windows can blank each other out, and the replay mode will sometimes send your plane on a Buster Keaton-like flight through a hanger.

Nevertheless, if you're anxious for the next step in flight simulation, pick up version 3.0. You'll have to pay full price (Microsoft doesn't offer 2.0 owners an upgrade), but at least the program is no longer copy protected. Just read the manual carefully—and keep those wings level. —Robert Luhn

#### WHERE TO BUY

#### Flight Simulator 3.0

Microsoft Corp. 16011 N.E. 36th Way Box 97017 Redmond, WA 98073-9717 206/882-8080

List price: \$49.95, no upgrade policy Requirements: 256K, graphics adapter, DOS 2.00 or later version Not copy protected

**Technical support:** unlimited, no tollfree number, M–F 6–6

Other support services: Compu-Serve forum (GO MSAPP), quarterly newsletter on Microsoft products For more information, circle 723 on reader service card.

#### Scenery disks

SubLogic Corp. 501 Kenyon Rd. Champaign, IL 61820 800/637-4983, 217/359-8482 **List price:** six Western United States Introducing ...

# Full Spectrum Data Communications

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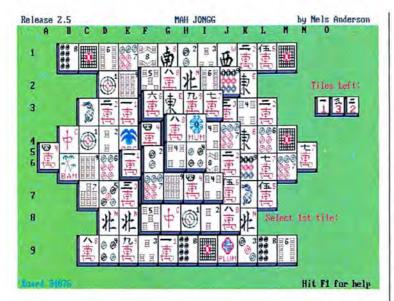
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#### Mah Jongg 2.5

PROS: Gorgeous board and tiles, challenging and addictive play

CONS: EGA only

To judge by the number of people who are downloading *Mah Jongg* from bulletin boards, Nels Anderson's elegant shareware game is delivering a lot of brain-soothing entertainment. Three millennia after its invention, Mah Jongg is still played widely in China, primarily in a gambling version that resembles rummy. Anderson, a programmer in Framingham, Massachusetts, chose to digitize a solitaire variation in which 144 handsome tiles are stacked in random patterns and removed two at a time until none remain.

The game's rules are simple, but clearing a tough *Mah Jongg* board calls for careful strategy, and it's this challenge that makes the game so addicting—you're constantly learning new subtleties of play. The boards are numbered, and you may choose a board or let the PC pick one from the 64,000 available. The README file contains a sample list of "winnable" boards.

Using the keyboard, you remove tiles by specifying their location by row and column, then pressing <Enter>. With a mouse, which makes play much easier, you simply click on tiles to select them. The tiles are marked by number and suit (dragons, dots, winds, bamboo, flowers, characters, and seasons), and pairs must match exactly, except for flowers and seasons. A counter keeps track of the number of tiles left.

Anderson has added a few modern conveniences that might not have pleased the ancient mandarins. Ask for help, and the computer shows you the next available pair of matching tiles. You can save and restore games and restart the same board. For competitive spice, you can play timed games, and in Tournament Mode, *Mah Jongg* records the scores of competitors who play the same board.

Surprisingly, this relaxing, noise-free game will lure even kids away from more exciting forms of computer madness. *Mah Jongg* puts a premium on relaxation and interiorization of the mind. It's an aesthetically delightful respite from the muscle-spasmed hyperventilation triggered by combat choppers and screaming F-15s. —*George Beinhorn* 

#### WHERE TO BUY

Mah Jongg 2.5

Nels Anderson 92 Bishop Dr. Framingham, MA 01701

List price: \$8 contribution Requirements: 128K, DOS 2.00 or

later version, EGA adapter (Microsoftcompatible mouse recommended) Not copy protected

Technical support: BBS, 617/875-3618, 617/449-7322

Other support services: none For more information, circle 725 on reader service card.

#### **Test Drive**

**PROS:** Realistic simulation of highperformance driving

CONS: Keyboard control awkward, minimal documentation

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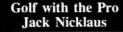
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When you see a cop's flashing lights in the mirror, Test Drive gives you a choice: Pull over, or make a run for it. to lust? If you do—but don't have much cash in your adult-toy fund—there's a slightly cheaper way to get relief. Accolade's *Test Drive* will let you burn electronic rubber in five of the world's most explosive driving machines—the Lamborghini Countach, the Lotus Turbo Esprit, the Ferrari Testarossa, the Porsche 911 Turbo, and the Chevrolet Corvette. And it won't cost you a dime for gas.

Take the Lamborghini Countach, for example. A steal at \$130,000, it hits a top speed of 173 miles an hour and can go from 0 to 100 in a brain-melting 12 seconds. Strap yourself into its *Test Drive* twin, and you find yourself peering out over the dashboard complete with a working tachometer and speedometer and even a radar detector. In a nice touch, the rearview mirror reflects road signs and other cars as you pass them. It also tells you when you've got a Smokey on your tail. Trying to outrun the cops may be the best part of the game.

Tap the keyboard—or a joystick fire button—to shift gears and get the car rolling. You shift again, and the engine starts to whine and the tach goes red. Directly ahead lies a two-lane slab of pavement snaking between a cliff on the right and a sheer drop to the left. Your mission is to reach the top of the mountain—over potholes and water slicks, past poky sedans and careening 18-wheelers. Shift gears again, and the car's doing 100 mph before you even hit the first curve. Uh-oh—here comes a truck...or a familiar set of flashing red lights. Playing

Test Drive doesn't feel like driving a real car. So why does it leave your palms sweaty and your heart pounding?

Accolade has done a good job of re-creating each car's personality, but the game has some annoying flaws. It's slow to get started, and the long introductory sequence features a gratingly obnoxious soundtrack. (Fortunately, you can quiet the din with a keystroke.) Pressing the wrong key can abort the game or freeze up the controls. Although Test Drive's 16-color EGA mode is excellent, the 4-color CGA and monochrome modes are only fair. Documentation is pitiful-a flimsy six-page manual that doesn't even tell you how to skip the opening sequence (hit the <Space> bar). And once you've mastered the road's turns and traffic, there's nowhere to go but faster. An alternative course would be a welcome addition.

Overall, though, *Test Drive* is a gas. It lets you climb behind the wheel of a dangerously powerful car and drive like a lunatic—in total safety. After a few hours with *Test Drive* you can saunter through an Italian car dealership, stroll over to the showroom model, and casually say, "Oh yeah, the Testarossa. Does it still top out at 140 on the corners?"—*Daniel Tynan* 

#### WHERE TO BUY

List price: \$39.95

#### **Test Drive**

Accolade, Inc. 550 S. Winchester Blvd. #200 San Jose, CA 95128 800/245-7744, 408/296-8400

**Requirements:** 256K, DOS 2.11 or later version (joystick recommended) Copy protected

Warranty: 90 days free replacement of defective media

Technical support: no toll-free number, M-F 8-5 Other support services: none

Other support services: none For more information, circle 726 on reader service card.

### Apollo 18: Mission to the Moon

**PROS:** Great graphics, challenging operation sequences and flight maneuvers

CONS: Can't save games

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Bringing Apollo 18 to a smooth touchdown on the moon involves careful control over the Lunar Module's rocket thrusters. Most of us remember exactly where we were at the moment in July 1969 when Apollo 11's Neil Armstrong took his giant leap for mankind. Now, in *Apollo 18: Mission to the Moon*, you can take one small step closer to experiencing the excitement—and frustration—of the real thing.

Based on actual mission film footage, Apollo 18's terrific graphics create an impressive simulation of space flight (especially in the high-resolution EGA version). You play two roles: Mission Control flight director during lift-off, then crew commander in space. Your mission: to recover portions of the Surveyor III photographic probe stationed on the moon since 1967, and to repair three satellites. To complete the entire mission, you must successfully perform eight sub-missions that include lift-off, Lunar Module docking, a moon landing, and a moon walk.

You begin at the control panel in Houston at T minus 15 and holding. Flight manual in hand, you switch to the Telemetry screen—your link to the Command Module's computer—for a final check of all systems, and then initiate the launch. Like most of the program's operations, lift-off involves using a joystick or tapping the cursor keys and <Space> bar to manipulate the controls, in this case to fire the rockets and then jettison the spent stages of the mighty Saturn rocket. You'll find the first few sub-missions tricky, but you'll soon get the hang of it. The real hair-pulling begins with sub-mission 4, the lunar landing.

After transferring yourself and your crew to the Lunar Module, you must negotiate a narrow descent trajectory by firing the rocket clusters. Land too hard or stray too far, and the landing is aborted. You get three tries; if you fail all three, Mission Control lets you practice the operation once more in a simulator before booting you straight to the Earth reentry sequences, at which point you start all over again.

This is when the game's one big drawback becomes maddeningly apparent: There's no way to save your place. After you've attempted to land on the moon for the umpteenth time, you'll yearn for a save feature in a bad way. But once you make it through the lunar sub-missions, splash down, and dry yourself off, you get to add your name to the Astronauts' Hall of Fame. Neil Armstrong, move over. —Sally Zahner

#### WHERE TO BUY

#### Apollo 18: Mission to the Moon

Accolade, Inc. 550 S. Winchester Blvd. #200 San Jose, CA 95128 800/245-7744, 408/296-8400 **List price:** \$39.95, high-resolution

**List price:** \$39.95, high-resolution version upgrade \$5

**Requirements:** 256K, graphics adapter, DOS 2.11 or later version Copy protected

**Technical support:** unlimited, no tollfree number, M–F 8–5

Other support services: none For more information, circle 727 on reader service card.

Richard Landry is the editor in chief of PC
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By James Lewis

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LIKE THE RIDE ON THE NEW BUS?

It's been twenty months since IBM shook up the PC industry by introducing the Personal System/2 line, whose high-end models incorporate the standard-busting Micro Channel Architecture (MCA). While this

new architecture departs radically from the bus development lines the PC first took in 1981, IBM's ads claim that MCA-equipped PS/2s running multitasking OS/2 constitute "the future of personal computing." So far, more than a million and a half users have bought into that vision.

Needless to say, IBM's competitors take a different view of the product. MCA is "the PC equivalent of New Coke," scoffs Mike Swavely, Compaq's vice president of sales and marketing. Swavely claims that to date,

## WHO LIKES THE PS/2?

IBM hasn't demonstrated a single benefit that MCA provides over industry-standard AT buses.

In September, after seven years of merely reacting to the standards that IBM set for the industry and after approximately six months of avowals that they are "working" on MCA clones, compatibles vendors finally got up the courage to openly display their disdain for the new bus. Compaq and eight other major CPU vendors have offered a multiprocessor bus specification, called Extended Industry Standard Architecture, that will compete directly with the Micro Channel (see *Industry Outlook* in this issue). All told, approximately 100 CPU and peripherals manufacturers have announced support for the non-IBM alternative; their implementations are anticipated sometime in late 1989.

However, customers have the final vote, so what do buyers of PS/2 machines say? In short, they report that the key word in IBM's ads is future.

Marina Hirsch

Even the most faithful IBM customers have trouble finding sufficient added value in the MCA-based machines to justify the confusion and inconvenience the redrawn architecture creates. Yet the IBM name on the box turns out to be as compelling as any feature the IBM clones can muster. Especially in large corporations, many managers seem willing to buy the new designs based on nothing more than faith that, sooner or later, IBM will deliver. Others, in true Blue shops, simply have no choice.

> HURRY UP AND WAIT

"I would be hardpressed to say that today we can

perceive the benefit of the MCA," says Trav Waltrip, vice president for data processing at The Travelers Companies, a giant insurance and financial services firm headquartered in Hartford, Connecticut. Nevertheless, Travelers has standardized on PS/2s. If MCA has an identifiable benefit, says Waltrip, it's in the bus's interrupt handling, which he considers a far better error-prevention system than classic PCs provide. He adds, though, that the increase in speed isn't noticeable.

Travelers' future plans call for replacing its workers' dumb terminals with PCs linked to mainframes and to each other via IBM's LU 6.2 protocol, which supports peer-to-peer cooperative processing under the Systems Network Architecture (SNA) umbrella. Travelers believes that MCA-capable PS/2s running OS/2 are the best way to make that ambitious plan succeed. "There's no question about MCA being an upcoming standard," says Waltrip.

System buyers, who must base hundreds of thousands of dollars in purchases on what they guess the PC standard will be for the next two years, historically have considered the IBM label a safe choice. Some view IBM not only as a safe choice but also a better one. Eric Boutwell, applications manager for the San Francisco Unified School District, sees MCA with its "busmaster" capabilities as a far better platform for moving toward true distributed processing than an AT bus. While the AT bus accepts multiple processors, Boutwell doubts that they can handshake with each other as well as MCA, or function truly simultaneously.

Brian Livingston begs to differ. A former PS/2 user with the Union Bank of Switzerland Securities, now a connectivity specialist with General Electric Consulting Services in New York, Livingston claims that "MCA is primarily a way for IBM to market patented technology." Other busmaster architectures, such as that found in AST Research's machines, can do whatever the MCA can do, he maintains, and do it just as well, at least for now. Moreover, says Livingston, the AST bus remains compatible with existing PC add-on boards, and its technology is also freely



Brian Livingston There are no tangible benefits: MCA is primarily a marketing ploy.

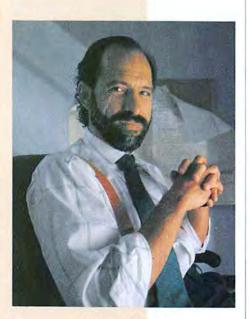


Without busmastering devices to take advantage of MCA's multitasking capabilities, the architecture is "more of a pain than a plus."



Trav Waltrip

"I would be hard-pressed to say that today we can perceive the benefit of the MCA."



David Hasiba

"We're in a trap...purchasing PS/2s because that's what's available [from IBM]."

available to developers of coprocessor boards.

Close, but no cigar, responds Boutwell. You can trust third parties like Novell to make specialized intelligent boards for PS/2s, he says, because the market already is so large. But will Novell make a special board just for AST? Maybe. And then again, maybe not.

These concerns are somewhat irrelevant today, since boards and applications that allow for multiprocessing simply don't exist, suggests Leslie Fiering, a systems vice president of advanced technology with New York City's Bankers Trust Company. Until such equipment becomes available and the promise of busmasters is realized, says Fiering, MCA will be "a bit more of a pain than a plus."

AN
INCOMPATIBLE
ULTIMATUM

Brian Livingston's former employer, the Union

Bank of Switzerland Securities, decided not to buy PS/2s for any of its operations worldwide not only because "there were no tangible benefits," but also because of incompatibilities with its installed base of machines. The company had designed its own communications boards for the AT bus, and that investment couldn't be transferred, says Livingston. MCA boards themselves must be smaller, with more exacting manufacturing tolerances, and they cost more to make than AT boards.

David Hasiba, manager of micro acquisition and maintenance support at Merrill Lynch and Company in New York City, just wants his AT back. Merrill Lynch purchased PS/2s, says Hasiba,

primarily because it wanted IBM products only and the company's supplier had run out of IBM ATs shortly after IBM abandoned the old machines. "We're in the same trap as so many others," he sighs. "We're purchasing PS/2s because that's what's available."

MCA does not offer substantive advantages over the standard on classic PC designs, reasons Hasiba, and unlike its counterpart, it suffers from problems with incompatible boards and drives. Merrill Lynch found that boards installed in PS/2s worked only as long as users didn't mix boards from different vendors. And for every PS/2 the company purchased, it also had to buy an external 5¼-inch drive to read old files created on AT bus machines.

Additionally, because IBM's external drive reads only the old 360K format, users who were relying on an AT's 1.2MB floppy drives were stuck, says Hasiba. Merrill Lynch eventually switched to a third-party product that could read both formats.

But IBM dealers counter that there's no gain without pain. Compatibility is a moving target, says Mark Cuban, president of Micro Solutions, an IBM dealership in Dallas. "What's compatible today is incompatible tomorrow." Switching from 5¼ to 3½-inch disks is an annoyance, he allows, but then, so was the changeover from 8-inch disks several years ago. And 3½-inch drives offer higher density and greater reliability.

Logistics aren't the only deterrent to widespread adoption of MCA, according to Rick Sharp, applications supervisor for PCs at Hughes Aircraft in El Segundo, California. As recently as two years ago, Hughes was primarily an IBM shop, but Sharp says that's no longer the case. The reason: "There are so many good machines in competition that have a good price/performance ratio." Sharp counsels Hughes employees to weigh PS/2 pluses (the MCA's upside potential and the greater capacity and reliability of 31/2-inch disks) against the minuses (media and board incompatibilities).

MAINTAINING

AN ADVANTAGE? Like many other purchasers, Sharp appreciates

the quality construction in PS/2s, noting, "We like the design approach that will reduce maintenance." Even detractors admit the PS/2 is "built like a tank."

PS/2 users can save an average of \$300 per year on maintenance costs, claims Chet Heath, a senior engineer at IBM's Entry Systems Division and the chief architect of MCA. Service contracts on the Model 50 cost less than half those on ATs, adds Micro Solutions' Cuban. His dealership is experiencing less than a 3 percent failure rate on PS/2s, versus about 6 percent on ATs.

Another much-publicized MCA benefit is lower radio frequency interference (RFI), thanks to a design in which every fourth pin is grounded. Reduced RFI and electromagnetic interference (EMI) result in greater reliability, affirms Leslie Fiering. "These are not sexy features that a user can see, but they mean you don't lose data," she emphasizes.

Faster processors will make the standard AT bus obsolete, declares Cuban, because the RFI will exceed Federal Communications Commission standards. "Put a TV next to a 10-MHz AT clone and then next to an IBM Model 50-you'll see which one gives you better reception."

But competitors like Swavely assert that RFI isn't a problem until processors exceed 30 MHz, and some users agree. "We don't watch much TV in the office," remarks one Fortune 500 customer. "When we do have interference with other small appliances, we just open up the machine and use foil to block the radio frequency emissions. That grounds it just fine."

Even more controversial is OS/2, which IBM touts as the natural complement to PS/2. Says one auto manufacturing executive, "The question to ask is, Will OS/2 ever be an operating system for the masses? And the answer is, Not in your lifetime." OS/2 requires a substantial amount of hardware. By the time IBM's Systems Application Architecture and distributed applications become a reality, he says, we'll be looking at yet another generation of hardware.

Future versions of OS/2 will be able to exploit MCA features, says Brian Livingston. But given the doubling and tripling of memory chip prices early this year, Livingston sees only a dim likelihood that OS/2 will gain a majority share even of new installations any time soon.

And, of course, competing vendors already offer OS/2 and claim their AT-bus machines show no performance hits.

IF EITHER **BUS GETS** YOU THERE

Not all users see the architecture debate as critical.

For Peter Miller, a Boston business consultant, the PS/2 Model 60 is just a 286 machine by another name. Everything he does on his Model 60 at work, he says, he can do on his AT at home (provided he remembers to bring along the right size disk). Miller remains true Blue regardless. "I knew there wasn't much available that took advantage of MCA when I bought the machine. But when add-in boards are available for my PS/2 Model 60, all I'll have to do is dust it off."

It's clear IBM's MCA has stirred strong emotions among users, who seem to be divided between those who are disappointed with today's scarcity of benefits and those willing to wait for IBM to build on its new platform. Roughly half of the 3 million-plus PS/2 sales are of Models 50 and above, which means that one and a half million MCA systems are already in place. There's no question that MCA is a viable industry standard.

Many users, particularly those in large corporations, also are anxious not to miss out on innovative technology, however elusive its promise. But their reaction to PS/2s can best be summed up by one PS/2 user who requested anonymity: "There are faster machines out there, and I'm not doing anything beyond what I do with standard bus systems."

So why is he sitting in front of a PS/2? "Simple. My boss told me to."

Marina Hirsch is a frequent contributor to PC World.

#### Everything You Need to Upgrade Your PS/2

Micro Channel
machines are here
to stay, and
they're ready for
upgrades. Take
your PS/2 Models
50 through 80 to
the limit with
some of these
essential hardware
enhancements.

Scott Spanbauer



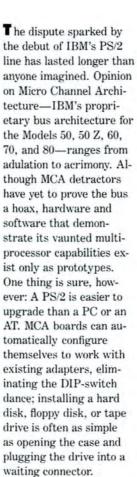
your system. Users typically upgrade system memory first, but currently inflated RAM chip prices make memory boards a risky investment. Buy now, and you may kick yourself later when prices plummet. To simplify your decision, this guide lists prices for boards configured with the minimum amount of installable memory and with 4MB. Chances are you'll get a better deal on RAM chips through mail-

find the right device for

order distributors—just be sure to get the speed and type of chip your board requires.

Whatever your needs, shop smart and choose a board that's right for your system. For example, only the 80386-based Models 70 and 80 can use 32-bit RAM boards. And if your software supports EMS 4.0, make sure the RAM board you buy does, too.

Since any external modem can easily be attached to a PS/2, this guide focuses on MCAcompatible internal modems. Although internal modems soak up system power and lack status lights, they don't consume desk space or serial ports. Better still, most modems for the PS/2 eschew DIP switches and jumpersconfiguration is accomplished solely via software.



#### MEMORY BOARDS

Manufacturer	Products	PS/2 models supported	Expanded memory specification supported	Memory chip speed (ns)	Data path	Minimum/ Maximum configuration (MB)	Number of ports included (serial/ parallel)	(with minimum	List price (with 4MB)	Reader service number
Advanced Microcomputer Systems	50/60-Megamem 2000 50/60-Megamem 8000 Memory 32 Memory 32 w/ I/O	50, 50Z, 60, 70 50, 50Z, 60, 70 50, 50Z, 60, 70 50, 50Z, 60, 70 50, 50Z, 60, 70	EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0	120 120 80 80	16 16 32 32	0/2 0/8 0/8 0/8		\$350 \$350 \$399 \$499	n/a \$1950 \$2319 \$2419	608 608 608 608
AST Research	Advantage/2	50, 50Z, 60	EMS 4.0	80	16	0.5/8	2/0 or	\$795	\$1995	609
	Advantage/2-386	70, 80	EMS 4.0	80	32	1/8	1/12 2/0 or 1/12	\$1395	\$4995	609
	Rampage/2-286 RampagePlus MC	50, 50Z, 60 50, 50Z, 60	EEMS EMS 4.0	80 80	16 16	0.5/2 0.5/8	2/0 or 1/12	\$995 \$895	n/a \$4585	609 609
Boca Research	BocaRam 50/60 BocaRam MCA 50Z	50, 50Z, 60 50, 50Z, 60	EMS 3.2 EMS 4.0	120 100	16 16	0/4 0/2		\$295 \$245	\$1695 \$9953	610 610
Chrislin Industries	CI-SYS2-56	50, 60	EMS 4.0	100	16	2/8	2/14	\$1580	\$3125	611
CMS Enhancements	MC-8000	50, 60	EMS 4.0	120	16	0/8		\$359	n/a	612
Cumulus	CuRAM 80 CuRAM 16+	80 50, 50Z, 60	EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0	100 120	32 16	0/8 0/12	1/15	\$695 \$495	\$3495 \$3095	613 613
Diamond Flower Electronic Instruments Co.	RAMbank-II	50, 60	EMS 3.2	120	16	0/4		\$249	\$1399	614
Everex Systems	RAM II 2000 RAM II 4000	50, 60 50, 60	EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0	120 120	16 16	0/2 0/4		\$399 \$499	n/a n/a	615 615
IBM	PS/2 2MB-8MB 80386 Memory Expansion Option PS/2 80386 Memory	70, 80 70, 80	EMS 3.2	85 80	32	2/16		\$1695 \$1695	\$3095 \$3095	616
	PS/2 80286 Memory Expansion Option	50, 50Z, 60	EMS 3.2	120	16	0.5/2		\$630	n/a	616
IDEAssociates	IDEA Supermax/MC IDEAmax/MC	50, 60 50, 60	EMS 3.2 EMS 3.2	120 120	16 16	0/8 0/12	2/0	\$545 \$395	\$3145 \$2995	617
Intel	AboveBoard 2 Plus	50, 50Z, 60	EMS 4.0	120	16	0/8		\$495	n/a	618
Monolithic Systems	JustRAM/MC8	50, 60	EMS 4.0	100	16	0/8		\$595	\$3461	605
Orchid Technology	RamQuest Extra RamQuest II	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60	EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0	120 120	16 16	0/8 1/1	2/0	\$599 \$849	n/a n/a	619 619
Profit Systems	Elite 16/2 Elite 16/2+ 386 Hypercache	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 70, 80	EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0	150 150	16 32	0.5/16 1/16		\$595 \$1095	\$2395 \$2395	620 620
Quadram	Quadboard PS/Q QuadMEG PS/Q	50, 60 50, 60	EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0	120 120	16 16	0/4 0/4	1/1	\$595 \$395	\$2595 \$1995	621 621
SMT	Acuram-8	50, 60		100	16	0/8		\$475	n/a	622
STB Systems	RapidRAM 2 RapidRAM 2/8	50, 60 50, 60	EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0	100 100	16 16	0/2 2/86	2	\$399 \$1495	n/a \$2795	623 623
Tecmar	MicroRAM MicroRAM AD MicroRAM M80	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 70, 80	EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0 EMS 4.0	100 100 80	16 16 32	0/2 0/8 0/8		\$350 \$445 \$675	n/a n/a n/a	624 624 624

All the listed boards can be configured as extended memory.
Available on aptional \$345 daughterboard.
Configured at 2MB.
Available on aptional \$225 daughterboard, includes game part,
Available on aptional \$179 daughterboard; optional \$495 daughterboard modern also available.
With optional 0MB-6MB daughterboard.

#### INTERNAL MODEMS

Manufacturer	Product	Maximum bps rate	Software included	Built-in error correction	Hayes compatible	List price	Reader service number
Acer Technologies	Acer Modem 2424/MC	2400	Bitcom	MNP Class 4	yes	\$439	625
Advanced Microcomputer Systems	XPRESS 12 XPRESS 24	1200 2400	Bitcom or ProComm Bitcom or ProComm		yes yes	\$123 \$179	608 608
Anchor Automation	Anchor 1200PS Anchor 2400PS	1200 2400	Anchor-Talk Anchor-Talk		yes yes	\$269 \$349	626 626
CMS Enhancements	MC 2400	2400			yes1	\$299	612
Computer Peripherals	Hook-Up PS/24	2400	CPI		yes	\$449	628
Cumulus	CuModem 2400	2400	ProComm		yes	\$495	613
Everex Systems	Evercom II 24 Evercom II 24+	2400 2400	Bitcom Bitcom	MNP Class 4	yes yes	\$299 \$299	615 615
Gammalink Synchronous Communications	Gammacomm	9600	Gammacomm		no	\$1595	634
GVC-Chenel	PS-12 PS-24	1200 2400	Bitcom Bitcom		yes yes	\$239 \$339	629 629
Hayes Microcomputer	Smartmodem 2400P	2400		LADD	yes	\$549	630
Hycom/Sharp	HC-4811	4800	ProComm		yes	\$399	631
Intel	2400B Modem 2	2400			yes	\$445	618
Microgate	SyncLink 24/2 SyncLink 48/2	2400 4800	terminal emulation terminal emulation		no no	\$695 \$1195	632 632
MultiTech Systems	MultiModem 224 ES MultiModem 224 PS	2400 2400	ProComm 2.42 ProComm 2.42	MNP Class 5	yes yes	\$549 \$499	633 633
Telenetics	TC921PS-12 TC921PS-24 TC921PS-96	2400 4800 9600		MNP Class 5 MNP Class 5 MNP Class 5	yes yes yes	\$445 \$545 \$1345	635 635 635
Universal Data Systems	Sync-Up 2/V.22bis	2400			yes	\$575	672
USRobotics	Courier 2400/PS	2400	HyperAccess	MNP Class 5	yes	\$699	636
Ven-Tel	MCM-24 MCM-24/NS MCM-24E MCM-24E/NS	2400 2400 2400 2400	Crosstalk XVI Crosstalk XVI	MNP Class 5, X.PC MNP Class 5, X.PC	yes yes yes	\$549 \$449 \$649 \$549	637 637 637 637
<sup>1</sup> At 2400 bps.				Charles Land Annual			

Connectivity products for the PS/2 currently come in three flavors: network adapters and gateways, terminal emulation boards that connect your PS/2 with mainframes and minicomputers, and multiuser serial adapters that let your computer host other terminals or PCs. All of these boards require special operating system software; some call for substantial user expertise.

Serial and parallel adapters supplement those built into the PS/2's system board and can be an inexpensive way to expand your machine's ability to use modems, printers, and other peripherals. Before you buy, however, make sure the ports you need aren't already included on expansion boards you're planning to purchase.

Internal and external hard disks and tape drives for the PS/2 come in a rainbow of formats, sizes, and controller interfaces. Depending on the drive, an additional controller for the Micro Channel may be required. Most PS/2s come with a hard disk and may have a device bay and controller connection for a second drive. QIC-40 format internal tape drives slide into any PS/2 floppy drive bay and run off the existing floppy controller. All other tape drives require a separate controller card.

Finally, the PS/2's 3½-inch floppy drives may improve on 5¼-inch fare, but software manufacturers have been slow to board the microfloppy band-

wagon. One solution: Buy a 5¼-inch external floppy drive (with the requisite MCA adapter). However, if you only need to read 5¼-inch floppies occasionally, save money and link your computer to a neighboring PC with Lap-Link, The Brooklyn Bridge, or a similar file transfer program. ●

Scott Spanbauer is an assistant editor for PC World. Eric Grant, Shannon Linville, and Jack Cutter contributed to this guide.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Acer Technologies** 401 Charcot Ave.

San Jose, CA 95131 408/922-0333

**Advanced Micro**computer System

1321 N.W. 65th Pl. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309 800/972-3733, 305/975-9515

**Alloy Computer Products** 

100 Pennsylvania Ave. Framingham, MA 01701 508/875-6100

Anchor **Automation** 

20675 Bahama St. Chatsworth, CA 91311 818/998-6100

Archive Corp.

1650 Sunflower Ave. Costa Mesa, CA 92625 800/237-4929

Arnet Corp.

618 Grassmere Park Dr. #6 Nashville, TN 37211 800/366-8844

**AST Research** 

2121 Alton Ave. Irvine, CA 92714 714/863-1333

Axon

9025 Wilshire Blvd. Beverly Hills, CA 90211 800/422-2966, 213/271-5448

Boca Research, Inc.

6401 Congress Ave. Boca Raton, FL 33487 407/997-6227

**Chrislin Industries** 

31332 Via Colinas #106 Westlake Village, CA 91362 800/468-0736, 818/991-2254

CMS **Enhancements** 

1372 Valencia Tustin, CA 92680 714/259-9555

SERIAL/PARALLEL INTERFACE ADAPTERS

Manufacturer	Product	Serial ports <sup>1</sup>	Parallel ports	List price	Reader service number
Advanced Microcomputer	IOSIX-1 IOSIX-2	4 4 2 2 1	2	\$185 \$162	608 608
Systems	IOSIX-3	2	1	\$95	608
	IOSIX-4	2	0	\$91	608
	IOSIX-5 IOSIX-6	1		\$70	608
	IOSIX-6 IOSIX-7	o	2	\$125 \$82	608
	IOSIX-8	Ö	0 1 2 2 1	\$50	608
Boca Research	Boca.MCA Parallel Boca.MCA Serial/Parallel	0 2	1	\$110 \$210	610 610
Cumulus	CuPORT-P	0	1	\$149	613
<u> </u>	CuPORT-FSP	2	1	\$249	613
Emulex	DCP-186/MC	4	1	\$1595	638
IBM	Realtime Interface Coprocessor Multiport with			welv	2000
	4-Port RS-232C interface	4	0	\$1271	616
	8-Port RS-232C interface	8	0	\$1349	616
	8-Port interface Dual Asynchronous Adapter	8 <sup>2</sup>	0	\$1376 \$225	616
IDEAssociates	IDEAmini/MC	2	0	\$210	617
Neotech	CM/4 4 Channel Serial Adapter	4	0	\$495	639
	PP/1 Printer Adapter	0	1	\$99	639
	SPC/1 Combination Adapter	1	1	\$149	639
	SP/1 Communication Adapter SSP/2	1 2	0	\$129 \$249	639
Opto 22	AC32 Dual Asynchronous Communications Adapter	23	0	\$350	640
	AC33 Industrial I/O	1	4	\$350	640
	AC34 Single Channel Industrial Asynchronous Adapter	15	0	\$350	640
Qua Tech	DS-1000	2 26 27 0	0	\$235	673
	DS-2000	26	0	\$395	673
	DS-3000	27	0	\$395	673
	PXB-7200	0	38	\$295	673
	QS-1000	4	0	\$450 \$145	673 673
	SP-1000 SP-1050	1	Ó	\$195	673
	MXI-1000	Ó	ŏ	\$445	673
Quadram	QuadPort PS/Q	2	0	\$295	621
STB Systems	Serial 2 Serial/Parallel 2	2	0	\$239 \$259	623 623
Tecmar	Plus 2 Module S/P Module	2	0	\$200 \$200	624 624

otherwise noted. nd four RS-422 ports

KS-232C, unless otherwise noted. Four RS-232C and four RS-422 ports. Two RS-422/485 ports. One (PAMUX bus). Option of one RS-422 or one RS-485 port. Two RS-422A ports.

Computer Peripherals, Inc.

667 Rancho Conejo Blvd. Newbury Park, CA 91321 800/854-7600, 805/499-5751

Computone Systems

1100 Northmeadow Pkwy. Roswell, GA 30076 404/475-2725

Core Int'l

7171 N. Federal Hwy. Boca Raton, FL 33431 305/997-6055

**Corvus Systems** 160 Great Oaks Blvd. San Jose, CA 95119

800/4CORVUS

**Cumulus Corp.** 23500 Mercantile Rd. Cleveland, OH 44122 216/464-2211

**Delkin Devices** U.S.A.

1940 Garnet Ave. San Diego, CA 92109 619/273-8086

**Diamond Flower** Electric Instruments Co. 2544 Port St.

West Sacramento, CA 95691 916/373-1234

Digiboard Inc. 6751 Oxford St. St. Louis Park, MN

55426 612/922-8055 **Digital Communi-**

cations Assoc. 1000 Alderman Dr. Alpharetta, GA 30201-4199 404/442-4000

#### NETWORK ADAPTERS

Manufacturer	Product	Network compatibility	Throughput speed	Software included	List price	Reader service number
Acer Technologies	Acer 5270/MC	Ethernet	10Mbps	Acer Ethernet Driver	\$495	625
Axon	Model F200M	NetBIOS, IBM PC-LAN, Novell	1.8Mbps	Axon LAN networking software	\$499	659
	Model S100 Model E-1000	NetBIOS Ethernet	110Kbps 10Mbps	Axon LAN serial network software Axon LAN networking software	\$125 \$399	659 659
Corvus Systems	Omninet/1 MC	Vines, NetBIOS, Novell, PC/NOS	1Mbps	diagnostics	\$329	660
DNA Networks	DNA Networks	NetBIOS, Novell	2.5Mbps		\$695	661
Gateway Communications	G/Ethernet LAN	Ethernet, Novell	10Mbps		\$525	662
IMC Networks	PCnic II Workstation PCnic II Workstation/ Fileserver	PC Network, Ethernet PC Network, Ethernet	10Mbps 10Mbps	diagnostics and drivers diagnostics and drivers	\$495 \$520	663 663
Invisible Software	Model 200/A	NetBIOS, IBM PC-LAN, Novell	1.8Mbps	NET/30	\$399	664
LANmaster Division/Vestra Subco	PS/2 Arcnet PS/2 Ethernet	Lifenet, Novell, Vines Ethernet, Novell, NFS, TCP/IP	2.5Mbps 10Mbps	Arcnet drivers Ethernet drivers and some utilities	\$495 \$499	665 665
Localnet Communications	D-Link (DE-001/2) D-Link (DN-001/2)	Ethernet NetBIOS, IBM PC-LAN, Novell	10Mbps 1Mbps	NetBIOS and Novell drivers	\$495 \$369	666 666
MICOM-Interlan	NI9210	Ethernet	424Kbps		\$495	667
Networth	vLAN+ vNET	Novell Novell	74Kbps 105Kbps	drivers drivers	\$545 \$595	668 668
Proteon	p1800 ProNet-10 p1840 ProNet-4	Token-Ring Token-Ring	4Mbps 4Mbps	diagnostics and driver diagnostics and driver	\$695 \$795	669 669
Racore Computer Products	LANPac II/MC 8106 LANPac 802.5/MC	Novell Token-Ring, Novell	16Mbps 4Mbps	drivers drivers	\$395 \$640	670 670
Western Digital	EtherCard Plus/A	Ethernet, Novell, NetBIOS	10Mbps	"Super Disk" drivers for NetBIOS, TCP/IP, Novell Netware	\$499	671
	StarCard Plus/A	Starlan, Ethernet, Novell, Netware, NetBIOS	1Mbps	"Super Disk" drivers for NetBIOS, TCP/IP, Novell Netware	\$424	671

#### MULTIUSER SERIAL ADAPTERS

Manufacturer	Product	Ports (number, type)	Software included	List price	Reader service number
Alloy Computer Products	PC-Slave/16N Plus 4/PS Slave/286	2 RS-232C 2 RS-232C 2 RS-232C		\$9951 \$49951 \$13951	601 601 601
Arnet	Multiport/2	8 RS-232C	multiuser operating system drivers	\$995	602
Computone Systems	Intelliport PSB	8 RS-232C	diagnostics	\$1295	603
Digiboard <sup>2</sup>	DigiChannel 4 DigiChannel 8 DigiChannel 16 DigiChannel 4 I DigiChannel 4 I+ DigiChannel 8 I DigiChannel 8 I+	4 RS-232C 8 RS-232C 16 RS-232C 4 RS-232C 4 RS-232C 8 RS-232C 8 RS-232C	DOS and UNIX drivers	\$469 \$695 \$1295 \$1119 \$1169 \$1319 \$1369	604 604 604 604 604 604
Monolithic Systems	Connect/MC4 Connect/MC8 Connect/MC16	4 RS-232C 8 RS-232C 16 RS-232C	UNIX and Xenix drivers UNIX and Xenix drivers UNIX and Xenix drivers	\$996 \$1297 \$1695	605 605 605
Stargate Technologies	MP2 Plus4 MC Plus8 MC	24 4 RS-232C <sup>2</sup> 8 RS-232C <sup>2</sup>	DOS drivers DOS and UNIX drivers DOS and UNIX drivers	\$349 \$570 \$670	606 606 606
Stritek	12-PAK	12 RS-232C	DOS and Xenix drivers	\$1295	607
1 Additional 4 PC (\$1105) 12 PC (\$140	C) annuaries bus models	3hockulas one sunchune	DE 222C 422 495		

Additional 4-PC (\$1195) or 12-PC (\$1695) expansion bus available

Includes one synchronous RS-232C, -422, or -485 port. Software configurable as RS-232C, -422, or -485.

#### **DNA Networks**

81 Great Valley Pkwy. #800 Malvern, PA 19355-1309 800/999-DNA2

#### Dolphin Systems 1701 E. Edinger Bldg.

G Santa Ana, CA 92705 714/558-3220

#### Emerald Systems Corp.

4757 Morena Blvd. San Diego, CA 92117 619/270-1994

#### **Emulex Corp.**

3545 Harbor Blvd. Costa Mesa, CA 92626 800/EMULEX3, 714/662-5600

#### **Everex Systems**

48431 Milmont Dr. Fremont, CA 94538 800/821-0806, 800/821-0807 California

#### Gammalink Synchronous Communications

2452 Embarcadero Way Palo Alto, CA 94303 415/856-7421

#### Gateway Communications

2941 Alton Ave. Irvine, CA 92714 800/367-6555, 714/553-1555

#### Genoa Systems

75 E. Trimble Rd. San Jose, CA 95131 408/432-9090

#### **GVC-Chenel Corp.**

41 Bergenline Ave. Westwood, NJ 07675 201/664-5888

#### Hayes Microcomputer

P.O. Box 105203 Atlanta, GA 30348 404/441-1617

#### Hycom/Sharp

16841 Armstrong Ave. Irvine, CA 92714 714/261-6224

#### IBM

Local authorized dealer hot line: 800/IBM-2468

#### TERMINAL EMULATION ADAPTERS AND GATEWAYS

Manufacturer	Product	Type of device	List price	Reade service numbe
Advanced Microcomputer Systems	MPCC1	3270 emulation	\$249	608
AST Research	AST-5251/12A AST-5250 Gateway Option AST-5250/A Cluster Option	remote 5250 emulation NetBIOS-5250 gateway 5251/11A and 5251/12 cluster	\$790 \$995 \$995	609 609 609
N.	AST-3270/SNA II AST-3270/SNA IIA AST-3270/CoaxII-CUT AST-3270/CoaxIIA-CUT	remote 3270 emulation remote 3270 emulation local 3270 emulation local 3270 emulation	\$895 \$895 \$895 \$895 \$895	609 609 609
Digital Communications Associates	IRMALAN DFT Gateway MCA IRMA2 communications adapter			657 657
IBM	Display Station Emulation Adapter/A	5250 emulation	\$995	616
	System 36/38 Workstation Emulation Adapter/A	S/36/38 workstation	\$885	616
	3270 Connection	3270 emulation	\$623	616
IDEAssociates	IDEAcomm 3278/DFT/MC	local 3278 DFT emulation	\$995	617
	IDEAcomm 5251/Gateway/MC	local 5251 NetBIOS gateway	\$895	617
	IDEAcomm 5251/MC	local 5251 emulation	\$895	617
	IDEAcomm 5250/Remote/MC IDEAcomm 5250/Remote Gateway/MC	remote 5250 emulation remote 5250 NetBIOS gateway	\$795 \$1775	617
	IDEAcomm 3278/MC	local 3278 emulation	\$995	617
	IDEAcomm 3270/SNA/MC IDEAcomm 5251/Remote Share/MC	remote 3270 emulation remote 5250 emulation	\$995 \$1395	617
	IDEAcomm 5250/Plus/MC IDEAcomm 5251/Share/MC	local 5251 emulation local 5251 emulation	\$1095 \$1495	617 617
Microgate	SyncLink	3270 emulation	\$695	632
MultiTech	MultiCom327PS	3270 emulation	\$749	633
Quadram	MainLink Ilm	3270 emulation	\$495	621
Techland BlueLynx	BlueLynx 3270 Gateway BlueLynx 3270 Remote BlueLynx 5250 Cluster BlueLynx 5250 Gateway BlueLynx 5250-12 BlueLynx 5250-11 BlueLynx 5250-11 Cluster BlueLynx 5250-11 Gateway BlueLynx COAXXSYS BlueLynx DFT-3270	NetBIOS-3270 gateway remote 3270 emulation remote 5250 cluster NetBIOS-5250 gateway remote 5250 emulation local 5250 emulation local 5250 asynch cluster NetBIOS-5251 gateway local 3278/3279 emulation 3270 distributed function terminal	\$1995 \$895 \$1995 \$1995 \$795 \$895 \$1995 \$1995 \$1995 \$1095	658 658 658 658 658 658 658 658 658 658

#### **IDEAssociates**

29 Dunham Rd. Billerica, MA 01821 508/663-6878

#### IMC Networks

**Corp.** 1342 Bell Ave. #3E Tustin, CA 92680 714/259-1020

#### Intel Corp.

5200 N.E. Elam Young Pkwy. Portland, OR 97124 800/538-3373

#### Invisible Software

481 47th Ave. San Francisco, CA 94121 415/221-0916

#### lomega Corp.

1821 W. 4000 S Roy, UT 84067 801/778-1000

#### Irwin Magnetic Systems

1201 Commonwealth Blvd. Ann Arbor, MI 48105 313/930-9000

#### LANmaster Division/Vestra Subco

1401 N. 14th St. Temple, TX 76501 817/771-2124

#### Laserdrive Ltd.

1101 Space Park Dr. Santa Clara, CA 95054 408/970-3600

#### Localnet Communications

Communications 3303 Harbor Blvd., Ste. E-8 Costa Mesa, CA 92626 714/549-7942

#### Maynard Electronics

460 E. Semoran Blvd. Casselberry, FL 32707 800/821-8782, 800/423-3007 Florida

#### MICOM-Interlan

155 Swanson Rd. Boxborough, MA 01719 508/263-9929

#### EXTERNAL HARD DISKS

Manufacturer	Product	Models supported	Formatted capacity	Interface type	Interface board	Access time	List price	Reader service number
Core Int'I	Optima 40E Optima 44E (3½-inch) Optima 70E ATplus 43E ATplus 44E (3½-inch) ATplus 72E HC40FE HC90E HC150E HC310E HC310E HC380E LAN150 LAN150/2 LAN150/D LAN310 LAN310 LAN310/D LAN310/D LAN380 LAN380/D LAN380/D	50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80	42.8MB 44MB 71.8MB 43MB 44MB 72.4MB 40MB 90MB 150MB 310MB 380MB 163MB 326MB 326MB 326MB 320MB 640MB 640MB 788MB 788MB	ST-506 ST-506 ST-506 ST-506 ST-506 ST-506 ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI	n/a	24ms 26ms 26ms 26ms 24ms 24ms 16ms 16ms 16ms 16ms 16ms 16ms 16ms 16	\$1095 \$1690 \$1495 \$1395 \$2190 \$3295 \$3890 \$5890 \$5890 \$5890 \$7199 \$7699 \$7699 \$10,299 \$11,299 \$12,599 \$13,099	642 642 642 642 642 642 642 642 642 642
Priam Technology	ED45-PS021 ED62-PS021 ED130-PS021	50 50 50	44.2MB 61.9MB 132.7MB	ST-412 ST-412 ST-412	n/a n/a n/a	28ms 28ms 20ms	\$1750 \$1820 \$3590	646 646 646
Storage Dimensions	SpeedStor PS-155E SpeedStor PS-300E LANStor LAN2-285SPS LANStor LAN2-570SPS LANStor LAN4-285SPS LANStor LAN4-570SPS LANStor LAN4-855SPS LANStor LAN4-855SPS LANStor LAN4-1140SPS	50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80	155MB 298MB 286MB 572MB 286MB 572MB 858MB 1144MB	SCSI SCSI SCSI SCSI SCSI SCSI SCSI SCSI	included included included included included included included included	17ms 17ms 17ms 17ms 17ms 17ms 17ms 17ms	\$3950 \$5525 \$6625 \$11,350 \$7595 \$12,375 \$17,095 \$21,982	648 648 648 648 648 648 648

#### 5%-INCH EXTERNAL FLOPPY DRIVES

Manufacturer	Product	Models supported	Maximum formatted capacity	List price	Reader service number
CMS Enhancements	EF 360/U	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$365	612
	EF 12/36	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	1.2MB	\$375	612
Cumulus	Stepping Stone 5.25/360	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$345	613
	Stepping Stone 5.25/1.2	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	1.2MB	\$395	613
Delkin Devices U.S.A.	525 Extra	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$329	650
Dolphin Systems	Matchmate 360	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$349	651
	Matchmate 1200	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	1.2MB	\$399	651
IBM	PS/2 5¼-Inch External Disk Drive	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$475	616
Neotech	Neotech 51/4-Inch Disk Drive	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	1.2MB	\$299	639
Pacific Rim Systems	PRS-2-360	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$300	641
	PRS-2	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	1.2MB	\$350	641
Procom Technology	PXF360	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$355	647
	PXF1200	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	1.2MB	\$395	647
SMT	XD-360	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$325	622
Sysgen	Bridge File 360	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$325	649
	PSF360 w/ adapter	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	360K	\$295	649
	Bridge File 51/4	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	1.2MB	\$325	649
	Bridge File 3.51	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	1.44MB	\$325	649
13 <sup>1/2</sup> -form factor.					

#### INTERNAL HARD DISKS

Manufacturer	Product	Models supported	Formatted capacity	Interface type	Interface board	Access time	List price	Reader service number
CMS Enhancements	H50M50-R F65M60-K F70ESDI-T F115ESDI F120M60-X	50 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80	50MB 65MB 70MB 115MB 120MB	ST-506 ST-506 ESDI ESDI ST-506	n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a	31 ms 28ms 33ms 30ms 28ms	\$1195 \$1295 \$1995 \$2295 \$3095	612 612 612 612 612
Core Int'l	Optima 40 Optima 44 (3½-inch) Optima 70 ATplus 43 ATplus 44 (3½-inch) ATplus 72 HC40F HC90 HC150 HC310 HC380	50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80	42.8MB 44MB 71.8MB 43MB 44MB 72.4MB 40MB 90MB 150MB 310MB 380MB	ST-506 ST-506 ST-506 ST-506 ST-506 ST-506 ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI	n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a	24ms 26ms 26ms 26ms 24ms 26ms 10ms 16ms 16ms 16ms	\$895 \$995 \$1295 \$1295 \$1295 \$1795 \$2695 \$2395 \$3495 \$5495 \$6495	642 642 642 642 642 642 642 642 642 642
IBM	314MB Fixed Disk Drive 115MB Fixed Disk Drive 70MB Fixed Disk Drive 60MB Fixed Disk Drive 44MB Fixed Disk Drive	60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 50, 50Z 60, 80	314MB 115MB 70MB 60MB 44MB	ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI ST-506	n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a	23ms 28ms 20ms 30ms 40ms	\$6805 \$3660 \$2505 \$1695 \$1460	616 616 616 616
lomega	Bernoulli Box II B120i-MC Bernoulli Box II B120iu-MC	60, 80 60, 80	20MB 20MB	SCSI SCSI	\$399 n/a	40ms 40ms	\$1100 \$900	643 643
Micropolis	1333A 1335 1353A 1354A 1355 1558-15	60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80	44MB 71MB 92MB 128MB 147MB 331MB	ST-506 ST-506 ESDI ESDI ESDI ESDI	included included included included included included	28ms 28ms 23ms 23ms 23ms 18ms	\$995 \$1080 \$1725 \$1810 \$1910 \$3080	644 644 644 644 644
Plus Development	Passport 20 Passport 40	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80		proprietary proprietary	\$399 \$399	28ms 28ms	\$595 \$795	645 645
Priam Technology	ID62-PS041 ID130-PS041 ID330-PS071	60, 80 60, 80 60, 80	61.9MB 132.7MB 330.2MB	ST-506 ST-506 ESDI	n/a n/a n/a	28ms 20ms 20ms	\$1220 \$2860 \$4540	646 646 646
Procom Technology	PhD5045 PhD145E PhD330E	50 60, 80 60, 80	45MB 145MB 330MB	ST-506 ESDI ESDI	n/a n/a n/a	28ms 18ms 18ms	\$1195 \$2495 \$4295	647 647 647
Storage Dimensions	SpeedStor PS133 SpeedStor PS150 SpeedStor PS330 LANStor LAN115PS LANStor LAN150EPS LANStor LAN150SPS LANStor LAN285EPS LANStor LAN285EPS LANStor LAN285SPS	60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80 60, 80	133MB 148MB 330MB 115MB 148MB 149MB 285MB 286MB	ST-412 ESDI ESDI ST-412 ESDI SCSI ESDI SCSI	n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a included n/a included	28ms 14ms 16ms 26ms 14ms 17ms 16ms 17ms	\$2735 \$2675 \$4095 \$2725 \$2995 \$3395 \$4725 \$5495	648 648 648 648 648 648 648 648

**Micro Design Int'l** 1235-D Commerce Rd. Morrow, GA 30260 404/968-6658

Microgate Corp. 9501 Capitol of Texas Hwy. #105

Hwy. #105 Austin, TX 78759 800/444-1982

Micropolis Corp. 21211 Nordhoff St. Chatsworth, CA 91311 818/709-3300 Monolithic Systems

84 Inverness Circle E Englewood, CO 80112 303/790-7400

Mountain Computer 240 Hacienda Ave. Campbell, CA 95008 408/379-4300

MultiTech Systems 82 Second Ave. SE New Brighton, MN 55112 800/328-9717 Neotech 30295 Solon Industrial Pkwy. Solon, OH 44139 800/552-1552

Networth Inc. 1801 Ridgepoint Dr. #107 Irving, TX 75063 214/869-1331

**Opto 22** 15461 Springdale St. Huntington Beach, CA 92649 800/854-8851, 714/891-5861 Orchid Technology 45365 Northport Loop W Fremont, CA 94538 415/683-0300

Pacific Rim Systems 2570 Barrington Ct. Hayward, CA 94545 415/782-1013

Plus Development Corp. 1778 McCarthy Blvd. Milpitas, CA 95035 800/826-8022, 408/434-6900 Priam Technology 20 W. Montague Expwy. San Jose, CA 95134 408/434-9300

Procom Technology 3100 Airway Dr. #128 Costa Mesa, CA 92626 714/549-9449

Profit Systems, Inc. 30150 Telegraph Rd. Birmingham, MI 48010 313/647-5010

#### INTERNAL TAPE DRIVES

Manufacturer	Product	Models supported	Formatted capacity	Format/media	Interface board	List price	Reader service number
Alloy Computer Products	Tape System/2	50, 60, 80	40MB	QIC-40/DC2000	n/a	\$595	601
Archive	Archive VP 60i Archive VP 150i Archive XL 3550 Archive XL 3560	50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80 50 60, 80	60MB 150MB 40MB 40MB	QIC-02/DC600A QIC-02/DC600XTD QIC-40/DC2000 QIC-40/DC2000	\$299 \$299 n/a n/a	\$995 \$1395 \$499 \$499	652 652 652 652
CMS Enhancements	T40/2	50, 60, 80	40MB	QIC-40/DC2000	n/a	\$695	612
Core Int'l	CT40I CT60/100I	50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80	40MB 60/100MB	QIC-40/DC2000 QIC-02/DC600XTD, DC1000XTD	included included	\$695 \$1295	642 642
	CT150/250I	50, 60, 80	150/250MB	QIC-02/DC600XTD, DC1000XTD	included	\$1995	642
Dolphin Systems	Matchmate 40MB-I	50, 60, 80	40MB	QIC-40/DC2000	included	\$590	651
Everex Systems	Excel II 125i Excel II 60i	60, 80 60, 80	125MB 60MB	QIC-120/DC600A QIC-120/DC600A	included included	\$1795 \$1495	615 615
Genoa Systems	Galaxy 3150-60T/MC Galaxy 3160/MC Galaxy 31150/MC	50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80	60MB 60MB 150MB	QIC-24/CT600H QIC-24/DC600 QIC-24/DC600	\$179 \$179 \$179	\$995 \$1095 \$1395	653 653 653
Irwin Magnetic Systems	225 220 245 265	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	20MB 20MB 40MB 64MB	Proprietary/DC1000 Proprietary/DC2000 Proprietary/DC2000 Proprietary/DC2000	\$50	\$499 \$499 \$649 \$849	656 656 656
Maynard Electronics	MaynStream 150	50, 70	150MB	QIC-02/Data Cass	included	\$1895	627
Mountain Computer	Series 4000 Series 6000 Series 7000/150	50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80	40MB 60MB 150MB	QIC-40/DC2000 QIC-40/DC600A QIC-150/ DC600AXTD	n/a n/a included	\$595 \$1495 \$1795	654 654 654
Sysgen	Reliant 200 INT Reliant 300 INT(60) Reliant 300 INT(125) Reliant 500 INT	50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80 50, 60, 80	60MB 60MB 125MB 72MB	QIC-24/cassette QIC-24/DC600 QIC-24/DC600 QIC-24/DC2000	\$250 \$250 \$250 \$250 \$250	\$700 \$800 \$1100 \$800	649 649 649
Tecmar	QT-150i/PS QT-125i/PS QT-90i/PS QT-60i/PS QT-40i/PS	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	150MB 125MB 90MB 60MB 40MB	QIC-02/DC600 QIC-02/DC600 QIC-02/DC600 QIC-02/DC600 QIC-40/DC2000	\$299 \$299 \$299 \$299 n/a	\$2195 \$1995 \$1695 \$1395 \$595	624 624 624 624 624

Proteon Inc.

Two Technology Dr. Westborough, MA 01581 508/898-2800

Qua Tech Inc.

478 E. Exchange St. Akron, OH 44304 216/434-3154

Quadram

One Quad Way Norcross, GA 30093 404/923-6666

Racore Computer **Products** 

170 Knowles Dr. Los Gatos, CA 95030 408/374-8290

SMT

1080 Linda Vista Dr. San Marcos, CA 92069 619/744-3590

Stargate Technologies Inc.

29300 Aurora Rd., Bentley Park S Solon, OH 44139 800/782-7428

**STB Systems** 1651 N. Glenville Dr. #210 Richardson, TX 75081

214/234-8750

Storage **Dimensions** 

2145 Hamilton Ave. San Jose, CA 95125 408/879-0300

Stritek Inc. 8705 Freeway Dr. Macedonia, OH

44056 216/468-3380

Sysgen Inc. 556 Gibraltar Dr. Milpitas, CA 95035 408/263-4411

**Techland** BlueLynx

112 Main St. Newmarket, NH 03857 800/TECHLAND, 603/659-6035

Tecmar Inc. 6225 Cochran Rd.

Solon, OH 44139 216/349-1009

Telenetics Corp.

5109 E. La Palma Ave. Anaheim, CA 92807 714/779-2766

**Universal Data** Systems

5000 Bradford Dr. Huntsville, AL 35805-1953 205/721-8000

**USRobotics** 

800 McCormick Blvd. Skokie, IL 60076 312/982-5010

Ven-Tel, Inc.

2121 Zanker Rd. San Jose, CA 95131-2177 408/436-7400

**Western Digital** Corp.

2445 McCabe Way Irvine, CA 92714 800/847-6181

#### EXTERNAL TAPE DRIVES

Manufacturer	Product	Models supported	Formatted capacity	Format/media	Interface board	List price	Reader service numbe
Alloy Computer Products	Retriever/120	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	120MB	DC600XTD	n/a	\$1295	601
Archive	Archive VP 60e Archive VP 150e	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	60MB 150MB	QIC-02/DC600A QIC-02/DC600XTD	\$299 \$299	\$1295 \$1795	652 652
Core Int'l	CT40E CT60/100E	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	40MB 60/100MB	QIC-40/DC2000 QIC-02/DC600XTD, DC1000XTD	included included	\$895 \$1595	642 642
	CTC150/250E	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	150/250MB	QIC-02/DC600XTD, DC1000XTD	included	\$2295	642
Delkin Devices U.S.A.	40 Extra	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	40MB	QIC-40/DC2000	included	\$699	650
Dolphin Systems	Matchmate Tape	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	40MB	QIC-40/DC2000	included	\$649	651
Emerald Systems	Rapidrecover 1/8 Rapidrecover 1/4-60 Rapidrecover 1/4-150 VAST	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	60MB 60MB 150MB 2.2GB	SCSI/Cass SCSI/DC600A SCSI/DC600XTD Helical Scan/8mm cartridge	included included included included	\$1295 \$1795 \$2395 \$6995	655 655 655 655
Everex Systems	Excel II 125 Excel II 60 Excel II 60T	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	125MB 60MB 60MB	QIC-120/DC600A QIC-24/DC600A QIC-24/CT600H	included included included	\$1895 \$1595 \$1395	615 615 615
Genoa Systems	Galaxy 3250-60TZ/MC Galaxy 3260Z/MC Galaxy 32150Z/MC	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	60MB 60MB 150MB	QIC-24/CT600H QIC-24/DC600 QIC-24/DC600	\$179 \$179 \$179	\$1245 \$1345 \$1745	653 653 653
IBM	6157 Streaming Tape Drive	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	60MB	QIC-02/DC600	\$366	\$1880	616
Irwin Magnetic Systems	725 720 745 765	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	20MB 20MB 40MB 64MB	Proprietary/DC1000 Proprietary/DC2000 Proprietary/DC2000 Proprietary/DC2000	\$100 \$100	\$649 \$649 \$849 \$1049	656 656 656 656
Mountain Computer	Series 4000 Series 6000 Series 7000/150	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	40MB 60MB 150MB	QIC-40/DC2000 QIC-40/DC600A QIC-150/ DC600AXTD	n/a n/a included	\$899 \$1895 \$2395	654 654 654
	Series 7000/300	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	300MB	QIC-150/ DC600AXTD	included	\$3495	654
Procom Technology	PT-150 PT-125 PT-60 PT-40	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	150MB 125MB 60MB 40MB	SCSI Host adapter SCSI Host adapter SCSI Host adapter QIC-40/DC2000	included included included n/a	\$2195 \$2060 \$1595 \$750	647 647 647 647
Sysgen	Reliant 200 EXT Reliant 300 EXT(60) Reliant 300 EXT(125) Reliant 500 EXT Bridgetape Smartimage Plus QIC-File60 Plus	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	60MB 60MB 125MB 72MB 42MB 60MB 60MB	QIC-24/cassette QIC-24/DC600 QIC-24/DC600 QIC-24/DC2000 Proprietary/DC2000 QIC-24/cassette QIC-24/DC600A	\$250 \$250 \$250 \$250 \$250 \$250 \$250 \$250	\$900 \$800 \$1100 \$800 \$695 \$795 \$995	649 649 649 649 649 649
Tecmar	QT-150e QT-125e QT-90e QT-60e QT-40e	50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80 50, 50Z, 60, 70, 80	150MB 125MB 90MB 60MB 40MB	QIC-02/DC600 QIC-02/DC600 QIC-02/DC600 QIC-02/DC600 QIC-40/DC2000	\$299 \$299 \$299 \$299 n/a	\$2495 \$2295 \$1895 \$1495 \$795	624 624 624 624 624

### **20-MHz 80386 Systems**

Clone makers are turning the 20-MHz
80386 PC into a commodity item. Here's
how to shop for a reliable, high-powered
system that will move
enough MIPS to keep
anyone happy.

The time

Eric Knorr



he time to buy a 20-MHz 80386 PC is now. Intel is producing 20-MHz chips at full tilt, and manufacturers are snapping them up, building boxes around them, and competing hard for your PC dollar. As the 60 systems listed in this Buyers' Guide demonstrate, the result is an array of features and prices to meet almost any high-performance need.

Though it's safe to call any 20-MHz 80386 PC fast, the variation among these units in terms of performance, price, quality, and expansion capability is probably greater than with any other class of PC. The tables on the following pages, which list the systems' basic features, should help you reduce your prospective buys to a handful of likely candidates.

#### **Spotting High Performance**

Benchmarks are the only way to tell for sure which machines will do your computing chores fastest—and even then, only if the tests employ the applications you normally use (see "Surprise Values at 20 MHz" in this issue). Nonetheless, if your main concern is speed, knowing which features are common to the fastest machines can aid in your product selection.

#### **Memory Architectures**

A 20-MHz CPU is so fast that conventional dynamic RAM chips can't keep up with it. PC designers have devised a number of schemes that work around this problem, the four most popular being memory interleaving, paged memory, static-column RAM, and memory caching.

Of the four methods, memory caching stands out. Memory caching uses a small cache of very fast static RAM—fast enough to handle full-speed CPU memory access—as a

PAUL MEISEL

buffer between main memory and the CPU. This technique is currently the only practical way for a 20-MHz PC to deliver zero-wait-state operation. Other methods average between one-half and one-and-a-half wait states, depending on the scheme and how well it has been implemented. (A wait state is a wasted CPU memory write cycle; a single wait state cuts memory access speed by about 25 percent, two cut it by 50 percent, and so on.) The main drawback to memory caching is that it usually means a more expensive machine. If you want top performance, though, it can't be beat.

## Mass Storage

To take advantage of 20-MHz speed, you need a disk drive that won't hobble your system. Look for four key features: large capacity, low average access time, disk caching software, and (if you can afford it) an ESDI or SCSI interface.

More and more people are deciding that a 40MB hard disk is the optimum size for a single-user workstation running common business applications. On the other hand, those who see themselves becoming OS/2 users will probably find 40MB the absolute minimum. If you

plan on using a system as a network server, figure at least 5MB per user, not counting what's required for shared server-based applications.

Average access time is an imprecise measure of drive performance, but it's a necessary evil for roughly judging drive speed unless you plan on running your own benchmarks. As a rule of thumb, don't buy a hard disk for a 20-MHz PC with an average access time greater than 40 milliseconds (ms); under 20ms is preferable.

Disk caching software is a must. It's a cheap, effective way to speed mass storage throughput, although it works best when you access the same data frequently (as with most data management applications). Disk caching software comes with most 20-MHz PCs, but because it's cheap, it's no tragedy if the system you want doesn't include it.

Next to deciding on capacity, the most significant mass storage choice you'll make concerns the kind of drive you want: an ST506 (standard AT style), an ESDI, or a SCSI. Most vendors of 20-MHz systems now offer ESDI drives, which deliver twice the throughput of ST506 units. SCSI drives are still hard to procure from system vendors, but they can provide even better performance than



ESDI drives, along with the ability to chain multiple drives to a single SCSI interface board. The downside to both ESDI and SCSI drives is that they're expensive and usually unavailable in sizes under 80MB.

## When You Need Room to Grow

Many new 80386 workstations have small footprints and a number of features built into the motherboard. Nonetheless, most of the 20-MHz 80386 PCs listed here are still AT-size boxes with substantial capacity for boards and devices. Under-the-desk towers offer the ultimate in elbowroom and are generally intended as network servers.

## **Fast Memory**

The most important expansion capability of any fast system is the amount of RAM the system can access in 32-bit chunks, at or near full CPU speed. If your fast 32-bit RAM expansion is limited, you'll probably have to install a

	List price	Built int	o mot	herboa		cop	neric rocessor supp			
<b>Manufacturer</b> Product	(includes 1148 RAM.) (includes	Ports Pandled Serial	Hada	Yides A	Mouse	re game port	Helies Helies	nses 3	come sorket	
Acer Technologies Acer 1100/20	\$7470 (EGA, 70MB hard disk)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Y	
Advanced Logic Research ALR 386/220 Model 401	\$3990 (1MB RAM, EGA, monochrome monitor)	0/0	N	N	Z	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
FlexCache 20386 DT	\$4490 (1MB RAM, EGA, monochrome monitor)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
FlexCache 20386	\$6490 (1MB RAM, 100MB hard disk, EGA, monochrome monitor)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Advantech VHP 386	\$3695	1/2	N	N	N	N	80387/16 80387/20	N	n/a	
Alphanumeric Int'l	\$4995	1/1	Y	Y	Y	N	80387/20	Y	Y	
AMAX Engineering PC 386 Business System	\$4464	0/0	N	N	N	N	80287/10 80387/16, 20	N	n/a	
PC 386 Tower System	\$4764	0/0	N	N	N	N	80287/10 80387/16, 20	N	n/a	
American Mitac Mitac Paragon 386E	\$5692	1/2	Y	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Amstrad PC 2386/65	To be announced	1/1	Y	Y	Y	Y	80387/20	N	n/a	
Arche Technologies Arche Rivol 386	\$4995 (EGA)	2/2	N	N	Y	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
AST Research AST Premium/386	\$8220	1/2	Y	N	N	N	80287/8 80387/20	N	n/a	
AT&T 6386 WGS	\$8193	1/1	Y	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	N	
6386E WGS	\$9744	1/1	Y	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	N	
C <sup>2</sup> Micro Systems	\$3359	0/0	N	N	N	N	80287/10 80387/16	N	n/a	
Cheetah Int'l	\$3990 (1MB RAM, 62MB hard disk)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80287/20 80387/20	N	n/a	
Club AT Club 320	\$5083	1/2	N	N	N	N	80387/16, 20	Y	Y	
Compaq Computer Deskpro 386/20	\$9596 (60MB hard disk)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Y	
Computer Classifieds CCI ST/386	\$3925	1/1	Y	Y	N	N	80287/20	N	n/a	
Computer Expert	\$3537	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Cordata CS 5040-2	\$7134	1/2	Y	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Y	
CSS Laboratories	\$3600 (no hard disk or VGA)	1/1	Y	N	N	N	80287/10 80387/20	N	n/a	
Dell Computer System 310	\$5299	1/2	N	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Y	
Dyna Computers Dyna 386	\$4272	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Everex Systems Step 386/20	\$6350	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Y	
Fivestar Electronics Fivestar 386	\$3295	1/1	Y	Y	N	N	80287/20 80387/20 80387/20	N	n/a	
Fivestar FS-386	\$3995	1/1	Y	Y	N	N	80287/20 80387/20	N	n/a	
Fortron 386-20 Rocer	\$4350	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
					7.0		A SAME AND			
80386-20 Plus General Technologies	\$4550	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
General 386 HEI Computer Systems	\$4375	1/2	Y	Y	N	N	80387/16, 20	N	n/a	
HEI 386 VFS	\$7040	1/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Y	

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	2	1MB	2MB	2/1	4/3	2/2	0/2	Y	Z	Z	Y	N	N	1 year	z	Toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	811
	0	1MB	2MB	2/1	4/3	2/2	4/0	Y	Z	Z	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	811
	1	1MB	1MB	1/0	5/4	2/1	5/2	Y	Υ	Y	Y	Y	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 10am-5pm	812
	0	1MB	16MB	2/0	4/3	1/1	3/0	Y	Z	N	Υ	N	N	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8:30am-5pm	813
	0	1MB	2MB	2/1	5/4	1/1	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	1 year parts, 90 days labor	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8:30am-5:30pm	814
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	0	2MB	8MB	1/1	4/4	0/0	4/0	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	1 year	Υ	Not toll free, M-F 7am-5pm	815
	1/2	4MB	16MB	0/0	5/5	0/0	1/0	N	Y	Y	N	N	Υ	1 year parts, 90 days labor	Y	Through deoler	816
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	0/2	1MB	1MB	2/2	1/1	3/2	3/1	Υ	Υ	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	818
	1	1MB	48MB	2/1	2/1	3/2	3/1	Y	Y	Y	Υ	N	N	1 year	Υ	Toll free, M–F 8am–5pm	861
	1	2MB	64MB	2/1	4/4	4/3	7/3	Υ	Υ	Y	N	N	Υ	1 year	Υ	Toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	861
	0	2MB	8MB	3/1	5/4	0/0	5/1	Υ	N	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	N	Not toll free, M-F 8:30am-5pm	820
	1	2MB	10MB	2/1	4/3	2/1	6/0	Υ	Y	Υ	Z	Υ	N	1 year	N	Toll free, M-F 9am-5:30pm	821
	0	1MB	1MB	0/0	6/4	2/2	3/0	Υ	Y	Y	Υ	N	N	1 year parts, 6 months labor	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	822
	0	1MB	1MB	2/2	3/1	1/1	4/0	Υ	N	Y	Υ	N	N	1 year	Y	Through dealer	823
	0	2MB	8MB	2/1	5/5	1/0	5/0	Υ	Y	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 9am- 6pm, Sat 11am-3pm	824
	0	1MB	4MB	2/1	5/4	1/0	3/1	Υ	Y	Ý	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 10am-7pm	825
	0	2MB	16MB	2/1	6/5	0/0	4/0	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 7am-5pm	826
	0	1MB	4MB	2/2	5/4	1/1	3/0	N	Υ	N	Y	N	N	1 year	N	Not toll free, M-F 7:30am-4pm	827
	0	1MB	8MB	2/1	6/5	1/0	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 7am-7pm	828
	0	2MB	16MB	4/2	4/3	1/1	2/4	Υ	Y	Y	N	N	Υ	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 9am-4:30pm	829
	0	1MB	16MB	2/0	6/5	1/1	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	863
	0	1MB	4MB	2/1	6/4	0/0	5/0	Υ	Y	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	831
	0	2MB	2MB	4/3	8/5	0/0	6/0	Υ	Υ	Y	Y	Y	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	831
	0	1MB	1MB	2/2	5/4	1/0	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 8:30am-5pm	864
	0	1MB	16MB	1/0	6/4	1/0	3/1	Υ	Y	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 8:30am-5pm	864
	0	1MB	1MB	1/1	5/4	2/2	5/0	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 9am-5:30pm	833
- 1	0	1MB	8MB	1/0	6/5	1/1	3/1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	1 year parts, 90 days labor	Y	Not toll free, M-F 9am-5pm	834

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Hewlett-Packard HP Vectra RS/20	\$8735 (100MB hard disk)	0/0	N	N	И	Z	80387/20	Y	Y	
Hyundai Electronics America Super 386C	\$4799	1/1	Υ	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
IBM	\$9745	20	,,	V	V	V	00207/00	N	-/-	
IBM PS/2 80-111 IBM PS/2 80-311	(115MB hard disk) \$12,745 (314MB hard disk)	1/1	Y	Y	Y	Y Y	80387/20	N N	n/a	
- 14 - 5 - 1	\$8745	1/1	Y	Y	Y	Y	80387/20	N	n/a	
IBM PS/2 70-121 Intelligent Data Systems	(120MB hard disk)		1							
PC386S-20 Ivy Microcomputer	\$6205	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Υ	
lvy 386	\$4995	1/1	Υ	Y	N	Υ	80387/20	N	n/a	
Kaypro 386E	\$6795	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Laser Digital Pacer 386-20	\$4695	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Matrix Digital Products Matrix 386	\$3434 (EGA)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Micro 1	\$4025	0/0								
Micro 1 Tower 386 Micro Express ME 386-20	(50MB hard disk)	0/0	Y	Y	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
ME 386-20	\$4400	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Roadrunner Plus	\$3849 \$4449	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Regal II	(gas plasma monitor)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Mitsubishi Electronics America MP 386	\$5895 (EGA, 1MB RAM)	1/2	Y	N	N	N	80287/8 80387/16	N	n/a	
NEC PowerMate 386/20	\$7190	1/2	Y	N	N	N	80287/10 80387/20	N	n/a	
Osicom Technologies Osicom Executive 386/20	\$5300	0/0	Y	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
PC Designs GV 38620	\$4533	1/2	Y	Y	N	N	80287/10 80387/20	N	n/a	
PC Values				1						
Value 386/20 Proteus Technology	\$5194	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Proteus Model 386-20  OIC Research	\$4496	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/16-20	N	n/a	
QIC 386/20	\$3220	1/2	Y	Y	N	N	80387/20	Υ	Υ	
Seattle Telecom & Data System 386-20	\$4745 (EGA)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80287/8 80387/20	N	n/a	
SEFCO Medallion 386	\$4995	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Y	
Sirex Sirex 386-20	\$3572	2/2	N	N	N	N	80287/10 80387/16-20	Z	n/a	
Spear Technology Spear 386D	\$4465	1/2	Y	Y	N	N	80387/20	Y	Y	1
Systems Integration Associates SIA 386/20	\$6580 (1MB RAM)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Tandon Computer Tandon 386	\$7097 (1MB RAM)	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	
Tandy Tandy 5000 MC	\$7128 (1.44MB disk drive)	1/1	Y	N	Y	Y	80387/20	Y	Y	
	\$6228									
Tandy 4000 LX Tatung Co. of America	(1.44MB disk drive)	0/0	Y	N	N	N	80387/20	Y	Υ	
TCS 8000	\$6590	0/0	N	N	N	N	80387/20	N	n/a	

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Wait Share	RAM INC.	System RAM	8-bil library	8/16-0"	32-bit we	on sio	hard disk available	setup software	Till-ond	Starrad monitor	Sizer-	Smar	holprint	hilliad	cytemded	Reduced support	Los service number
	1	1MB	16MB	1/0	6/4	2/0	3/1	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, 24 hours	865
	0	1MB	2MB	2/2	5/4	1/1	4/0	Y	Y	Y	Z	N	Y	18 months	Y	Toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	836
	1	2MB	4MB	0/0	4/4	3/3	2/2	Y	Υ	Y	N	Y	N	1 year	Y	Through dealer	837
	1	2MB	4MB	0/0	4/4	3/3	2/2	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	1 year	Y	Through dealer	837
	1	2MB	6МВ	0/0	1/1	2/2	3/0	Υ	Υ	Y	Y	N	Z	1 year	Y	Through dealer	837
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	1	1MB	1MB	2/2	6/3	0/0	6/0	Υ	Υ	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 6am-4:30pm	840
	0	2MB	2MB	2/2	5/3	1/1	5/0	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Y	N	1 year	N	Toll free, M-F 9am-6pm	841
	0	1MB	10MB	2/1	5/4	1/0	3/1	Y	Υ	Y	Υ	N	N	1 year	N	Not toll free, M-F 9am-4pm	842
	0	1MB	1MB	2/0	5/4	1/0	5/0	Υ	Υ	Y	Y	Y	N	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	843
	0	1MB	8MB	2/1	5/3	1/0	3/1	Y	Υ	Y	Υ	N	N	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8:30am-6pm	844
	0	1MB	1MB	3/1	2/1	1/0	2/0	N	Y	Y	Por- table	Por- table	Por- table	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8:30am-6pm	844
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	0	1MB	2MB	2/2	6/6	2/2	5/2	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	N	Through dealer	845
	0	2MB	2MB	2/2	5/4	1/0	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Y	Z	Z	1 year	Υ	Through dealer	846
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	0	1MB	4MB	6/5	2/1	0/0	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	1 year	N	Toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	848
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	0	1MB	1MB	3/1	4/3	1/0	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Z	15 months	Y	Toll free, M-F 9am-5pm	866
	0	1MB	16MB	0/0	6/0	2/0	5/0	Υ	Y	Y	Υ	z	Z	1 year	N	Toll free, M-F 9am-5pm	851
	0	1MB	8MB	3/1	4/3	1/1	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Z	z	Y	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	852
	0/1	1MB	16MB	2/1	5/4	1/1	6/0	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Z	1 year	Υ	Not toll free, M-F 9am-4pm	853
	0/1	0	4MB	1/0	4/3	2/1	5/2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	1 year	N	Toll free, M-F 8:30am-6pm	854
	0/1	1MB	1MB	0/0	6/5	2/2	5/0	Y	Υ	Y	Υ	N	N	1 year	N	Not toll free, M-F 9am-5pm	855
	0	1MB	4MB	2/1	6/5	0/0	5/0	Y	Y	Y	Υ	Z	N	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F7am-11:30pm	856
	0	1MB	8MB	2/1	6/5	0/0	5/0	Z	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	1 year	N	Through dealer	857
	0	2MB	16MB	0/0	3/3	2/2	4/1	Y	N	Z	Z	Z	Υ	1 year	Υ	Not toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	858
	0	2MB	8MB	2/1	6/6	1/1	3/1	Y	N	N	Z	Z	Y	1 year	Y	Not toll free, M-F8am-5pm	858
	0	1MB	16MB	2/1	6/5	0/0	5/0	Y	N	Υ	Y	N	N	1 year	Y	Toll free, M-F 8am-5pm	859

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Manufacturer's specifications, adjustable according to user needs.



memory board on the expansion bus—and RAM on that board will be accessed at approximately one-third the speed of fast RAM.

Fast RAM is especially important for OS/2 applications. With OS/2. you'll need at least 4MB of RAM to make switching operating systems worthwhile. Once enough OS/2 applications arrive, it's not inconceivable that you'd fill a machine up to OS/2's limit of 16MB (although at today's RAM prices, it would be absurdly expensive). Moreover, one of OS/2's quirks is that once you've installed a memory board on the expansion bus, OS/2 will use that slower RAM first, slowing down memory access from the word go.

Most 20-MHz PCs come with 1MB or more of RAM already installed. Beyond this, whether RAM is installed directly on the motherboard or through special 20-MHz. 32-bit slots, 32-bit fast RAM capacities range from a very low 2MB to 16MB and even higher. If you want to use the machine for multitasking or for extended-memory software like Paradox/ 386-or as a server or

multiuser host-go for the full 16MB capacity.

## **Expansion Slots**

The number of slots a PC has is no longer an absolute measure of potential functionality. For example, most PS/2 units come with a video adapter, a floppy drive controller, a hard drive controller, a mouse port, and one parallel and one serial port built into the motherboard. On a standard, AT-style 80386 machine, which lacks this integration, these features would take up four or five slots.

At a minimum, an ATstyle 80386 PC should have five slots (not counting any special 32-bit memory slots), and at least three of these should be 8/16 bit rather than 8 bit. An ESDI drive controller takes up an 8/16 slot, as do some I/O cards and VGA boards (see "VGA Boards: The Second Generation" in this issue).

Obviously, adding tape backup controllers, network boards, internal modems, fax boards, special printer controllers, and the like to a five-slot ATstyle machine will be a tight squeeze. If you're going to buy an AT-bus 80386 PC without integrated features, you're better off finding one with-at least-the original IBM AT's mix of six 8/16-bit and two 8-bit slots.

## **Device Support**

Consider space for at least three half-height devices the absolute minimum. Two of these should be externally accessible: one for a floppy drive and one for a tape backup. If the third half-height bay is designed for 3½-inch drives, keep in mind that you won't find (at least in the short term) any drives larger than 120MB.

Three externally accessible half-height bays (in case you want to add another floppy drive) and one full-height bay (for an extra-large hard disk) are recommended. For a tower unit that you plan to use as a network server, expect to find space for two full-height internal drives.

## **Quality Control**

You may not own a white lab coat, but if you're buying a no-name 20-MHz 80386 PC, a quick look under the hood is a good idea. The following spot checks may save you a lot of heartache:

Look for "80386-20" on the CPU. Some companies have had trouble procuring 80386-20 chips and have installed 80386-16 chips instead. Although there's some controversy, many experts (including Intel) agree that this substitution decreases reliability. If you see the suspect 16 in a supposedly 20-MHz system—or if there's no suffix at all—play it safe and walk on by.

Make sure the coprocessor socket is accessible. A number of 80386 systems hide the 80387 coprocessor socket under welded-in drive cages, power supplies, or other immovable objects. In such cases you must remove the motherboard to install a coprocessor—not a fun job.

Rattle the cage. The inner chassis, particularly the drive cages, should be solidly built; this goes double for towers, which are more likely to get bumped. Look for bad signs like loose connections, crushed ribbon cables, and more than a couple of patch wires.

Check the keyboard socket. Avoid machines with the keyboard socket soldered onto and supported by the motherboard; this setup can crack the board over time, effectively trashing your system.

Read the fine print on the warranty. Although many companies now offer a year's on-site service. some imply that it's free when it's not. Also check for details like how close your site must be to the repair center, who pays shipping charges while the warranty is still in effect, availability of phone support, and so on. Nothing enhances a high-performance computing experience like an ironclad warranty agreement.

Eric Knorr is a senior editor for PC World.



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**American Mitac** 

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AST Research. Inc.

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C2 Micro Systems, Inc. 1205 Fulton Place Fremont, CA 94539 415/683-8888

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General Technologies, Inc.

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**HEI Computer** Systems

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**Hewlett-Packard** 

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Hyundai Electronics America

4401 Great America Pkwy., 3rd Floor Santa Clara, CA 95054 408/986-9800

IBM

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Intelligent Data Systems

6319 E. Alondra Blvd. Paramount, CA 90723 213/633-5504

Ivy Microcomputer

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Kaypro

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Laser Digital, Inc.

1024 Morse Ave. Sunnyvale, CA 94086 408/747-1966

Matrix Digital Products, Inc.

6430 Variel Ave. #103 Woodland Hills, CA 91367 818/772-6122

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Micro Express

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Mitsubishi Electronics America, Inc.

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NEC

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**PC Designs** 

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**PC Values** 

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Inc.

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SEECO

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## B 3861 PROMISE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Michael Goodwin

Sun's 386i
workstation
promises a turnkey,
multitasking, network
solution for offices
where time is more
important than money.
But delivery on
that promise is
still somewhere in
the future.

I n many busy offices, it isn't cost that keeps a high-powered network out—it's time (and billings) lost when professionals must put work aside so someone can install the hardware. Productivity and profits are further sapped while everyone must struggle to master the complex new system.

Sun Microsystems is aiming its brandnew 386i workstation at offices just like these. It is not cheap—you'll have to spend between \$7990 (for a diskless, monochrome, 20-MHz unit) and \$21,990 (for a 25-MHz color system with a 327MB hard drive). But for businesses that can afford to throw money at problems, Sun claims the 386i provides fast and painless installation, virtually automatic networking, extensive on-line help, and extraordinary ease of use—including error messages in plain English.

The 386i sounded so much like å dream machine that *PC World* decided to take it for a quick test drive. Although a number of problems undercut Sun's claims, the machine is still undeniably impressive.

The 386i is an 80386-based system with a built-in 80387 math coprocessor (either 20 MHz or 25 MHz, depending on CPU speed) and support for high-resolution (1152 by 900) displays. It comes in two basic configurations: The Model 150 is a 20-MHz machine with 4MB of 32-bit RAM; the Model 250 is a 25-MHz system with 8MB of 32-bit RAM; both models are expandable (via full-speed memory boards) in 4MB increments to 16MB of memory, and both run the tried-and-tested UNIX multitasking operating system.

The 386i boasts three critical capabilities. Since all system software is preinstalled on the hard disk and high-speed ethernet hardware is built into every machine, setting up a network can be fully automatic. In fact, Sun claims a totally inexperienced user can set up a working network, out of the box, in less than 30 minutes! Second, the graphic icon-based SunView interface insulates the user from the UNIX command line and its alphabet-soup syntax. Perhaps even more important, the system can run most of your favorite DOS applications in separate windows and even multitask them.

## Setting Up Is Not Hard to Do

The vertical-standing system unit is smaller than you might expect, given its capabilities. It includes one 3½-inch floppy drive, one 8-bit and three 8/16-bit AT expansion slots, and a three-button Logitech mouse. The 107-key keyboard includes all the standard characters, plus a top row of familiar function keys and a row of special SunView keys such as Help, Find, Undo, and so on. You can choose between three high-res color monitors (14, 16, and 19 inch) and two monochrome displays (15 and 19 inch).

Using the seven-page Quick Start pamphlet, it was possible to set up and connect two 386i's in just 45 minutes; most of that time was spent pulling the hardware out of the boxes. Getting the network running was another story. Theoretically, you set up the first 386i as the network server by following a simple installation menu. Hook up another machine, and it connects and configures itself automatically. Unfortunately, the autoinstall system performed a bit like the fully automated airplane in the old joke ("Relax and enjoy your flight, your flight, your flight..."). When the second machine tried to link up to the network, the message 'Automatic System Installation experienced an error because of an unknown failure mode' popped onto the screen.

After several unsuccessful attempts to resolve the problem, I called Sun. A technician informed me that both the Automatic System Installation software and SNAP (the System and Network Administration Program) are being sold in *prerelease* form, and that some bugs (including the one that bit me) are still being chased down; a fully functional release is due in late 1988. Meantime, with his help (and some finger-twisting UNIX commands), I reinstalled the software on the second machine from scratch; it then succeeded in making the network connection automatically.

## SunView: UNIX Made Over?

Once the system is up and running, users will find themselves face-to-face with Sun-View, an attractive, full-color interface with Macintosh-style icons and pop-up menus.



SunView is gorgeous on both the 16- and 19-inch color monitors.

SunView does *not* benefit from the 386i's overly sensitive mouse, which overshoots a desired menu choice at the tiniest fingertip tremble. The three buttons can also be confusing; some functions require a left-button click, others a right-button click, still others a middle-button drag—and you're not always told which button to press.

Still, when SunView works, it succeeds quite nicely in keeping UNIX well concealed. A number of powerful, easy-to-use programs are built in, including a full-featured text editor, a network administration utility, an E-mail system, Sun Organizer (a powerful, icon-oriented disk manager that performs file operations across the network), an analog clock, a utility that schedules automatic system backups, and a hypertext help facility. The interface, from screen colors to window position, can largely be defined by the user.

Files appear on the desktop as icons text files are pages, executable files are The Sun 386i workstation promises instant networking, painless installation, and error messages in plain English. gears, and so on. SunView utilities appear as special icons (E-mail is a stamp; the text editor is *ABC's*); when you click them, they explode into tiled, resizable windows. Multitasking is supported, and you can run any number of applications simultaneously in separate windows.

The 386i has two error modes, neither very helpful. One produces chatty messages that read like excuses: 'There seems to be no boot server on the network which can respond to this system. They might be down, or overloaded, or perhaps the problem is with the network itself. Waiting for the problem to go away...'. Otherwise, SunView reverts to its native tongue, UNIX: 'pw\_int polling mode is unsupported.' UNIX error messages aren't explained in the user manual, so if a UNIX guru isn't handy, you'll probably find yourself learning more about this difficult operating system than you wanted to.

Networking under SunView is convenient and efficient, both for users and the administrator. Log-on, via a simple menu, is by name and password. Once you're on the net, peripherals like printers can be shared easily, and you can use files across the network automatically. File and directory security is simple to set up; file and record locking, when required, is handled by application software.

## Window on DOS

Although some familiar applications (such as AutoCAD, Interleaf Publisher, and Word-Perfect 4.2) are available in UNIX versions, most popular PC spreadsheets, data bases, and word processors are not. To make sure business users aren't cut off from their favorite software, the Sun 386i handily emulates a DOS environment using its Phoenix BIOS and the 80386's virtual mode.

You can open as many DOS windows as you like, either by clicking a listed DOS application or by clicking the DOS icon and loading the program from the prompt. Each window provides 640K of conventional RAM and 8MB of EMS 3.2–compatible expanded RAM. Text can be copied from one DOS window to another and between DOS and

UNIX windows, but graphics cut and paste is possible only between certain UNIX applications. Monochrome and CGA graphics are supported; for EGA and VGA you must install an option board.

Sun's DOS emulation is not without problems. The text's small size makes it hard to read, and though you can resize the window itself, the text remains tiny. Another annoyance: DOS applications load in monochrome mode unless a MODE CO80 command is first issued at the DOS command line. And although software compatibility (including with most TSRs) generally seems excellent, Microsoft Windows won't run, and SideKick behaves erratically. Sun promises to exterminate these bugs—and any others reported by users—at no extra cost.

Multitasking with DOS applications works flawlessly, although moving or resizing windows suspends processing temporarily. As with all multitasking systems that rely on the 80386's virtual mode (see "Multitasking Without OS/2," *PCW*, November 1988), only one window can use the COM port at a time; you must reassign access manually whenever another application needs the port.

## **Not Quite Ready for Prime Time**

Although the 386i doesn't yet live up to its advertising, it's clearly going to move Sun out of the engineering workstation ghetto and into the broader business marketplace. Once installation is foolproof and text in the DOS window is legible, this system is going to be worth throwing money at.

Michael Goodwin is an associate editor for PC World.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sun 386i

Sun Microsystems, Inc. 2550 Garcia Ave. Mountain View, CA 94043 415/960-1300 Reader service no. 800

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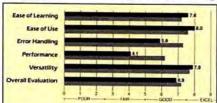
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Right now, a new generation of software is evolving. New programs — and changes to existing programs — will appear at an accelerating pace. OS/2 will soon be baseline technology — and generate a host of new applications. The 386 machines will accelerate the proliferation of software choices.

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## CONSUMER WATCH

## Advice and information for the computer consumer

Think the days of vaporware are over? Here's how to protect yourself when vendors don't deliver.

Anita Amirrezvani In the old days (five years ago), a product like *Ovation* could be announced, discussed, previewed, marketed, and featured in magazines but never released, giving rise to the term *vaporware*. By contrast, most of today's hardware and software actually makes it off the drawing board, but so slowly that *ambleware* is a more fitting term.

The Consumer Watch mailbag often contains letters from readers who feel they've been deliberately misled about product availability. Take Craig Sutton, a reader in Dallas who tried to buy a System 100 in July from Dell Computer. "I probably spent 15 minutes talking on the phone with one of their salespeople about the System 100, and he never mentioned that it was not available," writes Sutton. "When I called back to place an order, I was informed that the machine was not yet in production, and that it would be 'substantially more expensive' than advertised."

At first the System 100 was put on hold because it didn't get Federal Communications Commission Class B approval. No orders were taken, according to Dell spokesperson Brian Fawkes, because FCC regulations prohibit order taking for unapproved machines. In August Dell announced that it was canceling the 8088-based system altogether, probably because of unpromising sales forecasts.

Even more difficult for reader Robert van Hulst, a biology professor at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, Quebec, was his wait for a 32-bit memory board from Hauppauge Computer Works. Professor van Hulst says advertisements prompted him to order the board in November 1987, but he was told it wasn't available. When he finally ordered it in early 1988, he learned he was number 170 on a waiting list and was told to expect a 5-week wait. In June he still hadn't received the product, and when he called again about the delay, he learned that shipment was still 12 weeks away.

According to Hauppauge vice president Ken Plotkin, two factors led to the delays: a bug in the board that caused OS/2 to crash, and a shortage of RAM. "The bug was fixed in April; then we needed two more months to produce the board," says Plotkin. "Now the backlog has been cleared up."

Of course, when vendors like Hauppauge delay products to fix bugs, they're doing the right thing for consumers. In one of this year's major announcements, Ashton-Tate disclosed its decision to delay dBASE IV, reportedly to get rid of buggy code. Under deadline pressure many vendors have just shipped products complete with conspicuous bugs, causing users much more trouble than a long wait.

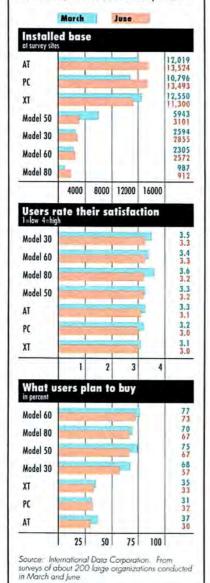
The first release of a software package is naturally more prone to bugs than a long-established (continues)

## RATE YOUR SATISFACTION: IBM

The AT, XT, and PC are still the most common IBM computers, according to a survey by International Data Corporation. But now that IBM has ceased production of those models, most survey sites (large organizations with at least 50 PCs) are turning to PS/2s.

A significant majority say they plan to buy Models 50, 60, and 80. Polls taken in March and in June indicate diminishing interest in the less powerful Model 30. And although user satisfaction ratings for all models were fairly high, users polled in June were generally less satisfied than those surveyed earlier this year.

Next month, we look at IBM's competitors.



product. But even upgrades to old favorites can be problematic: WordPerfect 5.0 and DOS 4.00 both shipped with problems that had to be fixed in later maintenance updates.

For consumers, delays are worthwhile if they prevent odious chores like costly and timeconsuming upgrades. The Microcomputer Managers Association estimates that upgrading 100 packages of a single product might easily take a company an entire year and require 450 hours of work-for product testing, collection of old system disks, new product installation, and training. When Lotus delayed its new release of 1-2-3 to retool core code for multiple environments, it put users on hold -but at least its goal is to shorten the upgrade path.

Certainly there are plenty of good reasons for delays, but the root of the problem is that many vendors announce unrealistic ship dates. As a result, sophisticated PC users are extremely skeptical about ads and announcements. "Personally, I don't put my money on the table until a product has been out for six months and proven to work," says Brian Camenker, executive director of the Boston Computer Society's IBM PC Users' Group.

Under federal law, no specific statute prohibits computer companies from advertising products before they're available. "The Federal Trade Commission Act just says that deceptive practices are unlawful," says Joel Winston, advertising program advisor for the FTC in Washington, D.C. "Deceptive is a matter of interpretation that depends on things

like the wording of the ad and whether reasonable consumers would be misled."

But when products slip way behind schedule, there are ripple effects. Dealers and mail-order companies find themselves advertising products they can't possibly provide. Those that accept back orders face irate customers if delivery dates continue to slip. In the interim, consumers end up without their cash or their goods.

However, consumers who order products by mail (not by phone) are covered by the FTC's mail-order rule, which stipulates that vendors must ship a product within 30 days of receiving the order unless they've clearly specified a different ship date. If vendors can't meet the deadline. they must inform consumers about the delay and offer the opportunity to cancel. Companies are also required to provide a refund within 7 working days (or one credit card billing cycle) of cancellation.

When ordering a product by mail—especially if delays are likely—it's a good idea to put all assumptions about the purchase in writing. In *The Consumer Protection Manual* (Facts on File, New York, 1984), author Andrew Eiler suggests writing a letter that spells out the conditions of the sale—what you're buying, how much it costs, and other essential points.

For example, consumers can specify that "this order may be accepted only by the prompt shipment of conforming goods," meaning that even if a check is enclosed, the purchase agreement doesn't exist until the vendor ships the product or promises to do so by a given date.

According to Eiler, consumers (continues)

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can also specify that the order be canceled if the vendor doesn't accept the terms of the letter.

Of course, writing such a letter doesn't mean you'll get the product when promised, but at least you'll have proof of your agreement and leverage if things go wrong.

Consumer advocates point out that when advertised products aren't available, disreputable companies sometimes use bait-and-switch tactics to get users to buy other products. "Never accept a substitute, and don't make a down payment unless you're sure that the product's coming along," advises Sally Browne, director of consumer affairs for the Electronic Industries Association in Washington, D.C.

If you've ordered a product from a reputable company that keeps putting you on hold, pressure tactics may be in order. You can demand a refund; if the company refuses or fails to give your money back, you have leverage under the Fair Credit Billing Act if you charged the purchase to a credit card. Simply write to the credit card company within 60 days of receiving the bill, request that the charges be removed from your statement due to nondelivery, and include records of your transaction.

Off the record, vendors admit that the customer who complains the loudest usually gets the fastest service. So make a fuss about your order—you could get better results.

## **SHOP TALK**

## **Demo Day**

After reformatting a hard disk I found that I needed to recover some files as soon as possible. I went to a local computer store and asked for a copy of *The Nor-*

ton Utilities Advanced Edition. The salesperson showed me a demo package and said that the store didn't stock the program but could order it overnight. He lent me a program disk, marked with orange demo stickers, which I returned two days later when I went in to pick up my order.

When I opened the new package and sat down to work, I noticed telltale rings of adhesive indicating that demo stickers had simply been peeled off. There was no registration card in the box. What can I do about the sale of a demo version as a new package?

James E. Nugent Peoria, Illinois

Peter Norton Computing responds: In a phone interview, marketing spokesperson Elizabeth Cundiff said Norton Computing doesn't condone the sale of demo packages and wants to know about it when it happens. Demo disks are fully operational, says Cundiff, but they don't come with serial numbers or registration cards. "Customers who think they got a demo disk should call us, and we'll issue a registration card, as long as they provide proof of purchase such as a sales receipt," says Cundiff.

Mr. Nugent is now a registered user of *The Norton Utilities Advanced Edition*.

## EGA, RGB, and Alphabet Soup

My company purchased a VIP VGA video adapter board after reading ATI Technologies' advertising and product literature, which clearly mentions that the product provides RGB support.

After installing the board and wasting a great deal of time troubleshooting the product, I called ATI's technical support department and found out that RGB support "was removed at the last minute."

T. W. Kline Nashville, Tennessee

## ATI Technologies responds:

The customer is referring to the interlace capability of the VIP board, which was discontinued due to the lack of market for this feature. Running interlace EGA on an RGB monitor is, in most cases, not an appropriate solution for upgrading to the EGA standard because of the flickering effect that interlace may generate. Users wishing to run interlaced EGA can use our EGA Wonder board.

In our current ad we still mention that we can run EGA on an RGB monitor. In keeping with the IBM EGA standard, an RGB monitor can be driven by an EGA board at 640 by 200 resolution but not at 640 by 350. Some consumers who are not fully aware of the limitations of IBM EGA believe that EGA is only 640 by 350 and expect this resolution to appear on their RGB monitor.

Rick Osborne Technical Support

Editor's note: No one should expect a video adapter to produce 640 by 350 (EGA) resolution on a 640 by 200 (CGA) monitor or, for that matter, resolution of 640 by 480 (VGA) on an EGA monitor. However, consumers who aren't familiar with the relationship between video adapters and monitors could easily get confused by ATI's ad. (continues)

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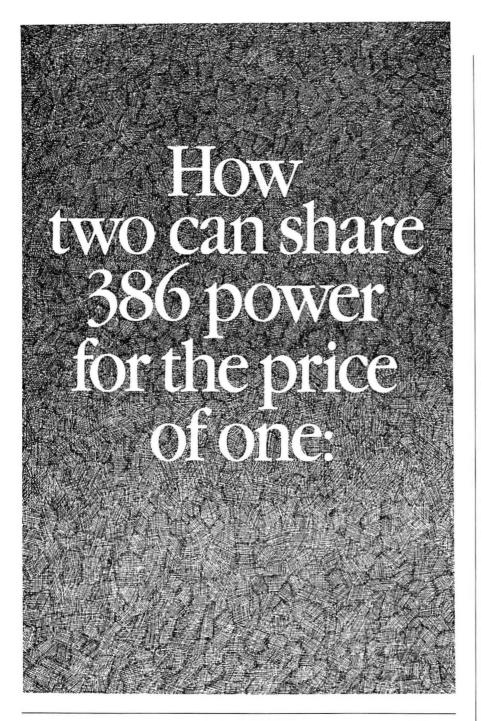
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## **Playing Games**

Microsoft is world renowned for providing excellent software and support. The hospital I buy software for uses Excel, Project, and QuickBASIC, among others, and we have always been offered fair upgrade policies. Much to my surprise, when Flight Simulator 3.0 was released, there was no upgrade policy. I called Microsoft and was told that due to the "low" price of \$49.95, no upgrade would be offered. The person I spoke with said that this was not really an upgrade but an entirely different program. Who was he trying to kid? It's still called Flight Simulator, and the company isn't planning to sell the old version anymore.

I purchased the program a month and a half before the latest release and can't believe Microsoft wants me to dish out another \$49.95 for EGA graphics and the ability to load the product from a hard disk, which should have been included in the first place.

Ronald L. Bellinger Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Editor's note: In a phone interview, a Microsoft spokesperson said that an upgrade to Flight Simulator is not being offered because the new version is "practically a new product."

Even so, vendors should offer a break to people like Mr. Bellinger, who purchase their software in good faith a few weeks or months before the new release.

## **An Expanding Memory**

To improve performance of Windows 2.01, I decided to buy an EMS 4.0 expanded memory board. On my first attempt, I bought a 3MB board made by (continues)

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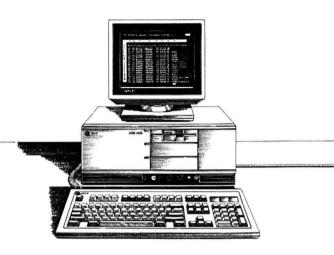
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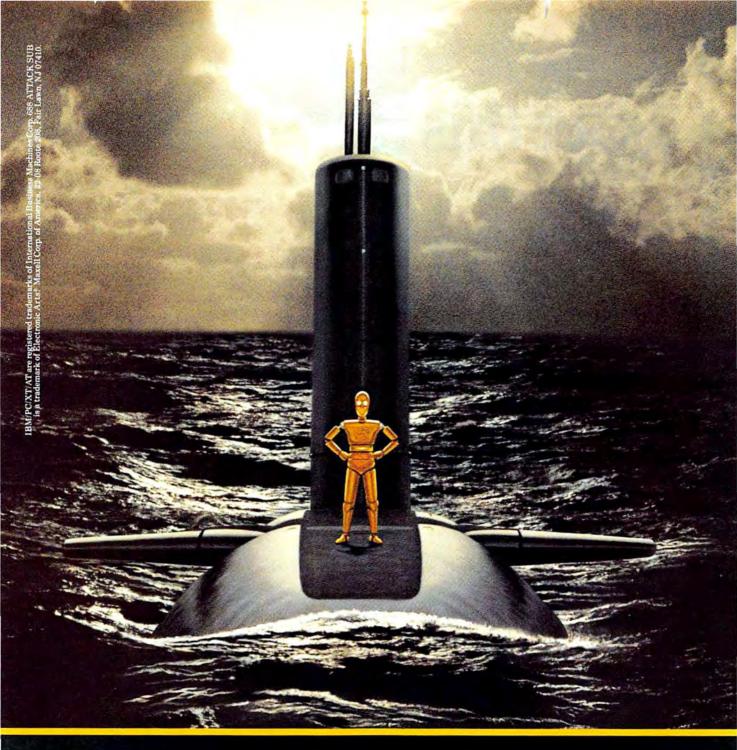
Kowei Electronic Corporation, but it turned out not to support the EMS 4.0 specification.

Next I bought an Everex RAM 3000 Deluxe EV159, which was advertised as an EMS 4.0 board. Just to be safe, I questioned the salesperson and even called Everex technical support; both assured me that the RAM 3000 Deluxe supported EMS 4.0. But when I installed the board, it didn't work right with Windows. After calling Everex's technical support again, I discovered that even the RAM 3000 is not really an EMS 4.0 board.

Stevan J. White Hayward, California

Editor's note: Everex systems manager Alex Sy said in a phone interview that Mr. White's setup under Windows was incorrect and had been fixed to work with the board. But Mr. White brings up a good point—many boards, including the RAM 3000 Deluxe EV159, don't support all the features of EMS 4.0, even when they're advertised as EMS 4.0 compatible.

Many of today's memory boards actually support EMS 3.2, an older specification, instead of EMS 4.0, and there's a critical difference. An EMS 3.2 board limits the amount of program code that can be run in expanded memory to 64K or less; so for all practical purposes, only data—not program code can be shuffled into expanded memory. Unless you have an EMS 4.0 (or EEMS) board, you can't put a program like Desqview into expanded memory and take advantage of its multitasking capabilities. Another major difference is that an EMS 3.2 board can address only 8MB (continues)



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of RAM, while an EMS 4.0 board addresses up to 32MB.

Before buying a board that's supposed to support EMS 4.0, ask the following questions: Does the board allow for more than 64K of program code in expanded memory? Can the board access more than 8MB of RAM? Note, too, that some of the EMS 4.0 specifications are voluntary and aren't always observed even by the manufacturers that developed them. For best results, call the board maker's technical support department, describe the programs you need to run, and grill tech support about the product's capabilities.

## **PC Plaudits**

Recently I tried to install an Alarm-Card (a card that makes a loud sound if the PC is tampered with) into a Leading Edge Model D. But the card wouldn't fit in the slot. When I secured the card's mounting bracket to the back of the PC, the card hung over one end of the slot.

I immediately called Alarm-Card in Bellevue, Washington, and although the representatives had never encountered my problem before, they volunteered to mill new oval slots into the card for the mounting bracket screws so the card could be adjusted to fit the slot. Moreover, they sent the special card by express mail and arranged for prepaid pickup of the original card. Talk about service!

Steve Lawrence Denver, Colorado

To send correspondence or to submit material for publication in this column, please see How To Contact PC World, page 4. ●

## How Farsighted Executives Are Using Their PC's For The Fun Of Profit. What can you get from your PC? Dow Jones News/Retrieval gives you... • Exclusive online access to the full text of The Wall Street Journal • Current and its street Journal • Out rent 10 O deta

By William J. Spink

For years now you've been hearing about the wonderful things personal computers will do for The Executive of the 80's—at least in theory.

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Walt Casey, V.P. of Communications

at ConAgra says, "I spend a lot of time each day poking into this and tracking that. It's much easier when you can immediately get the facts from a computer, rather than having to make a series of phone calls."

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## THE HELP SCREEN

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Backtrack through Paradox, pass the time, manage your media, detach Word style sheets, alternate CONFIGurations, effect 2K clusters, discover why CHKDSK and DIR give different file sizes, and learn an alternative to the em dash.

Karl Koessel

## **Paradox Lost**

Q. While using the Paradox query function, I came upon a significant flaw. Searching a field for entries greater than or equal to F locates entries beginning with letters F through Z. However, specifying less than or equal to F as the search criteria locates only those entries beginning with E back down through A. It's almost as though when searching backward, Paradox loses entries starting with F. I am curious to know whether anyone else has come across this same bug.

Steven G. Ritter Owasso, Oklahoma

**A.** The problem you're having is not really a bug; it's a consequence of the way ASCII strings are compared. Obviously *A* is less than *B*, and *D* is greater than *C*. But *A* is also less than *AA* because it's shorter.

Let's say the field you're searching through contains last names. When you look for every name greater than or equal to M, Paradox, dBASE, and other data base systems correctly find Macintosh, Mermaid, and Morris, all of which are greater than the single letter M. However, searching for all names less than M will not find any names that begin with M because they will all be longer (greater) than M. Finding names beginning with M back through A, therefore, requires a little thought. One solution is to search for everything less than

the next letter (*N*, in this case). Or, you can search for everything less than or equal to *MZZZ*, which should kick out all words beginning with *M*.

## If You've Got the Time

Q. I was pleased to see LOCK-KEYS.COM [The Help Screen, PCW, April 1988] and TYPE-AHED.SYS [Star-Dot-Star, PCW, April 1988]. Both have been quite useful. Now, how about a way to automatically answer the DATE and TIME commands in an AUTOEX-EC.BAT file with <Enter>s? It's silly to have to supply these <Enter>s from the keyboard when the date and time have already been provided by the internal clock.

Karen A. Mullen-Zagale Louisville, Kentucky

A. The DATE and TIME commands are issued automatically if a system does not have an AU-TOEXEC.BAT file because PCs, XTs, and their clones do not have a built-in clock/calendar. To be able to set the date and time, users often include those commands in AUTOEXEC.BAT files. For an AT, which automatically sets the date and time from its built-in clock/calendar, and for a PC or XT that has had a clock/ calendar installed, these commands need not be executed every time you boot your system. (continues)

Just remove the DATE and TIME commands from the AU-TOEXEC.BAT file and you won't have to answer them anymore.

## The Medium Is the Mess

**Q.** The other night I copied a file onto a disk so I could work at home. Much to my surprise, my home computer would not read the disk; typing DIR returned the error message 'Sector not found'. On closer inspection, I realized that the disk was a highdensity (1.2MB) disk that had been formatted to 360K. Back at work the next day, I found that 1.2MB drives could read the disk, but 360K drives could not. Curious, I formatted several more high-density disks to 360K and found that they too could be read by 1.2MB drives but not by 360K drives. Yet all the normal, double-density disks that I formatted to 360K in a 1.2MB drive could be read by both 1.2MB and 360K drives.

What gives? Why can't a 360K drive read a 360K-formatted high-density disk? Jonathan Michaels Redmond, Washington

**A.** I know it's a surprise; I found out the hard way, too. The high-density disk medium has different magnetic properties than the double-density medium. It is thinner and holds a weaker magnetic charge than the double-density medium. And high-density drives generate a weaker signal than do double-density drives. 1.2MB drives, when writing in the 1.2MB format, write tracks twice as close together as do 360K drives, and they use a

weaker signal to help prevent track signals from "bleeding" over to a neighboring track. 360K drives expect stronger magnetic charges and can't distinguish the charges on highdensity disks written by a highdensity drive. That's why you get the message 'Sector not found'. (High-density disks work reliably in 360K drives as long as they are never written to by a high-density drive.) Doubledensity disks hold a stronger charge, but manufacturers universally caution users that 360K drives may not always be able to read the thinner tracks that 1.2MB drives write.

After reading about how to format a 720K (double-density) 3½-inch disk in a 1.44MB drive ("1.44MB Drives Yield 720K Disks," The Help Screen, PCW, August 1988), Dale Cardin of Manzana MicroSystems wrote to tell me that although I had given the correct parameters for formatting a disk to 720K in a 1.44MB drive, I did not mention that only double-density disks should be formatted to 720K. Although PS/2s can read high-density disks formatted to 720K. those disks cannot be read by 3½-inch drives in other systems, such as a laptop or an AT to which a 3½-inch drive has been added. Like the 51/4-inch disks, double- and high-density 31/2-inch disks, used for 720K and 1.44MB disks, respectively, also have differing magnetic properties. Furthermore, the drives can distinguish between the two types of media and write to them with different signal strengths, burdening users of 31/2-inch drives with the same problems that you've been having with 51/4-inch drives.

## A Lack of Style

Q. I use Microsoft Word on a hard disk at the office and on a dual-floppy system at home. Although I haven't had any significant problems, I do have a minor complaint. When I want to take a document file home, I save my work to the hard drive and then save the file again to the floppy in drive A:. Once home, I run Word and issue <Esc> Transfer Load to load the document. Invariably, the floppy drive grinds annoyingly for some time before the file is loaded, and the error message 'Style sheet unavailable' appears at the lower left corner of the

Is there some way I can get the file to load without Word wasting time looking for a style sheet that doesn't exist?

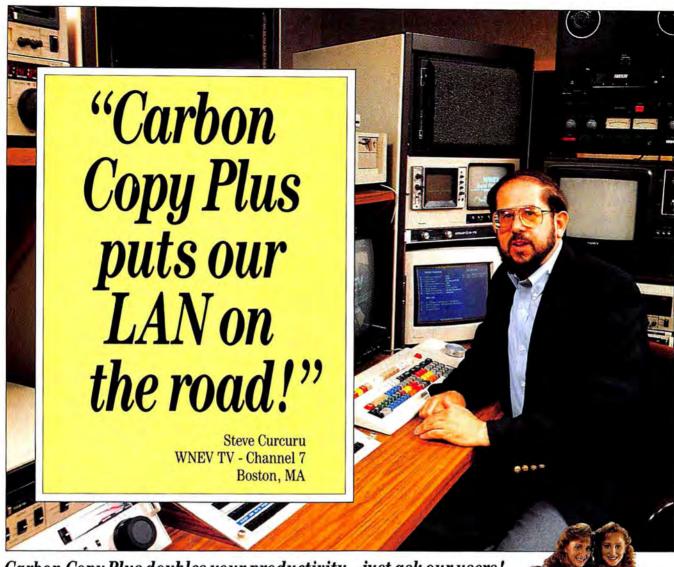
Richard Lutzer Walnut Creek, California

**A.** Sure. Save your *Word* document to the hard disk with <Esc> Transfer Save. Then issue <Esc> Format Stylesheet Attach, press <Delete> and <Enter>, save the file to drive A:, and quit. Those commands detach the style sheet from the file, and *Word* will no longer go looking for a style sheet when you load that file.

There may come a time, however, when you want to reattach the style sheet. Simply copy the style sheet onto the disk that holds the document. At home, *Word* will automatically find the style sheet on the floppy disk.

## Irreconcilable Drivers

**Q.** Most of my computing is done on an IBM PS/2 Model 60. Once or twice a month, however, (continues)



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I must access a System/36 to enter some data and run a few reports. In order to connect to the System/36, my PS/2's CON-FIG.SYS file must reference three device drivers—
VDSK.SYS, FSDDX.SYS, and FSDD.SYS—which together consume a whopping 91,312 bytes of RAM. The rest of my time on the PS/2 requires only the statements DEVICE = C:\DOS\ANSI.SYS, FILES = 44, and BUFFERS = 25.

Can you suggest a way to selectively activate the System/36 device drivers only when they're required? I sorely need that near 90K of memory to run certain other applications in a single pass, instead of having to break them into two separate jobs.

William Keith Clark, Jr. Carson City, Nevada

**A.** Yes, the commands within CONFIG.SYS execute only when the system is initiated. To activate one set of CONFIG.SYS commands instead of another requires starting the PC with a different CONFIG.SYS file.

You can use a pair of batch files to automate switching between the two configurations. You'll need to create two CON-FIG files. Let's assume that you name the one that references the System/36 device drivers CON-FIG.S36, and the everyday one CONFIG.PS2. If you want, you can also create two AUTOEXEC files, AUTOEXEC.S36 and AU-TOEXEC.PS2 (both should contain a PATH command that includes the string C:\BATCH;-C:\DOS;C:\UTILITY). Finally, you need to create two batch files, S36.BAT and PS2.BAT (see FIGURE 1), and store them in the \BATCH directory (if it doesn't

## \$36.BAT:

COPY C:\CONFIG.S36 C:\CONFIG.SYS COPY C:\AUTOEXEC.S36 C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT C:\UTILITY\WARMBOOT

## PS2.BAT:

COPY C:\CONFIG.PS2 C:\CONFIG.SYS
COPY C:\AUTOEXEC.PS2 C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT
C:\UTILITY\WARMBOOT

FIGURE 1: These two simple batch files restart the PC after replacing the current CONFIG.SYS and AUTO-EXEC.BAT files.

exist, make one). These two batch files simply replace the current CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files with the batch files' associated CONFIG and AUTOEXEC files and then restart the system by calling WARMBOOT.COM from the \UTILITY directory.

To create WARMBOOT.COM. change to the \UTILITY directory and save the lines shown in FIGURE 2 in an unformatted ASCII text file called WARMBOOT-.DBG. Note that you must include the blank line that follows the JMP command. Next, issue DIR C:\DOS\DEBUG.COM to check for the presence of DE-BUG in the \DOS directory. If it's not there, copy it from your original DOS Supplemental Programs disk to the \DOS directory (some versions of DOS have DEBUG on the Operating disk).

A 100 MOV DX,40 MOV DS,DX MOV BX,72 MOV WORD PTR [BX],1234 JMP FFFF:0

R CX 11 N WARMBOOT.COM W Q

FIGURE 2: WARMBOOT.DBG contains the DEBUG commands that create WARMBOOT.COM. Now type DEBUG<WARM-BOOT.DBG; this command loads DEBUG and feeds it the keystrokes held in WARMBOOT.DBG, creating WARM-BOOT.COM. Test the program by typing WARMBOOT and pressing <Enter>. If it works, delete WARMBOOT.DBG.

Now you can, at any DOS prompt, issue the command S36 to restart the system with CON-FIG.SYS referencing the System/36 device drivers, or issue PS2 to restart your system in its usual configuration.

## **Cluster Buster**

**Q.** Isn't it true that one of DOS 3.00's more significant improvements was changing the hard disk cluster size from 8K to 2K? When I upgraded from DOS 2.10 to DOS 3.30, my hard disk's clusters were still 8K, even after I reformatted the drive. I know because I performed the following test: Log on to drive C:. Issue DIR. Write down the number of 'bytes free'. Create a small file. [You can make a 1-byte file by typing COPY CON TEMP and pressing <Enter> <Enter> < F6 > < Enter > . Issue DIR again. Write down the new number of 'bytes free'. Subtract the second number from the first; (continues)

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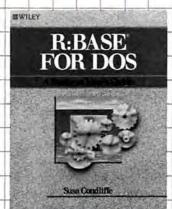
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what remains is the cluster size in bytes. Divide by 1024 to get the cluster size in K.

Now that I'm using DOS 3.30, how do I get 2K clusters? I noticed that you didn't tell how it's done when you wrote about upgrading DOS in the September issue of PC World.

Alan Palmer Chicago, Illinois

**A.** You're right; I had forgotten about the cluster size change and didn't mention how to achieve it.

When upgrading to DOS 3.00 or a later version from a version earlier than 3.00, you can reformat the hard disk and get 2K clusters. Obviously, you should first back up the hard disk. However, before FORMAT will produce 2K clusters, you must boot from the new DOS's floppy disk (or a copy) and run FDISK to remove the DOS partition, and then reinstall it. Finally, format the partition, restore your files, and replace all the DOS files on the hard disk with the new DOS's versions.

## **Older Format**

**Q.** Do I have to reformat the hundreds of floppy disks (which were formatted with DOS 2.10) that I am currently using if I upgrade my hard disk to DOS 3.30?

Howard T. Atlas Massapequa Park, New York

**A.** No, all versions of DOS can read disks formatted by earlier versions.

## **File Size Discrepancy**

Q. My AT clone has 512K of user memory and 512K of extended memory. When I recently tried to convert a less-than-100K .EXE file into a binary, the command EXE2BIN MENU.EXE simply returned the error message 'Insufficient memory', even though CHKDSK showed over 400K bytes free.

I copied MENU.EXE to a blank floppy and ran DIR. It showed that the file occupied 77,232 bytes, while CHKDSK said there were '77312 bytes in 1 user files'. What's the reason for the discrepancy in file sizes? And why did CHKDSK also show '0 bytes in 1 hidden files'?

Peter Kang Richmond, Virginia

**A.** EXE2BIN generates the insufficient-memory error message because it cannot convert .EXE files that are larger than 64K.

DIR returns the number of bytes that the file contains, while CHKDSK tells you how much disk space the file occupies. Disk space is assigned by whole numbers of clusters. Therefore, the smallest amount of disk space that can be assigned to a file is one cluster. DOS formats singlesided 51/4-inch disks with 512byte clusters; double-sided 51/4inch disks with 1K clusters; highdensity 51/4-inch disks with 512byte clusters; double- and highdensity 31/2-inch disks with 512byte clusters; and hard disks with clusters from 2K to 8K, depending on the size of the disk and the version of DOS.

The hidden file you refer to is a volume label that was on the disk before you copied MENU-.EXE. (The label name appears when you issue a DIR of the disk.) Although the label occupies an entry in the file directory (as do subdirectory names), it is not erased when you delete all the files. Use the DOS command LABEL to remove or replace the label.

## Super Em Dash

Reader Richard Tamler of Los Angeles has come up with an alternative to the July Help Screen's suggestions for Page-Maker users trying to generate an em dash on non-PostScript laser printers: "Use one underlined space (or more, depending on the pitch) and raise it to its superscripted position by checking the appropriate box in the 'Type specifications' menu. Strictly speaking, it's not really an em dash, but it looks like one, and this method is easier than kerning, drawing lines, or using Publisher's Type Foundry."

To send correspondence or to submit material for publication in this column, please see How to Contact PC World, page 4.

## **POWER TIP NO. 24**

## Tag WordPerfect Files

When you display the contents of a WordPerfect directory with the List Files key (<F5>), you can individually tag and untag files (for copying or deletion) by pressing the asterisk key. To tag or untag all the files at once, press <Alt>-<F5>.

George Beinhorn Nevada City, California

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Index a data base on a related file's field, sum 1-2-3 columns with a macro, load Freelance graphics into Ventura, create .PICs with a view, enter BASIC math in DOS, and go bug busting.

Edited by Tom Swan

# **Sorting Out Your** Relations

A common dBASE III task is indexing a data base file on a field in a related file. For example, suppose you have the two files shown in FIGURE 1 and want to alphabetize ADVANCES.DBF by employee names, which are stored separately in the file EMPLOYEE.DBF.

Using the SET RELATION command, this job becomes relatively easy. To list AD-VANCES. DBF by employee name, just issue the commands in FIGURE 2. FIGURE 3 displays the results.

Rafael Q. Montemayor Mandaluyong, Philippines

Editor's note: The two files must be related; that is, they must share a common field (in this case, EMPNO). As an added benefit, this arrangement conserves disk space by letting you store lengthy text in one file and then refer to that text by shorter codes stored in other files.

# 1-2-3 Totem Pole Totals

Writing 1-2-3 formulas to add up columns that contain subtotals is a time-consuming and errorprone task. It's too easy to miss a cell or to include a subtotal within the range, throwing a totem-pole sum out of kilter.

For more reliable formulas, I wrote a macro [see FIGURE 4] that automatically totals columns,

skipping embedded subtotals. To create it, enter the macro commands into columns A and B as shown in the figure. [Note that rows 8 and 11 are blank, and that although the contents of cells B3, B4, and B12 are shown wrapped, each must be entered on its own line.] Then issue /Range Name Labels Right, type A1.A11, and press < Enter > .

To use the macro, assign the range name SUM to the range of cells in the column to be totaled and the range name TARGET to the cell you want the total to appear in. When you press <Alt>-S, a formula string @SUM(SUM) is created in the cell TARGET. Then the macro uses the @CELLPOINTER-("CONTENTS") function to search for a cell containing dashes (assuming that subtotals are preceded by a line drawn with the \- command, as is usually the case). Each time it locates one, it adds characters to the @SUM(SUM) string that will subtract value in the subtotal cell below. An EDIT function deletes the label prefix, changing the final string into a formula.

Brian T. Copeland Warminster, Ontario

# Freelancing With Ventura

My colleagues and I have had trouble loading Lotus's Freelance Plus graphics into Ventura (continues)

# ADVANCES.DBF

EMPNO	ACCT	AMOUNT
00001	51350	100.00
00002	23510	200.00
00003	74400	1500.00
00004	68680	300.00
00005	50564	20000.00
00006	60540	750.00

# **EMPLOYEE.DBF**

EMPNO	NAME
00001	Jing
00002	Patsy
00003	Odi
00004	Carol
00005	Dick
00006	Mike

FIGURE 1: These two simple batch files restart the PC after replacing the current CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files.

Publisher, even though Ventura is supposed to accommodate Lotus .PIC files as well as a host of other graphics formats. We finally solved the problem when we discovered that while both Ventura and Freelance support the metafile graphics standard, they use different file extensions.

When exporting a metafile, Freelance adds the extension .GMF. As an experiment, I renamed a test file, changing the file's extension to .CGM, the extension Ventura expects for metafile graphics files. Ventura then had no problem loading the graphics file.

Changing the extension to match *Ventura*'s expectations works fine, but it requires exiting to DOS. Then I found a simpler way, which doesn't involve DOS. I simply change the default \*.CGM in *Ventura*'s item selector box to \*.GMF, and voilà, the box fills with a list of all my *Freelance* graphics files.

Don Murray Pemberton, British Columbia

# **BASIC Pipe Lines**

I don't have a memory-resident calculator but often need answers to simple math problems. I used to start BASICA, enter a calculation, and then issue SYSTEM to return to DOS, but I hated wasting the time. By accident, I stumbled on a quick way to accomplish the same thing, shunting expressions from DOS

to BASICA with lines such as: ECHO PRINT 2+2 | BASICA The ECHO command sends

The ECHO command sends the PRINT statement to DOS's standard output, which the vertical bar pipes to BASICA. After displaying the answer, BASICA automatically returns to DOS. The same trick works with GW BASIC, too.

Dave Bushong Concord, New Hampshire

SELECT 1
USE employee
INDEX ON empno TO byempno
SELECT 2
USE advances
SET RELATION TO empno INTO employee
INDEX ON a->name TO byname
LIST a->name, empno, acct, amount

FIGURE 2: WARMBOOT.DBG contains the DEBUG commands that create WARMBOOT.COM.

A->NAME	EMPNO	ACCT	AMOUNT		
Carol	00004	68680	300.00		
Dick	00005	50564	20000.00		
Jing	00001	51350	100.00		
Mike	00006	60540	750.00		
Odi	00003	74400	1500.00		
Patsy	00002	23510	200.00		

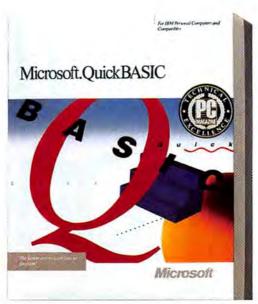
FIGURE 3: ADVANCES.DBF can be sorted on a field from EMPLOYEE.DBF via the common field EMPNO.

	A	В
1	\\$	(LET TARGET, "@SUM(SUM)")~
2		(GOTO)SUM~
3		(IF @CELLPOINTER("COL")<27)(LET COLUMN, @CHAR(@CELLPOINTER("COL")+64))~
4		(IF acellpointer("col")>26)(Let column,
		achar(acellpointer("col")/26+64)&
		achar(amod(acellpointer("col"),26)+64))~
5		(DOWN)
6		(FOR COUNTER, 1, @ROWS(SUM) - 2, 1, SUMMER)
7		(GOTO)TARGET~(EDIT)(HOME)(DEL)~
8		
9	COLUMN	
10	COUNTER	
11		
12	SUMMER	(IF @CELLPOINTER("CONTENTS")="-")(LET TARGET,+TARGET &"-"&COLUMN&@STRING(@CELLPOINTER("ROW")+1,0))~
13		(DOWN)

FIGURE 4: This 1-2-3 macro totals a column even if it contains embedded subtotals.

If anyone tries to tell you that one language fits all, turn the page.

# To each





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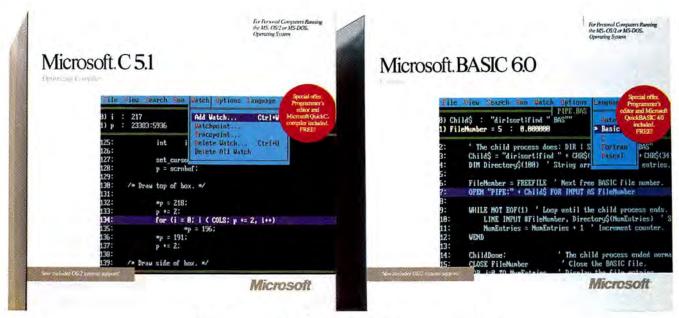
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course, all Quick languages are mousedriven, so all commands are just a point and a click away. More specifically, Microsoft\* Quick-BASIC comes with on-line support: QB Advisor serves as a state-of-the-art electronic manual, and QB Express can teach you how to use the environment in just minutes. Of course, you'll be more productive even faster with our new Easy Menus and the instant environment.

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# .PICS With a View

Rather than run a separate program to view graphics files, you can change a displayed image into an executable file containing its own viewing software.

To demonstrate the process, first create the sample graphics

```
10 SCREEN 1,1: KEY OFF: CLS
20 B=195: C=60
30 FOR I=0 TO B STEP 5
40 LINE(C,B-1)-(I+C,I),3
50 LINE(B-I+C,B)-(I+C,B-I),2
60 NEXT I
70 DEF SEG=&HB800
80 BSAVE "DEMO.PIC",0,&H4000
```

LISTING 1: Run DEMO.BAS to create a sample .PIC file for converting with the program in FIGURE 5.

```
A100
JMP 4107
A4107
MOV AH,F
INT 10
CMP AL,7
JZ 412D
XOR AH, AH
PUSH AX
MOV AL,5
INT 10
MOV AX, B800
MOV ES, AX
MOV SI,107
XOR DI, DI
MOV CX,2000
CLD
REPZ
MOVSW
XOR AH, AH
INT 16
POP AX
INT 10
INT 20
N VIEWPIC.COM
R CX
402F
W
Q
```

FIGURE 5: PIC2COM.PAT adds viewing code to BSAVE-format graphics files.

file DEMO.PIC by running the BASIC program DEMO.BAS shown in LISTING 1. Next, enter the text in FIGURE 5 with any ASCII text editor, saving the file as PIC2COM.PAT. Be sure to include the two blank lines. With DEBUG.COM in the same directory as PIC2COM.PAT (or available via the PATH command), type DEBUG DEMO.PIC > PIC2COM-.PAT. This creates VIEWPIC-.COM, containing both the original image plus the viewing code. To display the picture, type VIEWPIC and press <Enter>. When you've finished enjoying the view, press any key to return to DOS.

Denny "Zuko" Yanuar R. Bandung, Indonesia

Editor's note: Graphics files must be CGA images in the same format that the BASIC command BSAVE uses. Be aware that you may find .PIC files containing data that cannot be converted. If you're not sure whether a .PIC file is the right kind, operate on a copy of your original. To save converted images that contain the viewing code, rename VIEWPIC.COM before converting additional files. You might then, for example, create slide shows of multiple images by running the renamed .COM viewers in succession, perhaps from a batch file.

# DEVELOPER'S TOOLBOX

# Let's Go Bug Busting

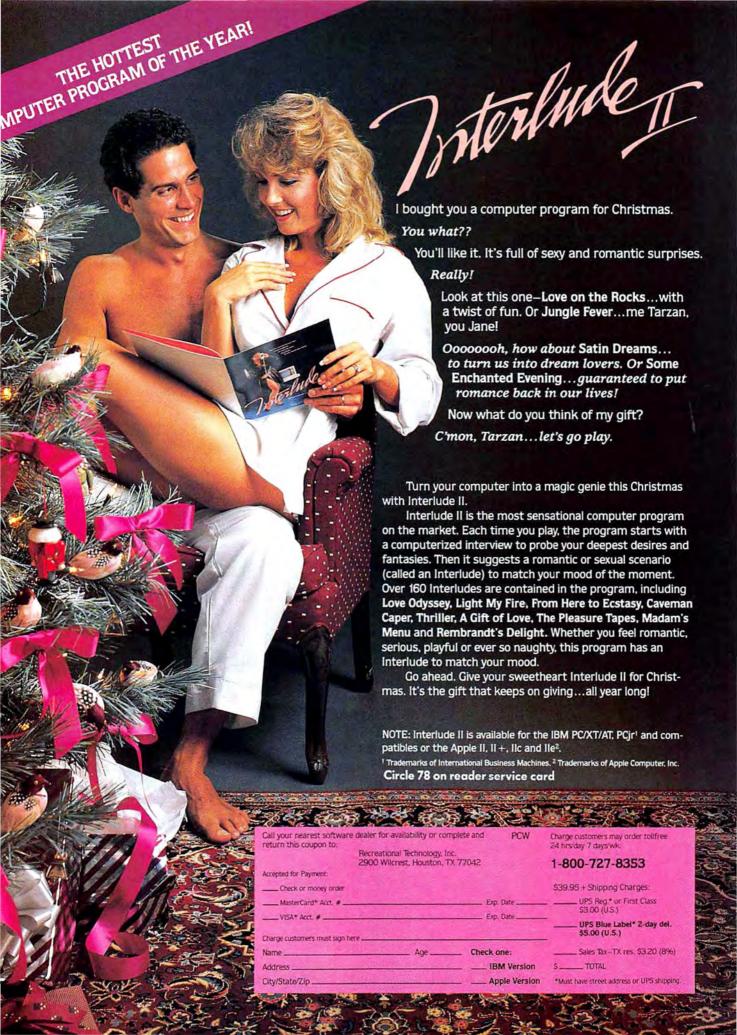
Finding the bugs in software is dark and dreary work, lightened in part by several new debugging tools that take advantage of special features in my system's 80386 processor.

The 80386 contains several debugging registers normally unavailable to applications. These registers allow programs to run at full speed under the control of debugging software, which watches for memory changes and halts programs that have no business reading or writing at specified addresses. Programs like Soft-ICE, MagicCV, Periscope, and Borland's Turbo Debugger use these special registers to add hardware-level debugging capabilities to any 80386-based system.

In the past, such capabilities required purchasing a hardware in-circuit emulator (ICE), costing \$18,000 or more. Soft-ICE emulates a hardware ICE, providing most of the same capabilities for \$386-a far more reasonable cost. Although you can use Soft-ICE as a stand-alone debugger, the program shines in adding hardware debugging features to existing products such as DOS DEBUG and CodeView-the source-code debugger shipped with Microsoft's C, Pascal, BA-SIC, Fortran, and Macro Assembler (MASM) languages.

MagicCV is an 80386 protected-mode program that loads CodeView in a virtual 8086 machine. It requires at least 384K of extended memory, 640K to run CodeView and Soft-ICE simultaneously. With enough memory, MagicCV and Soft-ICE provide the advantages of a hardware ICE plus the added safety of running CodeView from protected memory.

For debugging Turbo C and Pascal source code, I'm head (continues)



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over heels about Borland's Turbo Debugger, sold with the company's newest language product, the MASM-compatible Turbo Assembler. Known in the press as the CodeView Killer, Turbo Debugger debugs C, Pascal, and assembly language source code. It can also take advantage of 80386 debugging registers, load itself into extended memory, and perform all the operations of CodeView, MagicCV, and Soft-ICE combined. A pleasure to use, Turbo Debugger has the best displays and command hot keys of any debugger on the market. Borland's got another winner.

Periscope, a time-tested favorite of many programmers, comes in several configurations—some with memory cards, others with an optional breakout switch installed by poking a wire into an occupied peripheral slot. (This sounds dangerous, but the process is fully explained in the manual and, if you're careful, is unlikely to cause any harm.) Periscope Model II comes with the breakout switch already in place. All models can take advantage of 80386 debugging registers. Periscope debuggers are highly technical products requiring much experience to use effectively. Casual programmers are probably better off with Code-View or Turbo Debugger.

For OS/2 debugging, the story takes a sinister twist, especially when multiple processes (called threads) sew up your code. Because several active threads may call the same subroutines, you not only need to set breakpoints on specific memory areas, but you may also need to know which process has called an interrupted instruction. For this purpose, Microsoft provides a protectedmode version of CodeView that

runs under OS/2 and has special features for debugging threaded processes. The protected-mode CodeView can also display structured variables-for example, listing named fields in Pascal records. (Turbo Debugger has a similar feature for viewing structures.)

Software tools that use special 80386 debugging features are giving developers new ways to get the bugs out of their code. Debugging is never easy, but the next time I go bug busting, I know who I'm gonna call.

### WHERE TO BUY

### Soft-ICE

Nu-Mega Technologies P.O. Box 7607 Nashua, NH 03060-7607 603/888-2386

List price: \$386

Requirements: IBM Series II, 80386-based PC, or PC equipped with an 80386 coprocessor card

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For more information, circle 730 on reader service card.

## MagicCV

Nu-Mega Technologies List price: \$199 For more information, circle 731 on reader service card.

# Periscope Model II

The Periscope Company 1197 Peachtree St. Atlanta, GA 30361 404/875-8080, 404/875-4726 (technical support)

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(continues)

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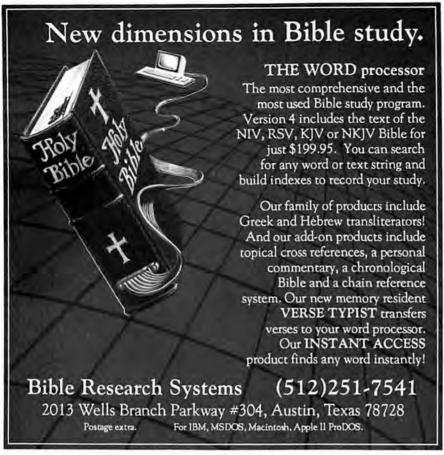
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# **POWER TIP NO. 25**

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Speeds up IBM/XT	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Ä	Y	
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Microprocessor	80296	80296	80386	8086	30296	80296	60236	
Memory Cache	16K	BK	64K	BK	N	8K	BK-	1
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Computer processor retained	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	
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Disk caching included	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N:	N	ı
RAM disk included	N	Y	14	N	Y	N.	N	1
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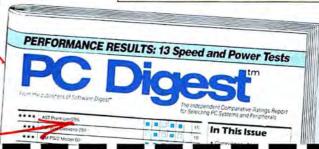
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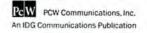
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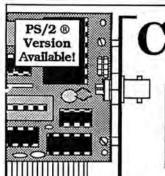
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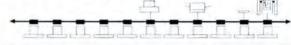
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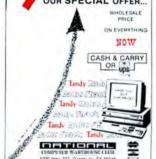
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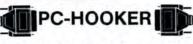
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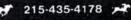
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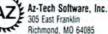
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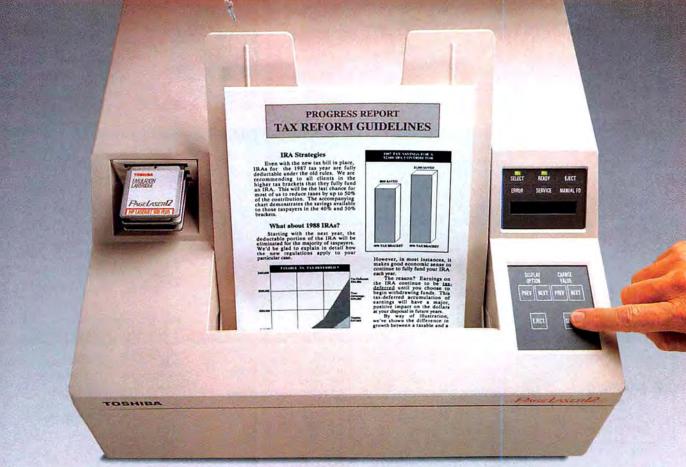
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Assembled & Tested IBM® AT Compatible MS-DOS® OS/2® & UNIX® Compatible

80286 12/6 MHz Norton SI 13.7

512K of RAM Expandable to 1MB

1.2MB Floppy Drive Ports: 1 Serial, 1 Parallel, 1 Game

Dual Floppy/Dual H.D. Controller

101 Key Enhanced Keyboard Clock Calendar w/Battery Backup Swan Setup & Utilities Diskette

31/2" Floppy Drive SWAN/MS-DOS (3.3) add \$89

VIDEO OPTIONS

\$1199 \$1248 \$1598 \$1698

\$1899 \$1948 \$2298 \$2398

EGA VGA

\$1998 \$2098

14" Flat Mono Mono

\$1599 \$1648

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8 Expansion Slots, 6x16 bit, 2x8 bit

Base System with 1.2MB Drive

200W Power Supply

80287 Coprocessor Upgrade to 1MB

286/12

**Drive Options** 

Single Floppy

w/80MB Seagate #ST-4096 HD

Phoenix BIOS

0 Wait State

Swan 200

# Swan

\$519 Monitor not included

Base System with Single 360K Drive, Assembled & Tested IBM ® XT Compatible

- 10/4.77 MHz 8088-1
- 640K of RAM

- Swan Setup & Utilities Diskette

- Phoenix BIOS
- 31/2" Floppy Drive

XT10	VIDEO OPTIONS Include Monitor & Video Adepter											
Drive Options	Mono <sup>†</sup>	CGA	EGA	VGA								
Single Floppy	\$669	\$839	\$1068	\$1168								
Dual Flopppies	\$749	\$919	\$1148	\$1248								
w/20MB Seagate #ST-225 HD*	\$949	\$1119	\$1348	\$1448								
w/30MB Seagate #ST-238 HD*	\$995	\$1165	\$1394	\$1494								

Includes Single 360K Floppy Drive
 Add \$49 For 14" Flat Screen Monitor

\$849 Monitor not included

# 10MHz/0 Wait State

Base System with 1.2MB Drive, Assembled & Tested IBM® AT Compatible MS-DOS®, OS/2® & UNIX Compatible

- 80286 10/6 MHz Norton SI 11.2
- Phoenix BIOS
- 512K of RAM Expandable to 1MB
- 200W Power Supply
- 1.2MB Floppy Drive Ports: 1 Serial, 1 Parallel, 1 Game Dual Floppy/Dual H.D. Controller
- 8 Expansion Slots, 6x16 bit, 2x8 bit
- 101 Key Enhanced Keyboard
- Clock Calendar w/Battery Backup Swan Setup & Utilities Diskette
- Options:
- 80287 Coprocessor

- Upgrade to 640K or 1MB 31/2" Floppy Drive SWAN/MS-DOS (3.3) add \$89

286/10	VIDEO OPTIONS Include Monitor & Video Adapte										
Drive Options	Monot	CGA	EGA	VGA							
Single Floppy	\$995	\$1165	\$1394	\$1494							
w/20MB Seagate #ST-225 HD	\$1249	\$1419	\$1648	\$1748							
w/40MB Seagate #ST-251 HD	\$1399	\$1569	\$1798	\$1898							
w/80MB Seagate #ST-4096 HD	\$1699	\$1869	\$2098	\$2198							

1 Add \$49 For 14" Flat Screen Monitor

# Swan 386/

\$1969 Monitor not included

# 16MHz/0 Wait State

Base System with 1,2MB Drive, Assembled & Tested IBM® AT Compatible MS-DOS®, OS/2® & UNIX® Compatible

- 80386 16/8 MHz Norton SI 17.6
- Phoenix BIOS
- 1MB (expandable to 2MB)RAM on
- memory card 80287 & 80387 Coprocessor Socket
- 200W Power Supply
- 1.2MB Floppy Drive
- Ports: 1 Serial, 1 Parallel, 1 Game
- Dual Floppy/Dual H.D. Controller
- 8 Expansion Slots
- 101 Key Enhanced Keyboard
- Clock Calendar w/Battery Backup
- Swan Setup & Utilities Diskette

## Options:

- Upgrade to 2MB
- 80387 Coprocessor
- 31/2" Floppy Drive SWAN/MS-DOS (3.3) add \$89

386/16	VIDEO OPTIONS Include Monitor & Video Adapter											
Drive Options	Mono	14°Flat Mono	EGA	VGA								
Single Floppy	\$2199	\$2168	\$2518	\$2618								
w/40MB Seagate #ST-251 HD	\$2499	\$2548	\$2898	\$2998								
w/80MB Seagate #ST-4096 HD	\$2799	\$2848	\$3198	\$3298								

\$2349 Monitor not included

# 20MHz/0 Wait State

Base System with 1.2MB Drive, Assembled & Tested IBM® AT Compatible MS-DOS®, OS/2® & UNIX® Compatible

- 80386 20/8 MHz Norton SI 22.0 Phoenix BIOS
- 1MB (expandable to 2MB)RAM on memory card 80287 & 80387 Coprocessor Socket
- 230W Power Supply
- 1.2MB Floppy Drive
- Ports: 2 Serial, 1 Parallel, 1 Game
- Dual Floppy/Dual H.D. Controller
- 8 Expansion Slots
- 101 Key Enhanced Keyboard
- Clock Calendar w/Battery Backup
- Swan Setup & Utilities Diskette

## Options:

- Upgrade to 2MB
- 80387 Coprocessor
- 31/2\* Floppy Drive SWAN/MS-DOS (3.3) add \$89

386/20	VIDEO OPTIONS Include Monitor & Video Adapter										
Drive Options	Mono	14" Flat Mono	EGA	VGA							
Single Floppy	\$2499	\$2548	\$2898	\$2998							
w/40MB Seagate #ST-251 HD	\$2879	\$2928	\$3278	\$3378							
w/80MB Seagate	\$3179	\$3228	\$3578	\$3678							

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- 12" Hi-Resolution Amber Monitor
- Tilt & Swivel Base 14" MONOCHROME:
- Swan Switchable Video Card
- 14" Flat Screen Monitor
- Tilt & Swivel Base

- Swan Switchable Video Card RGB Monitor
- Swan EGA Video Card
- 14" EGA Monitor VGA
- Swan VGA Video Card
  14" VGA Monitor
- Tilt & Swivel Base

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internal ......\$69 2400 baud external ......\$135 1200 baud external ......\$89

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- EGA/CGA/TTL
- Parallel Port \$129 VGA
- Compatible with all 17 VGA Modes .....\$219



# Swan AT-Style Keyboard

- 101 Key Enhanced Keyboard
- XT & AT compatible
- Full 1 year warranty

\$69

# Swan Tape Drive

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# 10MHz

150W Power Supply Ports: 1 Serial, 1 Parallel, 1 Game

8 Expansion Slots

101 Key Enhanced Keyboard Clock Calendar w/Battery Backup

Options:

8087 Coprocessor

SWAN/MS-DOS (3.3) add \$89

XT10	VIDEO OPTIONS Include Monitor & Video Adepter											
Drive Options	Mono <sup>†</sup>	CGA	EGA	VGA								
Single Floppy	\$669	\$839	\$1068	\$116								
Dual Flopppies	\$749	\$919	\$1148	\$124								
w/20MB Seagate #ST-225 HD*	\$949	\$1119	\$1348	\$144								
w/30MB Seagate #ST-238 HD*	\$995	\$1165	\$1394	\$149								

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	N	EC	
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Quietwrite	rIII										\$ 1199
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Aultisync	Plus \$889	9
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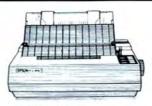
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# Epson FX-850

- · Narrow-carriage 9-pin, dot-matrix printer.
- · SmartPark,™ a unique Epson paper-handling innovation, lets you switch from fanfold to single sheets or envelopes without removing hardware or paper.
- · With a standard push feed tractor and single sheet friction feed, the FX-850 can handle virtually any type of paper as well as envelopes.

  Exclusive SelecType front control panel puts
- popular printer features and SmartPark
- operations at your fingertips.

  The FX-850 prints 264 characters per second (CPS) in high-speed draft mode (12 CPI); 54 CPS in Near Letter Quality mode (12 CPI).



# Epson FX-1050

- · Wide-carriage 9-pin, dot-matrix printer.
- a unique Epson paper-handling · SmartPark, innovation, lets you switch from fanfold to single sheets or envelopes without removing hardware or paper.
- · With a standard push feed tractor and single sheet friction feed, the FX-1050 can handle virtually any type of paper as well as envelopes.

  Exclusive SelecType front control panel puts
- popular printer features and SmartPark
- operations at your fingertips.
  The FX-1050 prints 264 characters per second (CPS) in high-speed draft mode (12 CPI); 54 CPS in Near Letter Quality mode (12 CPI).



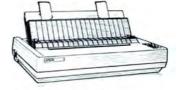
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- Automatic single sheet loading, standard pull tractor and friction feed for versatile paper handling
- · Exclusive SelecType front control panel offers quick, easy selection of popular typestyles, fonts and pitch
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# Epson LQ-850

- · Epson's 24-pin, dot-matrix technology creates true letter quality characters
  • Epson's SmartPark "
- Exclusive SelecType front control panel offers quick, easy selection of popular typestyles, fonts
- · 264 Characters per second in the high-speed draft mode delivers outstanding productivity
- · 88 Characters per second in Letter Quality mode for enhanced, high-resolution characters
- In draft mode or Letter Quality mode, the LQ-850 runs at a surprisingly quiet 55 dB noise level



# Epson LQ-1050

- · Epson's 24-pin, dot-matrix technology creates true letter quality characters
- Epson's SmartPark
- · 264 Characters per second in the high-speed draft mode delivers outstanding productivity
- 88 Characters per second in Letter Quality mode for enhanced, high-resolution characters
- In draft mode or letter quality mode, the LQ-1050 runs at a surprisingly quiet 55 dB noise level
- Exclusive SelecType front control panel offers quick, easy selection of popular typestyles, fonts and pitch



# Epson LQ-2550

- 24-Pin technology creates superior Letter Quality characters and high-resolution graphics up to 360 dpi.
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- Epson's SmartPark"
- Exclusive LCD SelecType front control panel for easy selection of pre-sets, fonts and printer
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Liberty XT, EMS......<sup>5</sup>89. Quadsprint Accellerator....<sup>5</sup>89.

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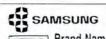
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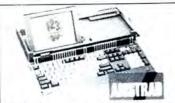
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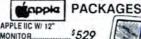
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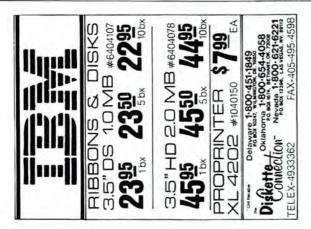
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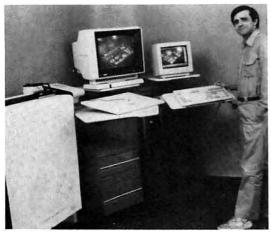
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# Software Publishers: Do It for Mom

Brian Camenker



Recently my mother called to announce that she is selling her PC and buying a Macintosh. She wants to write a book but can't figure out how to use any of the word processing packages that I've sent her. She's giving up in disgust.

Naturally, this is a bit embarrassing for the executive director of a major PC user group. The truth is that the overwhelming majority of software for the PC is simply too difficult for normal people to use, and there's just no excuse for it. You shouldn't have to run a five-day mental steeplechase just to learn the basics of a high-end word processor. That only results in large amounts of expensive shelfware.

So what's going on here? Some major issues stand out:

SETUP Who knows what device drivers are? Who knows that 07 means gray on black when you're setting the colors on a screen display? Why can't anyone write a setup program that makes sense? And I don't mean a maze of menus that seem endlessly recursive. Instead, the menus should offer enough depth and hand-holding for novices but be flexible enough to let experts avoid them if they wish. The WordStar 3.3 setup programs show the right idea (sans the DEBUG code, of course).

MANUALS Manuals should be clear and succinct. They should be like automobile users' guides—not like the Talmud—and read the way we think. That's not easy, I'll agree, but most of them stink. The best are the Microsoft language manuals.

# PROGRAM COMPLEXITY/SOPHISTICA-

TION The more sophisticated a program gets, the more difficult it is for the newcomer, so most "easy to use" products have limited functions. But it doesn't have to be that way. Anyone can sit down and fully use ABT's Project Manager's Workbench, the most sophisticated package in its class. Why can't more companies make products like that?

USER INTERFACE Pete Peterson, head of WordPerfect Corporation, recently asked me if I used WordPerfect. I said no, because I have a terrible memory, and I hate rooting through a template or pamphlet all the time. Why can't keys be intuitive? What ever happened to <Esc> to back out of a program, or something as obvious as <Alt>-P to print? Designing a good, clear user interface is a painstaking, timeconsuming process. And it really starts with good program structure.

GRAPHICS INTERFACE I hope I'm never reduced to having to point to a little garbage can in order to delete a file. I think the WIMP (windows, icons, mouse, and pointer) interface is a cop-out and actually constrains the software designer.

I lay blame first on vendors and second on magazine product reviewers. The vendors find it easiest to compete by using fancy marketing and sheer numbers of features. They cram in what they can and let the user sort it all out.

Most reviewers are too busy playing journalist. They don't take the time to live with a product to see what makes it tick. They get snowed by benchmarks and numbers of features, and just plain intimidated by "name" vendors. How many times have I seen a major new release rated "highly easy to use" and later found it the exact opposite?

One of these days I'll build a word processor myself that's both sophisticated and easy for you, Mom. •

Brian Camenker is executive director of the Boston Computer Society's IBM PC Users' Group.

Have a different perspective? Write Dan Lavin, User Ombudsman, PC World, 501 Second St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

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