

InfoWorld

The Newsweekly for Microcomputer Users

New electronic typewriter challenges IBM's market lead

Xerox Memorywriter to link into networks

By Deborah Wise, IW Staff

NEW YORK, NY—The Xerox Corporation has announced its previously rumored series of electronic typewriters. The Memorywriters, which had been codenamed Sabre, are aimed at the stand-alone typewriter market that has for so long been dominated by IBM.

The four new machines are designed for the secretary's desktop, which Xerox calls "the cornerstone of the multistation integrated network strategy of the office of the future."

The Memorywriters are upgradable, and the high-end models, available in June 1982, will have a

communications function that links them to one another and to other work stations via the Ethernet local-area network.

The low-end model 610 has a limited memory-storage capability of 946 characters for phrase and format recall as well as other advanced typewriter functions. It costs \$1430.

The 620 and 625 models have five and ten pages of storage capacity respectively and can communicate using the Xerox 872 and 873 communications server at a rate of 300 to 1200 bauds. Prices will be announced next year.

With this communications function, Memorywriters can fit into local-area networks, using Ethernet to pass information between other Xerox office products such as the Xerox Star, the Xerox 820 personal computer and the Xerox 860 word-processing system, a company spokesman said.

Xerox also said that when LSI chips are available from semiconductor companies, Memorywriters will be able to communicate by a direct attachment.

Copier sales force

The company will market the Memorywriter through its copier sales force as well as through Xerox retail outlets, the office-products division, direct mail and telemarketing. Having the copier sales force sell the product is a departure from normal company strategy and will, according to Xerox,



TI introduces new video controller

By John Markoff, IW Staff

LUBBOCK, TX—Texas Instruments, Inc., has announced the TI Video Controller (VP-1000), designed to allow the TI-99/4A computer to link to selected videotape players or to the Pioneer Video Disc player.

The system, still in prototype form, was previewed recently at Video Expo in New York City.

The Video Controller has been described by Texas Instruments officials as being intended for developing and delivering customized teaching or training programs. It will probably find its way into the hands of experimenters intent on blending video and personal-computer technology as well.

"We have provided an interface between our technology and videotape and disk technologies," said Bill Turner, a marketing executive for Texas Instruments.

The Video Controller can be used without the need for disk storage, since programs can be stored on the second audio track of the video player, according to Al Groh, marketing manager for Texas Instruments's home-computer division.

The controller has been released with an initial Course Designer software package intended for industrial training and vocational courses.

The Video Controller will sell for \$699.95, and the initial software package will cost \$199.95.

"double the number of people selling electronic typewriters overnight."

Memorywriters offer a selection of different fonts and are all equipped with daisy-wheel printers that can be adjusted to any of four pitches. They can accommodate 15 languages with different daisy wheels. Memorywriters will be sold worldwide, according to a company spokesman, who said that the firm's product announcement in New York was also made, simultaneously, in London. ■

Japanese introduce hand-held computer

By John Markoff, IW Staff

The race to put more into smaller packages is showing no sign of letting up. Matsushita Electric Industrial has introduced the HHC Link pocket computer, to be distributed by its U.S. marketing arm, Panasonic Company.

The Link, which has been seen in test configurations for over a year in this country, contains a 6502 processor and includes Microsoft BASIC derived from Applesoft code with several extensions. The basic price of the system will be \$600.

The Link will be available with a range of peripherals including an acoustical modem, a TV interface to support text and color graphics, a small printer, RS-232 interface and a variety of nonvolatile RAM software capsules.

The new pocket computer was designed over the past three years by a small San Francisco development firm, Friends Amis.

Software initially available for the Link will include two telecommunications packages. Telecommunications I will be a terminal emulator that retains enough dialogue so that the system's one-line display can retain a screenful of information and allow the

Digital Research eyes 16-bit sales

By Deborah Wise, IW Staff

Digital Research, the company that developed CP/M, a widely used operating system for 8-bit microcomputers, is now targeting the emerging 16-bit micro market with CP/M-86 and its new MP/M-86.

Competition for dominance in this already crowded field is tough. Microsoft markets Xenix, and IBM has DOS; but perhaps the most talked-about product is Bell Laboratories's UNIX. Digital Research says this cannot be compared with CP/M-86 and MP/M-86, however.

"UNIX isn't a commercial product at all," said Gordon Eubanks, Jr., vice-president and manager of the language division at Digital Research.

According to Eubanks, UNIX is de-

signed for a scientific environment and doesn't have the security features he feels a commercial system needs, such as file protection, passwords or record lock-out, for example.

"Some UNIX people actually fear that what it takes to make UNIX commercially viable will hurt UNIX," he added.

Digital Research has developed CP/M-86 and MP/M-86 for the 16-bit commercial market, a market that is fast becoming more flexible.

The 16-bit microcomputer has a memory capacity that an operating system can take advantage of to bring "minicomputer capabilities into the micro world," according to Gary Kildall, president of Digital Research

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SPECIAL SECTION

How well do you understand the distinctive styles of different programming languages? Try this: Pascal is to disco as _____ is to punk. This and other questions are stylishly answered in our special section on the languages of computers, starting on page 18.

FORTH PL/I APL
COBOL FORTRAN
Logo BASIC Pilot
Pascal