

Help for first-timers

Packard Bell sees the future of the home PC as a shared resource for use by the whole family. It will be used for entertainment, communication and education and will be much easier to operate than current PCs, with one-touch access to many frequently used facilities.

As a first step along this route Packard Bell is equipping its latest PCs with an enhanced version of the Navigator interface (a pictorial control system designed to hide many of the computer's complexities from new users). It has also added a feature called Planet Oasis, which is an easy way for first-time users to get onto the Internet.

A remote controller and a new gadget called



MediaSelect are being included with some of the more expensive Packard Bell machines, starting with the £1,599 Executive 9003D. The MediaSelect panel sits underneath the monitor

and provides extra buttons that are used to play audio CDs and to start phone, fax and Internet features without having to use the main keyboard or Windows menu system.

Accessories such as Packard Bell printers, video cameras and a plug-in TV tuner will be easy to add because all the software that controls them will be pre-installed on every machine, removing the need for any complicated set-up procedures.

Packard Bell:
01753
831914



PPCP has launched a 33.6Kbps PC card with built-in network adaptor. The EtherModem and TokenModem cards (for Ethernet and token ring networks) cost £445.33 and £574.58 respectively.

PPCP 0181 893 2277

Microsoft is celebrating the fact that Windows 95 has equalled the 40 million sales of Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, the best-selling album of all time.

Microsoft: 0345 002000

Time Computer Systems and **Colossus** are changing their PC configurations. Time machines will now ship 16Mb of RAM, while Colossus PCs will come with a minimum of 32Mb.

Time: 01282 777111

Colossus: 01707 258899

Office move for Apple

Long-time sparring partners Apple and Microsoft have joined forces to bundle Microsoft Office with selected Macs. Certain configurations of Power Macintosh 7600 and 8200 machines will now ship with Microsoft Office for Macintosh, version 4.2.1 pre-installed.

Office for Macintosh comprises Microsoft Word 6.0.1, Excel 5.0, PowerPoint 4.0, and a client licence for Microsoft or Quarterdeck Mail for AppleTalk networks. Microsoft, which is Apple's largest software developer, claims that the move reaffirms its long-standing commitment to the Mac platform, and hopes the decision will herald a new era of co-operation between the two companies.



Apple declined to comment as to whether it has any plans to introduce Office into its Performa bundles, which currently come with ClarisWorks, although a Microsoft spokesperson claims that the option is there.

Apple: 0900 127753
Microsoft: 0345 002000

Digital and Mitac unveil notebooks

Digital and Mitac are each launching a pair of notebooks. Digital's additions to its HiNote range are the Ultra II LTS5150, which uses Intel's 150MHz Pentium for notebook PCs, and the LTS5133, based on a Pentium 133MHz chip. They have 16Mb of system memory expandable to 54Mb. Both can be attached to an Ultra Mobile Media Module which adds a six-speed CD-ROM drive and a stereo speaker module. Prices start at £3,993 and £4,581 respectively.

The slimline HiNote is the ultimate notebook to impress fellow commuters, but you can get almost as much work done on a less exotic Mitac 5024 for under half the price. Mitac's 5024/133 with a TFT screen costs £1,937, while the slower 100MHz model with a dual-scan screen is £1,526. Both have 8Mb of memory.

Digital: 0345 227228
Mitac: 01952 207200



Brother has restyled its desktop and tower PC cases to give a coherent look to the range. Internal changes include a new type of 5.25in drive bay which also accommodates 3.5in devices.

Brother (Kyodai):
01279 416888

US Robotics has a 40-page booklet for anyone considering going on-line. *The Sportster Guide* covers on-line services, the Internet, faxing and voice-mail, and is available free on:

0800 997777

800 notebook joins OmniBook range



Hewlett-Packard has added a further model to its range of OmniBook notebook PCs. The OmniBook 800 has a footprint less than a sheet of A4 paper, weighs 3.25lb and measures 38mm (d) x 282mm (w) and 183mm (l).

The OmniBook 800 comes in several flavours, but all have a 10.4in active matrix display, 16Mb of EDO RAM, 1.44Gb hard drive, 128-bit PCI video controller and two Type II PC card slots. The cheapest 800 model is the Pentium 100-based CS 5/100, which costs £2,585. The most expensive is the £3,642.50 CT 5/133 with a Pentium 133 processor.

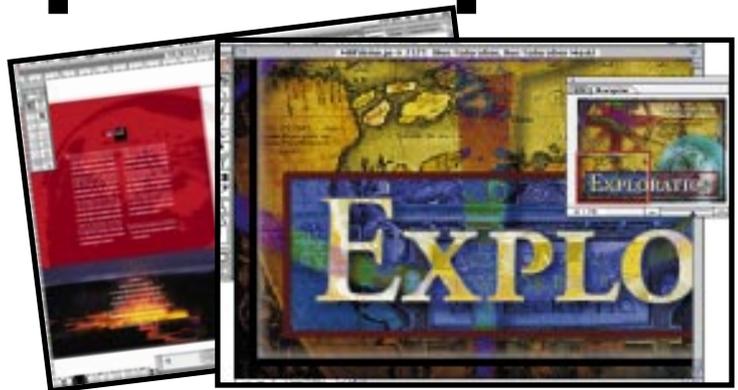
Each of the OmniBook 800 models also has a SCSI-2 port, 4Mbps infra-red port, 256Kb L2 cache and SVGA-out up to 1024x768 pixels. A quad-speed CD-ROM drive is available, as is a docking station that offers a single expansion slot and port replicators. *Hewlett-Packard: 01344 369369*

Adobe updates top duo

Adobe Systems is to launch new versions of its two most popular packages, Photoshop and PageMaker this month. Both will be released simultaneously on the PC and Macintosh.

Photoshop 4.0 has many new features which, Adobe claims, will increase user productivity and creative control. The Actions feature automates common editing tasks like image retouching and file conversion, and there's now support for batch processing of images.

Version 6.5 of PageMaker heralds the introduction of



document-wide layers to the desktop publishing system. Layers can be used to create multiple versions, annotations

and multilingual documents. The results can be printed or published onto the Internet. *Adobe: 0131 451 6888*

IBM revamps Aptiva home PC line

IBM has updated its range of Aptiva home PCs. The new series comprises both desktop and tower systems and includes eight-speed CD-ROM drives as standard. Processors range from 120MHz to 200MHz Pentiums and all models come with a bundle of games, productivity and multimedia titles.

The new eight-model range begins with the P120-based Aptiva Model 351 that has a desktop case with 12Mb of RAM, 850Mb hard drive,



monitor and IBM's MWave card that provides wavetable synthesis sound with integrated V.34 voice modem. It costs £1,899.

Each model in the updated range has a number of useful features, including the ability to power down after a period of inactivity, saving a snapshot of any work in progress. The machine can then be restarted quickly, with all the system fully restored.

*IBM: 0345 727272
http://www.pc.ibm.com*

14in monitor and Sound Blaster-compatible sound card, for £1,399. The P133-based Model 362 has a desktop case with 16Mb RAM, 1.6Gb hard drive and 15in



Nikon has launched two new digital cameras, aimed at personal and professional users, respectively. The CoolPix 100 is a lightweight pocket-sized camera that can store up to 42 compressed 24-bit colour images. It has a built-in PC card (PCMCIA) that will slot directly into a standard PC card slot, so that images can be viewed and quickly transferred, and costs £399.

The E2N professional digital camera can store up to 82 images on a 15Mb Type II PC card, with a sensitivity equivalent to ISO 3200. The camera is compatible with most Nikon lenses and accessories and costs £8,589.25 for the body only.

*Nikon: 0181 541 4440
http://www.klt.co.jp/nikon*

Top Level has announced Office Forms, a new package for creating paper-based and electronic forms. Priced at £99, it aims to fill the gap between traditional high-priced solutions and today's popular desktop applications.

Designed for Windows 3.1, 95 and NT, with full 32-bit code and Office 95 compatibility, Office Forms lets you

create professional-looking forms for just about any occasion. Over 50 pre-created forms are provided including expenses, personnel, accounting, and time sheets in four styles – classic, jazzy, professional and stark.

Other features include an option to send forms electronically as executable files, and 100 TrueType fonts. *Top Level: 01453 753955*

Logitech has unveiled three control devices, each for different applications. The Cordless MouseMan Pro is a £59.99 remote control mouse that uses radio signals and, unlike infra-red devices, doesn't require a line-of-sight to the receiver.

The SurfMan is also radio-controlled, but is a hand-held trackball device for use with Web browsers. It provides remote control access to Netscape Navigator and Window 95 functions and costs £69.99.

Finally, the WingMan Warrior is a joystick designed with 3D action games in mind. The stick, which costs £69.99, has a large base with a separate knob that can be used to quickly turn left and right.

Logitech: 01344 894300



PCs for almost all occasions

New PCs from MJN and Zenith are designed for specialist target markets while Dell has launched a general-purpose machine for home and business users.

MJN's £1,100 ClassPC is aimed at schools and is based on a Pentium 100MHz processor.

It's a multimedia machine pre-installed with Lotus SmartSuite and a number of educational titles suitable for Key stages five and six of the National Curriculum.

The bundled software with Zenith's Z-Station LX2 machines, costing from £1,433, is all designed to make the computers easier to

manage on a network. Titles include LANDesk Client Manager and PC Tools.

Dell's new Dimension Pv computers are for business users seeking a low-cost solution without sacrificing power. Supplied without sound capabilities (though with 8-speed CD drives), the machines are based on 133MHz Pentium processors and come pre-installed with Microsoft Office Professional.

MJN Education:

01282 777799

Zenith Data Systems: 0181 568 5050

Dell: 01344 720000



Toshiba continues its notebook price cuts

It seems that hardly a month goes by without Toshiba slashing the prices of its notebook computers.

You can now buy a Toshiba from only £1,169 (the 2130CS), with the biggest reduction of all being applied to the TFT version of the same machine, which comes at a cost of £1,404.

The price of what was,



until recently, the top-of-the-range Toshiba, the Tecra 710CDT, has fallen by 22 percent to £4,694.

According to Murray McKelvie, marketing manager at Toshiba, the reductions are due to economies of scale, but the big fall in the price of the Toshiba Tecra 710CDT has also been brought about by the introduction of new top-end machine, the Toshiba 720CDT, which has a 2Gb hard drive.

Toshiba: 01932 828828

Sharp links ZR PDAs to CompuServe

Sharp has announced two new PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants) based on the ZR-5000. The 1Mb ZR-5700 and 2Mb ZR-5800 have the same applications as the ZR-5000, but have added built-in CompuServe access and a much-needed Excel-compatible spreadsheet.

The CompuServe software can be used with either a desktop or PC card modem (the ZRs have a single Type II slot) and allows users to send and

receive e-mail, and retrieve information from CompuServe's many special-interest forums. The ZRs can also send faxes on the move if a cellular modem is used, though neither can receive faxes.

Both models have a large touch-screen for drawings and handwritten notes, though there is no handwriting recognition. The more expensive ZR-5800 has a backlit screen, enabling it to be used in the dark. The



ZR-5700 costs £429.99, the ZR-5800 £529.99. *Sharp:* 0345 125387

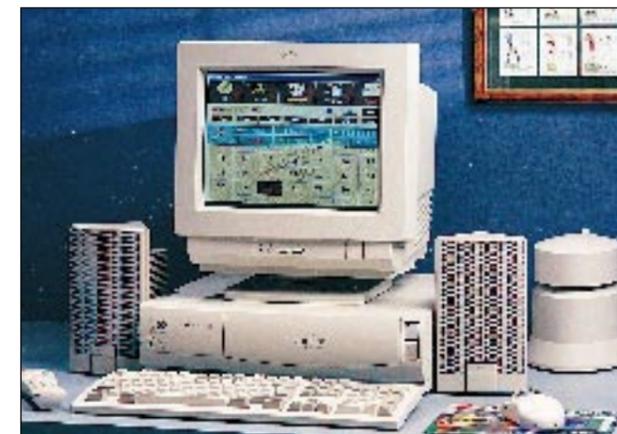
Apricot adds home lines

Apricot, Mitsubishi's PC division, has extended its range of consumer PCs with the MS540 series. Available in a choice of configurations, the MS540 models are aimed at home and small business users.

All MS540 machines have as standard an eight-speed CD-ROM drive and an internal 28.8Kbps fax/voice/data modem. ATI's 3D Rage graphics card is also fitted inside each model, with 2Mb of EDO RAM on board.

Sound output resonates from a pair of 20-watt speakers courtesy of either a Sound Blaster Vibra-16 or an AWE32. Some models have a 28-watt sub-woofer, Deep Sound.

With this series come two security features. 'Electronic



Fingerprinting' displays users' personal details when the machine is started and a password is required for access. The Sensonic is a 100dB move-

ment alarm with adjustable sensitivity levels.

An entry-level MS540 costs £1,499.

Apricot: 0800 212422

SmartSuite 97 well under way at Lotus

Lotus has unveiled the long-awaited update of its office software product, SmartSuite.

Unsurprisingly titled SmartSuite 97, it will include new versions of the Word Pro word processor, the database Approach, graphics tool Freelance, Organiser, the aptly named electronic organiser and screen-action capture system, ScreenCam.

Completing the application line-up is the legendary spreadsheet package 1-2-3. According to Lotus, 1-2-3 has been completely 'rearchitected' for the Windows 95's 32-bit environment. The ability to add comments to cells and automated totalling are among the new features, with many more likely to appear in the final release.

Lotus is keeping many other details of SmartSuite 97 under wraps. The company is not prepared to comment on pricing or release date, but we are informed that it should be available by the year end.

Lotus: 01784 455445



Corel to put toe in PDA waters

Software giant Corel has revealed plans to step into the PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) market and intends to launch a product by the middle of 1997.

The as-yet-untitled device will measure approximately 3x4in and will offer handwriting recognition, in addition to keyboard input.

The PDA's applications

will be written in Sun Microsystem's 'Java' and the operating system will be an open standard, which is vital if third party developers are to write programs.

A Web browser will be built in, as will a modem for use with a standard or cellular telephone and a colour screen will be optional. The price is expected to be under \$500.

Meanwhile, it appears that Psion has left this country's Series 3c users in the dark, as US versions of its new PDA have a backlit screen. As far as we can ascertain, Psion has no plans to light up UK models yet, but we'll keep you posted.

Corel Corporation: 0800 581028

Psion: 0990 143050

Microsoft has signed a deal with Computer Artworks to produce a special edition of the Organic Art screensaver.

The Organic Art Microsoft Edition can be downloaded from Microsoft's web site at www.microsoft.com. Running only on Windows 95 it comprises 15 new scenes.

A Designer version, which allows users to build and control the screensaver's evolution, is available from Computer Artworks' Web site at www.artworks.co.uk. The commercial version costs £34.99. *Computer Artworks:* 0171 828 6990

Olivetti Lexikon has apparently achieved the impossible by producing a five-colour inkjet printer. The JP 790 has two printheads, one containing cyan, magenta, yellow and black and another with... black.

Actually, the blacks are different - one is 'graphical', for graphics prints, and the other is deep black for text. The printheads of the 6ppm printer are refillable, and can print at resolutions up to 600x600dpi. *Olivetti Lexikon:* 01908 203029

Connectware has revealed the RasterMedia, a three-function PCI expansion card.

Billed as a 'three-in-one multimedia accelerator', RasterMedia is a combined graphics and sound card that offers DirectX (DirectVideo) support under Windows 95. The half-size PCI card is based on the Brooktree BtV MediaStream chipset, and comes as either a 1Mb version at £351.33 or 2Mb at £421.83.

The RasterMedia can output a maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024 pixels in 256 colours, or 640x480 with 16.7 million colours.

For an extra £116.33, Connectware ships a TV tuner card which will work with RasterMedia cards. *Connectware:* 01256 330030

Tekdata is distributing two Teac read/write CD-ROM drives. Working at quad speed in both read and write

modes, the internally-mounted drives can be used as high-capacity backup devices or to create your own CD-ROM titles.

The difference between the two drives is that the CDR-50S, is aimed at PC builders while the CDR-50SKR is a retail upgrade for end users and includes CD authoring and utility software and a blank CD-ROM disc. A SCSI interface card is required to operate the drives and is not supplied as standard. The CDR-50S costs £969.38 and the retail version is £1,028.13. *Tekdata:* 01782 577677

Brother and Sharp launch multi-function devices this month.

Brother's MFC-9000 combines faxing, printing, scanning and copying functions, but with higher specifications than is usual with all-in-one machines.

The scanner has a true optical resolution of 600x600dpi, which is matched by a Windows GDI laser printer. The MFC-9000 costs £1,115.

Measuring 360mm(w) x 412mm(d) x 169mm(h) Sharp's £1,286.63 F-2700M is one of the smallest multi-function systems. Its laser printer has a top resolution of 300dpi, and the machine can produce photocopies to the same resolution. *Brother:* 0161 330 6531 *Sharp:* 0345 125387

Stac has announced a Windows 95 version of its remote access utility, ReachOut.

ReachOut 6.0 lets users access their desktop PC files from any machine running a suitable web browser such as Internet Explorer or Navigator. Version 6.0 costs £175.08, but registered users of versions 5.0 and 4.0 can upgrade for £93.94.

Visitors to Stac's Web site can download a trial version, but this times out after 30 days and becomes unusable. *Stac:* 01344 302900 <http://www.stac.com/>

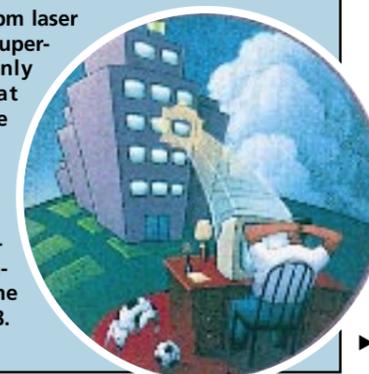
Quarterdeck, specialist in PC utility software, has announced

a new program called Fix-It to complement the recently released WinProbe 95 (reviewed in next month's *What PC?*). Fix-It is a database of over 1,000 PC software programs that works in conjunction with Quarterdeck's Remove-It system to fix any erroneous software settings.

On first use, Fix-It scans the entire PC and checks the integrity of all programs installed. In daily use the program continues to monitor these settings and to intercept potentially dangerous changes. Fix-It will cost £39.99. *Quarterdeck:* 01245 496699

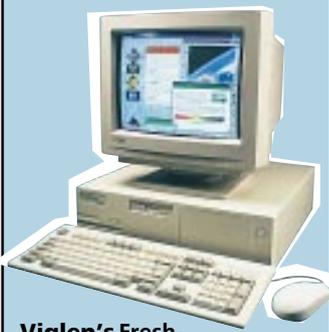
NEC has launched a new 8ppm laser printer aimed at Soho users. SuperScript 860 is a Windows-only machine that can print at 1,200x600 dpi, using the Adobe PrintGear image processor.

PrintGear allows rapid processing of print jobs and in the case of the SuperScript 860, the 8ppm speed is limited only by the printer's mechanisms, not the processor. The SuperScript 860 costs £527.58. *NEC:* 0645 404020



Euopress Software's Your Child Can Be A Genius collection of educational CD-ROM titles, covers spelling, reading and maths. Aimed at children of varying ages, titles cost £9.99 each. *Euopress: 01625 859333*

GoldStar has launched a 16-speed CD-ROM drive that has a data transfer rate of 2,400Kbps and an access time of under 80ms. The price of the EIDE drive has yet to be fixed. *GoldStar: 01753 500400*



Viglen's Freshman range comprises PCs aimed at students, with prices starting from £699. The Freshman 410 has a 486DX4/100 processor, 8Mb RAM and 540Mb hard drive. *Viglen: 0181 758 7000*

Carrera PCs are all to be supplied with ATI's graphics accelerators as standard. Conventional and 3D devices will be used, with an optional ATI TV Tuner. *Carrera: 0171 830 0486*

IBM has announced an exclusive model to be sold through Radio Rentals and Allders has signed a deal with Mitac to supply its multimedia desktop PCs. *IBM: 0345 727272*
Mitac: 01952 207200

PrivaSuite encryption software can guard your electronic mail and taxes from prying eyes. This £82.19 program attaches a decryption program to coded messages, operable only by password. *POW! Distribution: 01202 716726*

AP Computer Security has a free guide for businesses looking to safeguard PCs. *The Essentials of Computer Security* can be obtained from 01858 469500.

New monitors on parade

Monitor makers Mitsubishi, NEC and Eizo have all launched new models.

Mitsubishi's 17in Diamond Pro 87TXM sports the company's Diamondtron aperture-grille CRT (cathode-ray tube). This provides accurate focusing and enhanced



contrast. With its fine 0.25mm mask pitch and 80Hz refresh at 1,280x1,024 resolution, Mitsubishi is aiming this product at the corporate market and professional CAD users.

NEC's MultiSync M700 17in monitor incorporates Cromaclear. This is where the red, green and blue (RGB) phosphors – the colour dots that create the images – are set in elliptical form. NEC says this improves image clarity.

Finally comes Eizo with the 15in Flexscan F35, capable of an 85Hz refresh rate at a res-



olution of 1,024x7,681. The 17in Flexscan T57S has a top resolution of 1,280x1,024.

Mitsubishi: 0800 212422

NEC: 0645 404020

Sony: 01932 816000

Two flatbed scanners enter the arena

Sharp is promoting its new JX-250 scanner as the world's smallest flatbed scanner. It's a single-pass machine capable of scanning paper and other materials up to A4 size in 16.7 million colours. It works at 400x800dpi but interpolates these to provide an effective resolution of 1,600dpi. The price is £645.08 with a cheaper Mac version costing £527.58.

If you can bear to forgo the cachet of owning the world's



smallest flatbed scanner and make do with a 300x600dpi resolution (1,200dpi interpolated), Devcom's latest Black Widow scanner might interest you. The 1200SP is more con-

ventionally proportioned than the Sharp but costs only £198.58 and is capable of A4 full colour scanning. The same machine works with PC or Mac and, as with Sharp's scanner, can be fitted with an automatic document feeder.

Both scanners come with basic image editing software and the Black Widow is bundled with TextBridge OCR software.

Sharp: 0345 125387

Devcom: 01324 825999

Top 20 software packages according to Romtec figures

Position	Package	Publisher/supplier	Type	Last month
1	PK Zip for DOS	Atlantic Coast	Utility	2
2	MS Windows 95 Upgrade	Microsoft	Operating System	8
3	MS Windows NT Server Client	Microsoft	Operating System	-
4	RAM Doubler for Windows Licence	Connectix	Utility	-
5	Norton Anti-Virus for Windows	Symantec	Anti-virus	-
6	MS Office v4.2 Standard	Microsoft	Office Suite	1
7	MS Office v4.3 Pro	Microsoft	Office Suite	-
8	PC Anywhere for Windows Licence	Symantec	Communications	17
9	MS Plus Windows 95	Microsoft	Utility	-
10	Netware 4 Client Upgrade	Novell	Operating System	-
11	MS Project 4.0 for Windows	Microsoft	Project Management	19
12	MS Windows 95	Microsoft	Operating System	-
13	MS Office Upgrade	Microsoft	Office Suite	-
14	Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus for Win.	S&S International	Anti-virus	20
15	MS Works 3.0 for Windows	Microsoft	Integrated	-
16	MS Office 7 Standard	Microsoft	Office Suite	10
17	MS Office 95 Upgrade	Microsoft	Office Suite	8
18	WinZip	Atlantic Coast	Utility	-
19	Printhead	Corel	Graphics	-
20	MS Office 7 Pro	Microsoft	Office Suite	18

Figures for July 1996, source Romtec. Business application and desktop operating systems unit sales only, OEM sales excluded.

Romtec figures are calculated by grossing up sales from resellers. If you are interested in joining Romtec's Reseller Panel and finding out how as a reseller you can benefit, call direct on: 01628 414013.