

AMD ups stakes with K6

AMD is all tooled up to manufacture millions of its new Pentium-bashing K6 processors.

The K6 chip fits into the standard Socket 7 used for Intel's Pentium and Pentium MMX processors and it is being made in 166MHz, 200MHz and 233MHz versions. MMX multimedia enhancements are built into the chip, which AMD claims provides 'industry-leading performance' using both 16-bit and 32-bit software.

The K6 is therefore being promoted as an alternative to the latest Pentium II processors as well as to Intel's Pentium MMX chips. Intel currently owns 95 percent of the market for x86 processors (the family of chips that includes all variations of the Pentium processor) but analysts at Dataquest believe that by the year 2000 up to 25 percent of x86 processors will be sold by companies like AMD.

This is because clone chip manufacturers are now getting their leading-edge products to

market almost as fast as Intel, instead of being several years behind and having to settle for the bargain-basement end of the market.

Two other reasons why the K6 might be the breakthrough

product for AMD are that it costs significantly less than Intel's Pentium II processor and does not require a specially-designed motherboard.

Elonex is already selling 233MHz K6 machines from just £1,357.

AMD: 01276 803100

Elonex: 0181 452 4444



IE4 ready for download

After letting several scheduled release dates slip for further security checks, Microsoft has made the Platform Preview edition of Internet Explorer 4.0 available for download.

As reported last month, Internet Explorer 4.0 integrates closely with the Windows 95 operating system, making several changes to the way you use the desktop and menus.

New features include the ability to have 'active' components on your desktop, which means you can place movable Internet windows as part of

your Windows 95 background, and split-pane searching.

The latter feature is particularly useful because it displays and retains a list of search results in one pane while you go ahead and check the contents of each link in another.

Internet Explorer 4.0 Platform Preview is reviewed alongside Netscape's Communicator on page 24 and 25 of this issue, and it is also on this month's cover CD (see page 6 for installation instructions).

www.microsoft.com/ie/ie40
Microsoft: 0345 002000

US court judgment sets MMX free

Cyrix can now use the term 'MMX' in its promotional materials following a legal settlement with arch-rival Intel.

The agreement extends to Cyrix's customer base, so PC manufacturers fitting Cyrix processors can advertise them as MMX-compatible. As part of the deal, Cyrix must include 'appropriate attribution' wherever and whenever it uses the term MMX.

However, in a surprise setback for Intel, a federal judge in the US gave free rein to fellow chip manufacturer AMD to 'use the term in advertising and promotional materials describing its AMD-K6 MMX processor'.

Intel: 01793 403000

Cyrix: 0800 137305

AMD: 01276 803100

YAHOO!

Yahoo!, the Internet services company, has reported a profit for the first quarter of 1997. The news pleased investors who had been expecting the company to make a substantial loss.

The Iomega Corporation has announced that sales of its Zip drive have now exceeded the five million mark, less than two years after going into production.

Dr Solomon's Software has launched MailGuard, an anti-virus product for SMTP e-mail users. Available as a site licence only, MailGuard is designed to ensure integrity within company correspondence.
Dr Solomon's Software: 01296 318700

Rescue Me! is a £29.99 Windows 95 utility that automatically restores a PC to its original configuration if a program disastrously alters its system settings.
Kiss Software: 0181 875 4422

TaxCalc from Which? is available to help taxpayers calculate their liabilities before the October deadline, following the introduction of self-assessment by the Inland Revenue.
IDP: 0990 084 201

The Q-Mini is a compact digital camera from Konica that stores 57 images and has a built-in LCD screen. The price is expected to be around £580.
Konica: 0181 751 6121

Symantec has a free utility to link its ACT 3.0 contact management software to the US Robotics PalmPilot. It can be downloaded from Symantec's Web site.
www.symantec.com
Symantec: 0118 981 4230

Microsoft
Internet Explorer 4.0
Platform Preview



Giants square up for 3D standards battle

Intel and Microsoft are set to battle it out over standards in the 3D graphics market.

Intel is pitching to introduce a new standard for 3D graphics using the Intel740 graphics processor, developed jointly with Lockheed. The chip will appear later this year on Intel motherboards designed for the new Pentium II processor.

In a related move, Intel has announced support for a faster type of 3D graphics technology called AGP (Accelerated Graphics Port), for which it has the support of some of the leading names in 3D graphics such as Cirrus, S3 and ATI.

Cirrus has already supplied sample AGP chips to Intel and Microsoft for evaluation.

Meanwhile, Microsoft is pushing its own 3D technology, called Talisman. At the moment this is little more than a concept described at a recent developers' forum.

Talisman aims to put workstation graphics capabilities into ordinary PCs by keeping the processing of 3D graphics inside the graphics chip, thus reducing the performance penalty of external data handling.

Intel: 01793 403000

Microsoft 0345 002000

Trio of top-value PCs

Three new low-cost PCs have been announced by Brother and Tiny.

The two machines bearing Brother's SuperSaver name retail for £1,103 and £1,232.

The cheaper of the two is powered by either an IBM or a Cyrix P166+ processor and the more expensive by an Intel 120MHz Pentium chip.

Both machines are otherwise identical and are fully equipped for multimedia with a SoundBlaster sound card, speakers, an eight-speed CD-ROM drive and a 15in monitor. Lotus SmartSuite and six CD titles from Microsoft are

included in the price.

Tiny's Tutor PC is powered by a 150MHz AMD PR150 processor, and comes with a 14in SVGA monitor, 16Mb of EDO RAM, a 12-speed CD-ROM drive and speakers. It costs a remarkably low £868.

Buyers can choose from the Lotus SmartSuite or Microsoft's Family 97 software bundle. Tiny also bundles the same PC with a Lexmark 1020 colour inkjet printer and some extra home entertainment software for £1,009.



Great value though these machines are, they are not as cheap as the new AcerBasic II PC, which has been designed to sell for around \$1,000.

Rather unfortunately, Acer has no plans at present to release the machine in this country, although it is currently on sale in Taiwan.

Kyodai (Brother): 01279 416888

Tiny Computers: 01293 821333

More on display with latest monitors

This month sees a battery of new monitors from the leading screen manufacturers.

Sony's Multiscan W900 brings the widescreen TV format to the PC. With a 16:10 aspect ratio on a Trinitron tube, it gives a viewable diagonal of 22.5 in – large enough to display two full A4 pages side by side.

Microvitec's LCD monitor has an extra-wide viewing angle of

140° on both the horizontal and vertical planes, allowing the user to view a flat, stable image from almost any angle.

The Proteus 34X has a

13.3in superTFT screen but because the viewable screen area has no border it is comparable to a larger CRT screen.

The Proteus has a recom-

mended retail price of £2,595.

From Hitachi, there are two new monitors – the 17in CM630ET model and the 21in CM803ET. The 17in monitor is designed for users in professional graphic design and CAD markets and offers a resolution of up to 1,280x1,024.

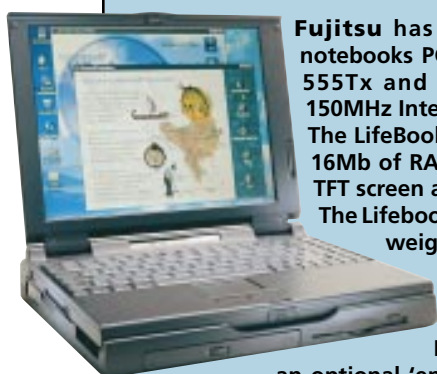
Panasonic also has a new 21in model for professional users, the PanaSync/Pro 7GX.

Sony: 0990 424 424

Microvitec: 01274 390011

Hitachi: 01628 585000

Panasonic: 0500 404041



Fujitsu has launched two MMX-based notebooks PCs in its LifeBook range – the 555Tx and 655Tx. Both machines use 150MHz Intel MMX Pentium processors.

The LifeBook 555Tx starts at £3,406.33 for 16Mb of RAM, a 2Gb hard drive, a 12.1in TFT screen and a 10-speed CD-ROM drive.

The Lifebook 655Tx is a lightweight model weighing only 1.9kg and has 16Mb of RAM, a 1.3Gb hard drive and two Lithium-ion batteries. Prices start at £4,064.33.

Both models can be attached to an optional 'enhancement' unit. Not quite a docking station, the £398.33 unit has an eight-speed CD-ROM drive, a 3.5in floppy disk drive and speakers.

Fujitsu: 01344 475555

www.fujitsu-computers.com

NEC has announced a faster processor for Windows CE handheld computers as the first versions of this type of computer reach the UK market.

The VR4102 operates at 66MHz, twice the usual speed of CE processors. It can emulate a modem and includes advanced power management features as well as support for all the usual CE peripherals, such as touch screens, PC cards, infrared communications and digital audio.

In addition, the new chip is designed to be incorporated in smart phones, advanced pagers and other battery-powered devices. Samples of the chip are already being shipped and volume production begins in July.

NEC: 0645 404020

Kiss Software has announced SmartDRAW!, a business drawing package. It is claimed to be easier to use than its competitors, which include such heavyweights as Visio and CorelFlow, while containing as many features.

To make drawing flowcharts and business diagrams easy, most standard flowchart symbols are predefined within SmartDRAW! and can simply be dragged into place. Other symbols are provided as SmartDRAWINGS which can be customised and used to help produce network diagrams, maps and forms.

SmartDRAW! is available now through major software retailers at a recommended retail price of £69.99 (inc VAT). Kiss Software: 0181 875 4422

Connectix, probably best known for its QuickCam golf ball camera, provided a sneak preview of its Virtual PC software at the recent launch of the Power Macintosh 6500. The software enables Power Macintosh PCs to run a full range of DOS and Windows software, including titles written for Windows 95 and Windows NT.

Connectix: 0181 561 1414

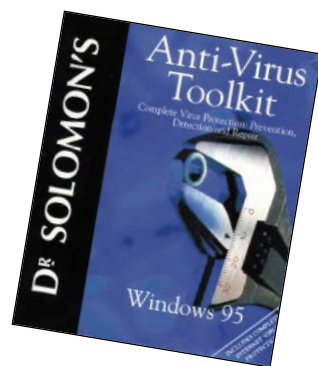
Virus firms trade insults

Leading anti-virus software companies Dr Solomon's and McAfee have been busy trading accusations of cheating and whining.

The first salvo was fired by McAfee, which claimed that Dr Solomon's top-selling Anti-Virus Toolkit contains a 'cheat mode' that makes it appear to produce better results when tested than rivals' products.

The press release goes on to state that 'Dr Solomon's products have been specifically designed to behave differently in a review situation than for an end-user'.

McAfee has forwarded evidence to back up its claims



to the National Computer Security Association (NCSA). The NCSA confirmed that such a mode exists.

Dr Solomon's responded quickly to the accusations by

issuing a tongue-in-cheek statement declaring that McAfee had resorted to 'pleading' with it to reduce the virus detection rate of Anti-Virus Toolkit.

McAfee's grievance relates to Dr Solomon's Advanced Heuristic Analysis engine, which kicks into action after a certain number of viruses have been detected.

As tests tend to involve considerably more infections than a 'real life' situation, Dr Solomon's product appears to detect more viruses than rival packages.

McAfee: 01344 304730

Dr Solomon's: 01296 318700

PC for 1998 is on the drawing board

Industry giants Intel and Microsoft have unveiled a draft for a new type of PC for 1998.

Known as The PC 98 Design Guide, it lays down guidelines for manufacturers building new PCs for use with the next versions of Windows and Windows NT.

The current specification covers the latest hardware advances including 2D and 3D graphics adaptors, and video still and broadcast capabilities.

It also sets out standards for business and consumer audio, storage devices such as the up-and-coming DVD-ROM, modems and network communications.

Details on the Universal Serial Bus (USB) and Intel's Accelerated Graphics Port (AGP) technology are included in the draft.

Both companies also stress that ease of use, user satisfaction and lower costs are key areas of the 1998 specification.

The design guide, currently on revision 0.6 and called the Reviewers Draft, is available for download and review on the Intel and Microsoft Web sites.

www.intel.com

www.microsoft.com

Intel: 01793 403000

Microsoft: 0345 002000

Apocalypse powers up to eclipse rivals

Videologic has unveiled a new version of its Apocalypse 3D graphics card, the 3Dx.

Built around the PCX2, the latest PowerVR chip from NEC, the 3Dx offers high-performance acceleration for 3D games and graphics.

The card is supplied with four games, including Mech-Warrior 2, the bloody Resident Evil, and futuristic race-driving simulator WipeOut 2097, and has a recommended retail

price of £186.83 (inc VAT).

Owners of the original Apocalypse 3D card can upgrade to the 3Dx for only £69.33, which includes the extra games.

They also get to keep their original hardware.

In addition, Videologic is running a 'competitive upgrade program' for owners of rival graphics cards that wish



to change to the 3Dx.

Anyone with proof of purchase of an Orchid Righteous 3D or Diamond Monster 3D card can buy a complete Apocalypse 3Dx package for £92.83.

Videologic: 01923 260511

New low-cost notebooks

Leading notebook manufacturers Compaq and Toshiba have both launched low-cost notebook PCs.

The Compaq Armada 1510 starts at £1,408.33 for a machine with a 120MHz Pentium processor, 16Mb of EDO RAM, a 1Gb hard drive and an 11.3in dual-scan colour screen capable of 8-bit colour at 800x600 resolution. It also has built-in 16-bit sound, two Type II PC card slots and a touchpad pointing device.

An internal 10-speed CD-ROM drive is an optional extra, as are desktop bases that provide port replicators and Ethernet network connections.



Toshiba's Satellite 210CS costs £1,404.13 and has a slightly higher spec. Based on a 120MHz Pentium chip, it has

16Mb of EDO RAM, a 1.3Gb hard drive and an 11.3in screen capable of 16-bit colour at a 800x600-pixel resolution.

One of the two Type II PC card slots is ZV port compatible and an optional 10-speed CD-ROM drive is available.

Compaq and Toshiba have also cut the prices of their other notebook PCs. Compaq has reduced the prices of its LTE range by up to 12 percent – the LTE 5300 now costs £3,049.13. Toshiba has cut prices on its Satellite, Tecra and Portégé machines, giving price drops of up to £600.

Compaq: 0990 134456

Toshiba: 01932 828828

Microsoft opens Windows to digital TV

Microsoft says that the next version of Windows (code-named Memphis) will be able to receive digital television broadcasts.

The announcement follows the launch of the Platform Preview of Internet Explorer 4 (see page 13) and indicates that the company is now shifting its attention to television.

The new feature will involve extra hardware but Microsoft reckons that this will

add little to the cost of a PC.

The announcement means that future Windows users will be able to watch digital, satellite, cable and terrestrial broadcasts on their PC screen. Microsoft also intends the technology to be interactive, allowing users to play along with game shows, for example.

The technology is not con-

finned to PC users, though. Microsoft recently acquired WebTV Networks (a company that offers access to the Internet via television) and proposed an open standard for delivering data via television broadcasts, suggesting that set-top boxes bearing Microsoft's name will soon be found in many households.

Microsoft: 0345 002000

Quicken gets an interface update

Intuit has launched new versions of its Quicken and Quicken Deluxe personal finance software.

They now have a streamlined interface to reduce the learning curve and improve the day-to-day use of the programs. Quicken Deluxe also includes the QuickTax self-assessment program.

Quicken's new interface has been designed in the wake of research with 20,000 users worldwide and usability tests with those new to personal finance software.

One of the results of the research is an 'activity bar' that presents lists of related activities in plain English. Clicking on an activity takes the user direct to that part of the program, rather than forcing them to step through a series of menus and dialog boxes.

Quicken Deluxe offers access to electronic share price indexes via the Internet. It also has a home inventory application, QuickInvoice, for invoice production, plus free Internet access for six months, for two hours per month. Quicken costs £34.95 and Quicken Deluxe £59.95.

Intuit: 01932 578500



Fractal Design's much-enhanced Poser 2 is already shipping, while version 5.0 of Painter, due for release at the end of June, promises artwork that cannot be created in any other program.

Poser 2 is a 3D modelling package for human body figures, which can be posed and then rendered with surface textures and lighting effects before being incorporated into still or moving designs. New features include animation and the ability to equip characters with props for added realism.

Import and export facilities to other 2D and 3D design packages have been enhanced. Poser 2 retails for £222 and existing users can upgrade for £81.

Principal Distribution: 01756 704000

Hayes has announced its support for K56Flex, the 56Kbits/s modem technology developed by Motorola and Rockwell. Existing Hayes Accura and Optima users who purchased their modem before 30 April will be offered a free upgrade when K56Flex becomes available. The upgrade will otherwise be offered at discounted rates starting from £99.

Interestingly, Hayes will also offer K56Flex upgrades to owners of competitors' modems – regardless of manufacturer or speed. Prices for the modem-for-modem exchanges start at £109, representing a saving of 31 percent over the retail price of a Hayes K56Flex modem.

www.hayes.co.uk

Hayes: 01252 775577

Internet World, the magazine for Internet users, is sponsoring the Internet World UK show, which takes place in the National Hall and Olympia Conference Centre in London from 20 to 22 May.

The three-day conference and exhibition addresses the major themes of the Internet, looking specifically at the implications of the Internet and Intranet for business.

More than 100 exhibitors will be attending the show, including Microsoft, Apple Computer UK, Reuters, Computer Associates and Symantec UK. Many new Internet and intranet innovators will also be present.

Among those giving presentations at the conference will be speakers from Marks & Spencer, Intel, and Virgin Net.

Learned Information Europe: 01865 388000

Microsoft has launched its most aggressive attack yet on the home software market with the release of Home Essentials 97, a bundle of some of its most popular titles, at the highly competitive price of just £99 (inc VAT).

Home Essentials 97 includes Word 97, Works 4.0, Money 97, Encarta World Atlas 97, Football, Internet Explorer and a 30-day free trial of MSN (Microsoft Network) software for connecting to the Internet.

The software collection and choice of titles comes as a result of research by Microsoft into customer requirements and its recognition that PC users want to be able to buy easy-to-use products offering good value for money.

Microsoft: 0345 002000

Quantum Leap Software has launched SNAPmagic, an external video frame grabber for PCs. The neat unit connects to the PC via the parallel port and is used to take frames from sources such as camcorders, VCRs and closed-circuit TV.

Compatible with Windows 3.x and Windows 95, SNAPmagic has both PAL composite video and PAL SVHS video inputs. Using the supplied software, the frame grabber can grab a full-colour image in one-fiftieth of a second, and all standard bitmap formats are available. SNAPmagic comes at a cost of £149.

Quantum Leap Software: 01506 461 917



Microsoft has released Active Accessibility, a technology aimed at making the Windows 95 operating system more accessible to people with disabilities.

Using Active Accessibility, software developers will be able to build specialised utilities known as 'accessibility aids'. These will take the form of input and output systems, such as a voice synthesiser to read aloud the contents of a document.

At the moment Active Accessibility works with Microsoft's Internet Explorer 3.0 and Office 97 products, as well as several others from third-party companies.

Interested developers can download a beta version of the toolkit from www.microsoft.com/enable.

Microsoft: 0345 002000

Lexmark is about to launch the 7000, a colour inkjet printer with a top print resolution of 1,200x1,200 dots per inch (dpi).

The 7000 can also manage a single-pass resolution of 600x600dpi, meaning high-quality output can be achieved even in its draft mode. In this mode the 7000 can print up to eight pages per minute.

Along with the printer, Lexmark is bundling a Workshop CD-ROM that has software to create greetings cards, comic books, labels and t-shirt transfers.

UK pricing for the 7000 has yet to be decided but in the US it sells for \$399 (around £250).

Lexmark: 01628 481500

Printware has announced a new font personalisation service which creates a unique TrueType font based on your handwriting. This personal touch costs from £295.

Printware: 01705 877111

Yellow Pages has released a new service for green-fingered PC users. Gardeners with a PC and an Internet connection should point their browsers to www.greenfingers.co.uk.

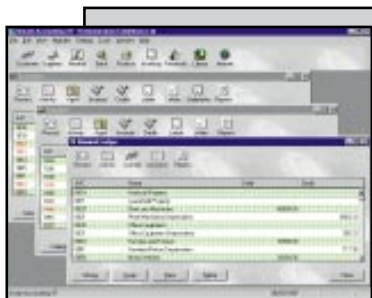
Daks has announced an innovative new device for cleaning mouse rollers. The HQ Mouse Cleaner uses a textured ball to scrape dirt away and leave your rodent as good as new.

Daks: 0181 458 2842

The DTI has launched a campaign for computer security for small businesses. Call the ISI hotline for more information

ISI Hotline: 0345 152000.

Lanacom has unveiled Headliner, a scrolling ticker-style program that uses the Internet to gather news stories from around the world. Headliner can be downloaded free from the company's Web site. www.lanacom.com.



Last month's review of Sage Instant Accounting 97 was accidentally printed with the wrong snapshot ratings. *What PC?* apologises for any confusion. The correct ratings are as follows:

Sage Instant Accounting

Features ★★★★★
Ease of use ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

Apple clones under threat

Apple Mac clone makers are up in arms over increased licence fees for Tempo, Apple's System 8 operating system.

Manufacturers are complaining that they will have to pay up to 10 times as much as previously if they want to make computers based on the new software.

Traditionally, the Mac operating system has been closely linked to the hardware

design of each new PC, requiring a customised version of the operating system to cope with the different chips inside each computer.

System 8 is a more open system that could see clone vendors coming up with their own hardware designs that would not need to be licensed by Apple.

It seems that Apple wants to claw back this potential lost

revenue by renegotiating operating system licences to cover the shortfall.

If the cost of licensing System 8 makes it no longer profitable to manufacture Macintosh clones, other makers could follow the lead of clone vendor Umax Data Systems, which recently decided to start making Windows-based PCs.

Apple: 0800 127753

ClarisWorks 4.0 adds Internet pack

Claris has now launched ClarisWorks 4.0 Internet Edition, a version of its integrated business package bundled with software for use with the Internet.

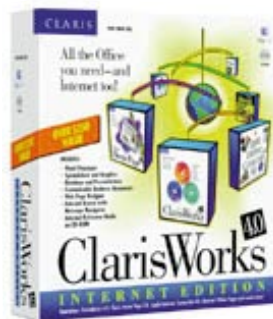
Best known to Mac users, ClarisWorks 4.0 has been gaining popularity on the PC, thanks to its ease of use and the fact that it costs substantially less than the major office suites.

It incorporates word processing, database facilities, spreadsheets, drawing and graphics features and has a number of useful templates so users can quickly create pro-

fessional-quality business documents.

For easy access to the Internet, Claris has bundled the Apple Internet Connection Kit for Mac users and Pipex Dial for PC users, along with the browser Netscape Navigator for Windows 95 users.

Also included is Claris HomePage 2.0, a simple-to-use Web authoring tool. This



software allows users with no knowledge of HTML or programming to create Web pages, allowing them to get ready for a presence on the Web.

The package, which comes at a cost of £151.58, also arrives with CD-ROMs of the ABCs of the Internet, Internet Yellow Pages and a choice of three Internet Service Providers.

Claris: 0181 756 0101

Top 20 software packages according to Romtec figures

Position	Package	Publisher/supplier	Type	Last month
1	MS Windows 95	Microsoft	Operating system	1
2	MS Office Pro for Win 95	Microsoft	Office suite	5
3	MS Office V4.2 Standard	Microsoft	Office suite	2
4	MS Windows NT Workstation	Microsoft	Operating system	3
5	MS Office Standard for Win 95	Microsoft	Office suite	6
6	MS Office Pro 4	Microsoft	Office suite	4
7	MS Exchange for Windows	Microsoft	E-mail	12
8	cc:Mail for Windows	Lotus	E-mail	7
9	MS Windows for Workgroups	Microsoft	Operating system	16
10	Lotus Notes for Windows	Lotus	Groupware	9
11	PK ZIP for Windows	Atlantic Coast	Utility	—
12	Lotus Smartsuite V3/4	Lotus	Office suite	8
13	MS SMS for Windows	Microsoft	Network management	19
14	MS Office Pro for Win 95 upgrade	Microsoft	Office suite	11
15	Guardian Angel	Protection Systems	Utility	—
16	MS Project for Windows	Microsoft	Project management	—
17	MS Office Pro 4 upgrade	Microsoft	Office suite	—
18	MS Word for Windows	Microsoft	Word processor	15
19	Dr Solomon's A/V for Win 95	Dr Solomon's Software	Anti-virus	—
20	Microsoft Plus for Windows 95	Microsoft	Utility	14

Figures for February 1997, 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.