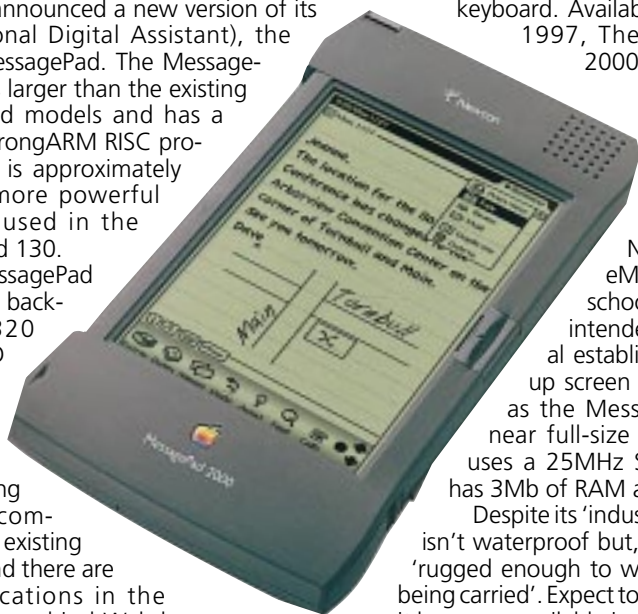


## Apple renews Newton

Apple has announced a new version of its PDA (Personal Digital Assistant), the Newton MessagePad. The MessagePad 2000 is larger than the existing MessagePad models and has a 160MHz StrongARM RISC processor that is approximately 10 times more powerful than that used in the MessagePad 130.

The MessagePad 2000 has a backlit 480x320 mono LCD screen and 5Mb of RAM. The Newton 2.1 operating system is compatible with existing software and there are new applications in the shape of a graphical Web browser and word processor though, oddly, the latter can only be used with an optional plug-in



keyboard. Available in February 1997, The MessagePad 2000 is expected to cost around £700.

Apple has also announced a sub-notebook variation on the Newton, called the eMate 300. Styled as a school satchel, the eMate is intended for use in educational establishments. It has a fold-up screen which is the same size as the MessagePad 2000's and a near full-size keyboard. The eMate uses a 25MHz StrongARM processor, has 3Mb of RAM and weighs 4lb.

Despite its 'industrial' design, the eMate isn't waterproof but, according to Apple, is 'rugged enough to withstand the rigours of being carried'. Expect to pay around £500 when it becomes available in the UK in the middle of next year.

Apple: 0800 639866

## Web's the way for MSN

Microsoft's revamp of its on-line service, The Microsoft Network (MSN), is now complete. MSN was launched in August 1995 as a proprietary on-line service, to compete with established providers

of on-line services like CompuServe and America On-line (AOL). Now billed as an 'Internet on-line service', MSN can be accessed by anyone with a suitable Web browser such as Internet Explorer or Navigator. For £14.95 (incl VAT), subscribers get unlimited usage of MSN and the Internet, as well as e-mail and news-reading facilities. And for those who only require limited access – for sending and receiving e-mail,



for example – MSN is offering a £4.95 monthly package with access restricted to three hours in any one month.

Soon after MSN's launch, Microsoft boss Bill Gates announced that the service was being redesigned in order to 'embrace and extend Internet standards' – in other words, MSN was to abandon the proprietary model and become a Web-based service. Microsoft: 0345 002000 MSN: 0345 000111

## Sharp plumps for a broader vision

Sharp's new notebook PC is the WideNote – so called because its 11.2in TFT screen has a 16:9 aspect ratio. Capable of displaying at a resolution of 1,024x600 in 16-bit colour, the WideNote allows two full-width windows to be displayed side by side.

The WideNote has a 133MHz Pentium processor, a 1.08Gb hard drive and 16Mb of RAM. Its width enables it to have a full-size Windows 95 keyboard rather than the compressed affairs found on most machines. Despite its extra breadth, at 4.2lb, the WideNote is lighter than most notebook PCs. It costs £3,166.63.

Sharp 0800 262958



Cyberia has launched Games Clubs at its UK Internet Cafes. The chief attraction is the SideWinder 3D Pro for flight simulations and shoot-'em-ups.

Cyberia: 0171 681 4116



VideoLogic has released Apocalypse 3D, the first product based on its PowerVR 3D graphics technology. The card comes bundled with DirectX drivers and two games for £187, incl VAT.

VideoLogic: 01923 260511

Corel is now shipping Corel-MEGA GALLERY, a collection of clip-art images, professional photos, fonts, sounds and videos. Also included are file management and conversion utilities.

Corel: 0800 581028

Packard Bell has 100 copies of its 'Essential Family Guide to the Internet' to give away. Write to: Packard Bell Guide to the Internet, Freepost NEA 1127, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 6YY.

Livingston Rental is offering a PC to the winner of its kids' Web page design competition. Funds from entry fees (minimum £1) go to the charity IT Relief.

Call 0800 886000 for details

Business in the Community is progressing towards setting up an umbrella group for recycling surplus IT equipment. It hopes companies and needy projects could benefit within a year. Business in the Community: 0171 224 1600

## Barclays moves to on-line banking

Barclays Bank has teamed up with Microsoft to offer a PC-based on-line banking service. Buyers of Microsoft's Money 97 will be able to register, free of charge, to use the Barclays PC Banking service.

Using the new electronic service – set to go live in the spring of 1997 – Barclays customers will be able to download up-to-date banking transaction details directly into Money 97. All that's needed is a modem and a PC running Windows 95. Money 97 should be on sale when you read this, and the expected street price is £29.99.

On the security front, Barclays has ensured that all account data is sent only after being encrypted. At 64 bits in length, the encryption key is one of the most secure around.

Barclays: 0800 000097

Microsoft: 0345 002000



# P150 notebooks here

Notebook manufacturers are moving en masse to install Intel's 150MHz Pentium processor in their high-end machines. Among the first to sign up and deliver new products are market leaders Toshiba, Dell, and IBM.

Toshiba's portable, the Tecra 730CDT, has a 2.02Gb removable drive, six-speed CD-ROM, and a 1,024x768 12.1in Black Matrix TFT colour screen. It also boasts the industry's largest 60Wh Lithium Ion battery, giving up to three hours of continuous use. With 16Mb of RAM, the Tecra costs £6,339, incl VAT.



The Dell Latitude XPI CD P150ST offers a similar specification but includes a 128-bit graphics engine and wave-table sound facilities, with four built-in speakers. Dell claims

the machine offers up to four hours and 15 minutes of continuous use if the CD-ROM isn't used. A standard system with a 1.2Gb drive and 16Mb of RAM costs £4,111, incl VAT.

Finally, IBM has released a new version of the ThinkPad 760c with a 2.1Gb drive, six-speed CD-ROM and Windows NT 4.0 preloaded on selected models. Prices start at £2,714, incl VAT.

Other P150MHz notebooks due soon are Olivetti's Echos Pro and the AcerNote 970c.

Toshiba: 01932 838838

Dell: 0500 121121

IBM: 01329 242728

## Printer buyers get greater choice

It's a bumper month for printers as Epson, Tektronix and ALPS announce new models. Epson's offering is a traditional inkjet printer, but the Tektronix and ALPS printers use unusual ink technologies.

The 'laser-class' Tektronix Phaser 350 sells for a hefty £3,519.13 (incl VAT), but this is lower than the cost of most colour laser printers and it can print in full colour to A3 size. The Phaser 350 is based on solid ink which is supplied in stick form. With a top resolution of 300dpi, the Phaser 350



can print up to six ppm (pages per minute).

ALPS' MD2010 uses four

colour tape cartridges to create its 600dpi colour print-outs. Alternatively, a single multi-colour cartridge can be inserted which has gold, silver, metallic blue and metallic red. The MD2010 costs £468.83 from Rotec Distribution.

Completing the trio of newcomers is Epson's Stylus 200 mono. At £159.80, this is the cheapest 720dpi printer of the Stylus series.

Epson: 01442 61144

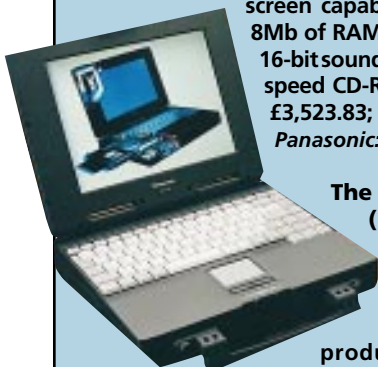
Rotec Distribution (ALPS): 01604 402012

Tektronix: 01628 403600

**Panasonic** has launched a notebook PC designed for use in harsh environments. The CF-25 is cased in a magnesium alloy that is resistant to water and dust and its hard drive is encased in shock absorbing gel.

Two models are available – the CF-25EGC2 with 133MHz processor and 1.35Gb hard drive, and the CF-25CG82 with 100MHz processor and 850Mb hard drive. Both have a magnesium-reinforced 10.4in SVGA TFT colour screen capable of 16-bit colour at 800x600, 8Mb of RAM, three Type II PC card slots and 16-bit sound. There's an optional internal six-speed CD-ROM drive. The CF-25EGC2 costs £3,523.83; the CF-25CG82 costs £3,171.33.

Panasonic: 0500 404041



**The British Standards Institution (BSI)** and the **London Symphony Orchestra (LSO)** have both finally gone on line. Find out more than you ever wanted to know about standards, product certification, testing and quality assurance at [www.bsi.org.uk](http://www.bsi.org.uk).

For the musically inclined, the LSO site holds a wealth of information about the orchestra. Point your browser at [www.lso.co.uk](http://www.lso.co.uk) to meet the players and con-

ductors. You can also find out about the orchestra's history and get up to date with its education projects.

**Motorola** intends to launch a software-only modem for Windows 95 by the end of the year. Its dependence on software will make the modem cheap and easy to upgrade as faster communication speeds become possible and close integration of communications and applications will be much more straightforward.

Software modems rely on the PC's processor and RAM for processing information received and transmitted over the phone line. Whether or not the current crop of Pentium processors will be able to cope with both this and the existing demands of Windows 95 remains to be seen.

Motorola: 01293 404343

**Dillons** the bookstore and **Zoo Internet** have taken steps to make the Internet more accessible. A selection of Dillons' London stores are offering in-store Web connections in conjunction with Sonnet Internet. A full range of services is available, from e-mail connection to ISDN services.

Zoo Internet is offering an easy Internet access package including a Net browser, e-mail and a news reader. There is a setup fee of £39.99, then a choice of access deals.

Zoo Internet: 0181 961 7000

Sonnet Internet: 0171 891 2000



# 'Easy' PCs out for Xmas

Both Mitac Europe and Sony are set to launch new PCs before Christmas. Each company claims its machines are designed to be as easy to use as possible.

PCs in Mitac Europe's new Pursuit range feature Discovery, a 'revolutionary' navigation tool. The Discovery interface is split into three 'rooms' – The Living Room, The Children's Room, and The Office – which give users easy access to a large collection of pre-installed software.

All the Pursuit models have built-in 3D graphics, an eight-speed CD-ROM drive and a 28.8Kbps modem.

Prices start at £1,399 (incl VAT) for a Pentium 120MHz PC with 16Mb of RAM.

Details of Sony's forthcoming PC systems are still patchy, but two machines are expected to be launched shortly. Both the PCV-70 and PCV-90 will have an eight-speed CD-ROM drive and a 28.8Kbps modem fitted as standard. The PCs will be powered by Pentium 166MHz and 200MHz processors respectively.

As well as a 3D graphics accelerator integrated onto the motherboard, the PCs will come with a Sony Multiscan Multimedia

Computer Display which has a 15in Trinitron tube.

Mitac Europe:  
01952 207200  
Sony UK:  
0181 760 0550



## Symantec expands utilities for Win 95

Symantec has added to its range of utility programs with three Windows 95 products.

The most important release is Norton Utilities 2.0 for Win95. Norton Utilities has long been a market leader for the older Windows and DOS platforms, and version 2.0 brings it bang up to date for the 32-bit environment.

Enhancements include System Genie, which lets users easily alter their computers' settings, and Registry Tools, an advanced customisation tool for the Windows 95 Registry. Norton Utilities 2.0 costs £69 (incl VAT) for first-time buyers, or £29 for an upgrade.

Next, Healthy PC is for inexperienced users who wish to get the optimum performance from their system. For £29, this combines Norton AntiVirus and Speed Disk into a simple-to-use package.

Finally, Internet FastFind, at £49, has facilities for simultaneously referencing multiple search engines.

Symantec: 01734 814230



## Kodak and Casio give clearer picture

Kodak has added yet another model to its range of digital cameras. The DC25 has 2Mb of RAM, a built-in automatic flash and an image resolution of 493x373. It also has a colour LCD display for viewing pictures and can store images on removable memory cards. Costing £389, the DC25 comes with a bundle of software, including Kodak Picture Postcard and Kai's Power Goo.

Casio has announced the QV-100 digital camera, an improvement on the existing QV-10A. The QV-100 has two resolutions: 320x240 (normal) and 640x480 (fine) and can store 192 or 64 images at each setting. The 180-degree rotating lens has been retained, as has the 1.8in TFT colour LCD viewfinder that doubles as an image viewer. The camera, costing £586.33, has a PC connector kit and an optional cable allows the transfer of images between cameras.

Kodak: 0800 281487  
Casio: 0181 893 2592

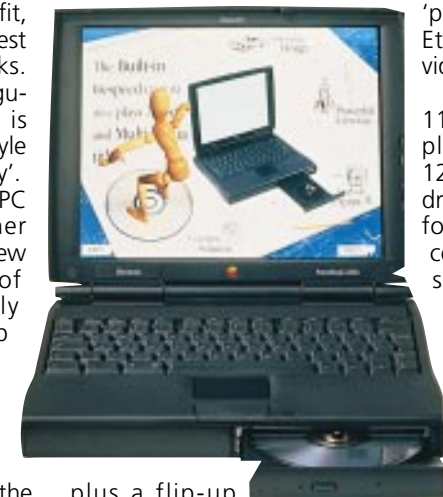


# PowerBooks go faster

Marking its return to profit, Apple has launched its fastest ever range of PowerBooks. Available in several configurations, the 1400 series is designed 'to suit your lifestyle and reflect your personality'.

Based around a PowerPC 603e processor, at either 117MHz or 133MHz, the new machines offer a level of power previously only available with desktop machines. They are also the first models to incorporate an internal CD-ROM drive, and a clear exterior panel which lets you personalise the look of the machine with interchangeable inserts.

Other features include a sleek new contoured design



plus a flip-up keyboard, giving easy access to the interior for expansion. Upgrades available include

'piggy back' memory cards, Ethernet networking and a video out module.

The 1400cs/117 offers a 11.3in dual scan colour display, 800x600 resolution, 12Mb of RAM, 1.4Mb Superdrive and a 750Mb hard disk for £1,974. The 1400c/117 comes with an additional six-speed CD-ROM, 16Mb of RAM and an active-matrix colour display for £2,936.

The top-of-the-range 1400c/133 is £3,290 and features increased processing power and 128Kb of L2 cache.

Prices include VAT. All models are bundled with ClarisWorks and Apple's Internet Connection Kit.

Apple: 0900 127753

## US Robotics ups data transfer speed

US Robotics' new 'x2' technology breaks the supposed 33.6Kbps transmission speed barrier of modems using normal telephone lines.

For various technical rea-

sons it has long been thought 33.6Kbps was the maximum possible (uncompressed) transfer rate over the public switched telephone network (PSTN). However, by taking advantage of the digital connections to the PSTN that most ISPs (Internet service providers) have, x2

overcomes this limitation and delivers an uncompressed data rate of 56Kbps.

US Robotics will be releasing a new range of x2-capable modem products in January, and dial-up ISPs Pipex Dial and Netcom have confirmed they will be offering x2 support as soon as these products hit the shelves. No pricing details have been given as yet, but owners of Sportster modems bought after 15 September can have a low-cost upgrade.

US Robotics: 01734 228200  
Pipex Dial: 0500 474739  
Netcom: 01344 395500



**Creative Labs** is currently making noises by announcing enhancements to its sound cards.

The Sound Blaster 16, Sound Blaster 32 and AWE32 will now be branded as 'INTERNETed', and come bundled with a set of Internet utilities. These include Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Creative's WebPhone and the RealAudio player from Progressive Network; buyers of the AWE32 will also receive Vienna 2.0 for Windows 96 and 3D Positional Audio.

Creative Labs has not increased the price of the INTERNETed products, so the Sound Blaster 16, 32 and AWE32 will cost £169, £109 and £85 respectively.

Creative Labs: 01734 344322



**Microsoft** has finally released version 3.0 of DirectX. This is a set of APIs (Application Program Interfaces) that enable software developers to access hardware features without needing to write hardware-specific code.

DirectX 3.0 is made up of the following components: DirectPlay, DirectInput, DirectSound, DirectDraw and Direct3D. The latter is the most recent and eagerly-awaited addition. Direct3D will allow programmers to create realistic 3D graphics under Windows 95 with the minimum of fuss, and limited processing overhead.

Microsoft is licensing the necessary Direct3D components

royalty-free, enabling software developers to include them with their applications.

Microsoft: 0345 002000

**Toshiba and Matsushita** are the first companies in the world to sell digital video disc (DVD) players.

Matsushita hasn't yet given details of its players, but Toshiba is releasing two machines: the SD-2006 and SD-3006. Both models play standard DVDs, but the SD-3006 is distinguished by the inclusion of component video outputs which results in much clearer picture quality. No price details were available at time of going to press.

Using advanced laser technology, up to 4.7Gb of data can be stored on a single side of a DVD – enough to hold 133 minutes of video footage.

Toshiba: 01932 828828

Panasonic (Matsushita): 0500 404041

**BBC Worldwide and ICL** have formed an alliance to develop a commercial BBC on-line service that will be available over the Internet. The service will be based around popular BBC magazines, radio and television programmes, covering news, sport, information and entertainment.

BBC Online is expected to be launched next spring. Initially, it will be free to anyone with access to the Internet, although additional features will be available by subscription. There are also plans for an access service to the Internet.

## CompuServe's Disneyland and EMAP deals

CompuServe has announced new partnerships with EMAP consumer magazines and with Disneyland Paris. Just for CompuServe users, the Disney page lets you take a virtual tour of five lands in the Theme Park or plan your day using hints on how to get there, where to eat and when to shop. You can book a holiday package by e-mail.



The venture with EMAP allows people to view the Connect magazine services, which are easy-to-use Internet access packages. Some of the magazines have a dedicated service, with content not to be found in the paper-based titles.

Call 0800 854322 for information about the New Woman Connect service

**Primax** has launched a low-cost colour flatbed scanner aimed at SOHO (Small Office/Home Office) users. The 4800 Direct EPP scanner connects directly to a PC's parallel port. The lack of a separate expansion card, together with Plug and Play compatibility, simplifies installation and a parallel-through port allows a printer to be connected at the same time.

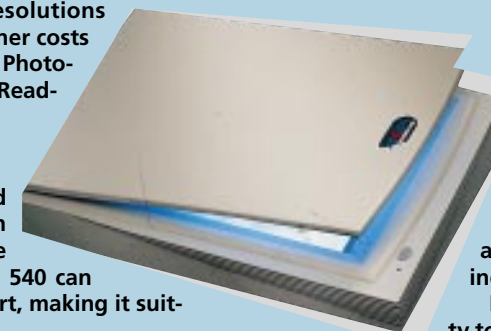
The 4800 Direct can scan in 1-bit mono, 8-bit greyscale and 24-bit colour, with resolutions ranging from 100 to 400dpi. The scanner costs £199 and comes bundled with Corel Photo-Paint 5+ image-editing software and Read-IRIS 3.7 OCR software.

Primax: 01235 559922

The **Nomai 540** is an external hard drive that can store 540Mb of data on removable cartridges. About the same size as a paperback book, the Nomai 540 can connect either to a parallel or SCSI port, making it suitable for both PCs and Macs.

The 3.5in 540Mb cartridges used by the Nomai 540 have an access time comparable to a fixed hard drive and can store up to 60 minutes of MPEG video or CD-quality audio. The drive is also compatible with SyQuest 270Mb cartridges. The Mac SCSI drive costs £229.13, the PC parallel version £305.50, and additional 540Mb cartridges cost £45.83 each.

Computers Unlimited: 0181 358 5857



**Xircom** has launched a PC Card modem that operates at 33.6Kbps. The CreditCard modem comes in two versions – the Ethernet+Modem 33.6 and the Modem 33.6, the former having both network and modem capabilities.

Both models have status LEDs that indicate modem activity, and software that simplifies the process of dialling from different countries. CreditCard Ethernet+ Modem and Modem cost £357.20 and £218.55 respectively.

Xircom also has an International Modem Travel Kit, costing £68.15, with telephone adaptors to connect modems to different phone sockets.

Ingram Micro: 01908 260160

**CRT Multimedia** has been quick off the mark to launch EasyTutor Learn Office 97, a CD-ROM-based training package covering Microsoft's updated software suite.

Learn Office 97 gives users an opportunity to preview and learn how to use Office 97, before Microsoft has even released it. The package has around 12 hours of interactive tutorials and CRT Multimedia is ensuring the voiceovers are locally accented.

Executable directly from the CD-ROM and without any need to have Office 97 itself, Learn Office 97 costs £29.99 (incl VAT) and is available now.

CRT Multimedia: 0181 743 9900



## YAHOO!

**Yahoo!**, the popular on-line guide to the Internet, has launched a localised version of its World Wide Web site.

Contact [www.yahoo.co.uk](http://www.yahoo.co.uk) for further details

**Time**, the computer manufacturer, has opened a number of retail showrooms in partnership with Powerhouse. The demonstration will be on live demonstrations and friendly advice.  
Time: 01282 770044

**Apple** Internet fans will be keen to hear that SoftQuad Hot Metal Pro 3.0 and Microsoft's ActiveX technology have made it to the Macintosh.

SoftQuad: 0181 387 4110  
Microsoft: 0345 0020000

**The House of Commons** is now on the Web. The site, at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk), is free and provides access to such things as reports on the previous day's sitting as well as various Commons documents.

**Psion** has announced Shark A Tax, an independently-written software package that enables the self-employed to track their tax liabilities.  
Call the author, John A Wilson on 01267 241443, for more details.



**Xplora** is offering EasyWeb, an all-in-one solution for businesses wishing to publish a Web site on the Internet. Costing £116.33, EasyWeb takes the hard work out of designing and publishing World Wide Web pages.

Xplora: 01932 827175

# More monitors on view

New 15in and 17in monitors have been launched by four major manufacturers.

Philips has announced two additions to its Brilliance range – the 15in 105 and 17in 107. Both have a built-in USB port that allows other USB devices to be connected daisy-chain-fashion, rather than to the PC.

The 105 costs £428.88, and the 107 is £998.75.

Compaq's 15in V50 has a 13.8in diagonal and can display at 1,024x768 at 75Hz. The 17in V70 has a 15.67 diagonal and supports 1,024x768



at 85Hz. The V50 costs £311.38, the V70 £622.75.

GoldStar has added a 17in

monitor to its StudioWorks range. The £458.25 74cm, aimed at home users, supports 1,024x768 at 60Hz and 800x600 at 75Hz.

NEC's latest 17in monitor is the MultiSync XV17V+. It supports resolutions up to 1,280x1024 at 75Hz, has digital controls and can store up to 19 image settings for different screen resolutions. It costs £856.

Philips: 0181 689 4444

Compaq: 0181 332 3000

GoldStar: 01753 500400

NEC: 0181 993 8111

## Home and student markets targeted

AST and Brother have launched new PCs. AST is targeting the home user, while Brother is aiming its systems at students.

Additions to the AST Advantage! range comprise PCs for the serious games player, the home worker and casual user. The entry-level Gamer machine has a 133MHz Pentium, 3D graphics, wavetable sound, joystick and modem, while Home-Worker models include a 166MHz



Pentium and a larger hard disk. The 120MHz Home System offers all-round per-

formance. The systems start at £1,799, £1,999 and £1,399 respectively.

Brother's Student Systems are based on 486 DX2/66 and DX4/100 processors, and are bundled with a Microsoft student licence pack for Office Professional. Both offer 8Mb of RAM, 850Mb hard disk and eight-speed CD-ROM.

They cost £939 and £962.

AST: 0181 587 3000

Brother (Kyodai): 01279 416888

### Top 20 software packages according to Romtec figures

Position	Package	Publisher/supplier	Type	Last month
1	MS Office v4.2 Standard	Microsoft	Office suite	1
2	MS Windows 95	Microsoft	Operating system	8
3	MS Office Pro 4	Microsoft	Office suite	–
4	Lotus Notes for Windows	Lotus	Groupware	13
5	MS Office 7 Standard	Microsoft	Office suite	10
6	PK Zip for DOS	Atlantic Coast	Utility	1
7	Lotus SmartSuite V3/4	Lotus	Office suite	12
8	MS Office 7 Pro	Microsoft	Office suite	–
9	MS Windows for Workgroups	Microsoft	Operating system	–
10	MS Plus for Windows 95	Microsoft	Utility	–
11	MS Word for Windows	Microsoft	Word processor.	14
12	Norton AntiVirus for Windows	Symantec	Anti-virus	–
13	cc:Mail for Windows	Lotus	E-mail	15
14	MS Excel for Windows	Microsoft	Spreadsheet	–
15	MS Windows NT Workstation	Microsoft	Operating system	–
16	MS Project for Windows	Microsoft	Project management	19
17	PK Zip for Windows	Atlantic Coast	Utility	18
18	MS SNA for Windows	Microsoft	Networking	–
19	MS Access for Windows	Microsoft	Database	–
20	Corel Draw! for Windows	Corel	Drawing package	–

Figures for August 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.