

digital

processor handbook

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The PDP-11 is a family of upward-compatible computer systems. We believe that these systems represent a significant departure from traditional methods of computer design.

The initial design step was the development of a totally new language, notation, and theory of computers called the Instruction Set Processor (ISP). This language provides a concise and powerful generalized method for defining an arbitrary computer system and its operation. Along with the development of ISP, a PDP-10 program was written for simulating the operation of any computer system on the basis of its ISP description. With the aid of ISP and the machine simulation program, benchmark comparison tests were run on a large number of potential computer designs. In this manner it was possible to evaluate a variety of design choices and compare their features and advantages, without the time and expense of actually constructing physical prototypes.

Since the main design objective of the PDP-11 was to optimize total system performance, the interaction of software and hardware was carefully considered at every step in the design process. System programmers continually evaluated the efficiency of the code which would be produced by the system software, the ease of coding a program, the speed of real-time response, the power and speed that could be built into a system executive, the ease of system resource management, and numerous other potential software considerations.

The current PDP-11 Family is the result of this design effort. We believe that its general purpose register and UNIBUS organization provides unparalleled power and flexibility. This design is the basis for our continuing commitment to further PDP-11 product development.

Thus the PDP-11 Family is at once a new concept in computer systems, and a tested and tried system. The ultimate proof of this new design approach has come from the large and rapidly increasing number of PDP-11 users all around the world.



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