

The First Fifteen Years of Computing in New Zealand

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Abstract—This article outlines the first fifteen years of modern computing in New Zealand ...

Modern computers arrived in New Zealand in 1960, little over a century after the first discernable information technology [1]. It then being a relatively isolated and small (2.5 million people) economy, it is feasible to track the dissemination and socio-economic influence of computing for the following period; this study runs from 1960 to about 1975. Two events in the mid-1970s signaled the end of an economic and social era that began after World War II, and can act as the end of our study: Britain joined the European Common Market in 1973, and New Zealand switched on a national Police Computer in 1976.

Several themes are used to organize this article:

- growth in numbers of computers and vendors
- growth in employees (and male dominance?) (and Pākehā/Māori?)
- types of users, including computing service bureaux
- key areas where the technology was used
- local contributions to the technology
- start of computing services and teaching in universities, technical colleges (and maybe schools?)
- professionalization (NZCS)
- commercial impact
- social impact

GROWTH IN NUMBERS AND EMPLOYMENT

The delivery of one of the successors of the first computer in New Zealand. It is an ICL 1902A being delivered to the premises of Motor Specialties on Anzac Avenue, Auckland in 1969. Almost certainly, this



FIGURE 1. ICL 1902A Delivery in 1969. Courtesy Fletcher Archives, NZ.

was installed in the same room as its predecessors, an ICT 1201 and an ICT 1301 (Figure 1).

TBD

CONCLUSION

TBD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] B. E. Carpenter and S. Manoharan, "Information Technology Pioneers of Aotearoa New Zealand," *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 44–58, 2025.

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