

Telesoftware gets Prestel boost

by Donald Kennett

PRESTEL is making a bid to boost the market for telesoftware, the transmission of programs over the telephone from the Prestel database.

Discussions between information providers, micro dealers and Prestel have led Tangerine Computer Systems to modify the design of its £170 Microtantal viewdata adapter to provide a standard RS232 interface for connection to micros, instead of the cassette interface it previously used.

Prestel's telesoftware product manager Tony Sweet has backed

the change by ordering 250 of the new version, which intends to sell with telesoftware loading routines he is commissioning for as many different micros as possible.

Sweet is prepared to spend up to £1,000 each on such routines for the three biggest sellers - the Apple II, Commodore Pet and Tandy TRS80 - but he hopes to do it much cheaper by involving hobbyists.

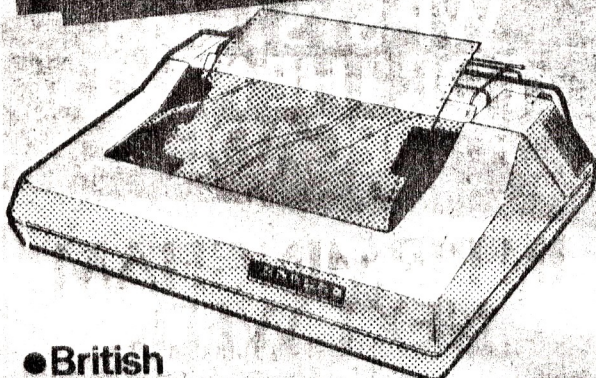
He has been talking to hobby clubs and user groups and only if this fails will he resort to software houses to meet his target date of the end of March.

Means of collecting telesoftware from Prestel have existed for some time, but their costs have put them out of the reach of most hobbyists and many schools. Sweet believes that the Microtantal, supported by cheap and widely applicable loading routines will quickly bring the market to the point where it needs no further support from Prestel.

One recent problem was the absence of a standard format for Basic programs on Prestel. There is now wide agreement that it is a good idea to use the format developed by the Council for Educational Technology.

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£4m orders at show

by Kevin Cahill

A SMALL satellite navigation system based on a Z80 microprocessor and costing less than £1,000, captured over £4 million worth of orders, 50% from overseas on the first day of the Boat Show in London.

The device, called the Sat Nav 402, is produced entirely in Britain by Walkers Marine Instrument of Birmingham.

The device aims to give the small yacht positioning information based on transmissions from five US satellites.

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