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# M·I·C·R·O·B·Y·T·E·S

Staff-written highlights of late developments in the microcomputer industry.

## IRS Tightens Rules on Business Use of Home Computers

Effective January 1, the Internal Revenue Service added temporary regulations requiring that a log be kept of home computer use in order to deduct the computer's business-use costs. After a comment period, permanent regulations will go into effect in late spring or early summer. An earlier rule, still in effect, states that home computer expenses may be deducted only by the self-employed or those who must own a home computer to hold their jobs.

## MSX Computers Shown, Not Sold, at CES

A number of Japanese and Korean companies exhibited MSX home computers at a Microsoft-sponsored MSX booth at January's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, but only Yamaha has definite plans to bring an MSX computer to the U.S. (See page 435 for details on Yamaha's CX5M Music Computer.) Because computers based on Microsoft's MSX standard all use the same basic hardware and software configuration, MSX cartridges and cassette software will run on any MSX computer.

Canon, Casio, Daewoo, Hitachi, Mitsubishi, Panasonic, Pioneer, Sanyo, Sony, and Toshiba all showed MSX computers—available in Japan—but declined to comment on U.S. pricing or availability dates. Most companies said they were waiting for reaction from American dealers and consumers. Spectravideo, the only U.S. company making an MSX computer, also displayed its computer. Financially troubled Spectravideo was recently acquired by Bondwell, a Hong Kong computer maker.

At least 19 software companies are reportedly developing versions of popular programs for MSX computers in Japan and the U.S., including Activision, Brøderbund, Infocom, and Spinnaker. However, those companies, like U.S. dealers, are hesitant to commit large development efforts to an American MSX computer market until the Japanese commit to a U.S. marketing effort, which they failed to do at CES.

Also at CES, Nintendo showed its Advanced Video System, a version of the FCS home video-game system it offers in Japan and that it says holds 90 percent of the Japanese home video-game market. An optional keyboard unit turns the system into a computer; several other peripherals will also be available. Nintendo had not set a price for the system but said it will be available in the U.S. in June.

## Digitizer Includes Software to Modify Images

Inovion, Layton, UT, announced a \$3500 image-capture system that can be used to digitize an image from a camera or other device. Also included is "paint" software with pop-up menus, which can be used to edit an image. Included in the Personal Graphics System are a 19-inch color monitor that displays the 512- by 480-pixel image in up to 250,000 colors, 780K bytes of graphics memory, a mouse, and composite video and RS-232C ports.

## Japanese Show More Wrist Computers

Seiko and Epson both showed watches that interface with computers at CES. Seiko's RC-1000 is similar to its earlier UC-2000, which used a separate keyboard to enter 2K bytes of text data for later reference. However, the RC-1000 includes an interface to any computer with an RS-232C serial port.

Epson's RC-20 wrist computer uses a Z80-compatible processor and features a 23-position touchscreen. It includes 8K bytes of ROM, 2K bytes of RAM, and a 4-line by 7-character display. Programs are included for appointment scheduling, address and phone listings, a calculator, and standard time and alarm functions. Neither price nor availability date were released.

(continued)