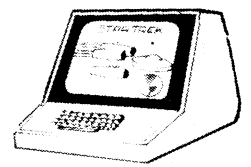


# Microcomputer News



## News from the Data '83 exhibition

The DATA '83 business computer exhibition and seminar series was held at Sydney's Centrepont from May 17-19 this year. Occupying four levels of the convention centre, with over 100 exhibitors, the exhibition was well attended, although not overcrowded.

Graphics Directions Pty Ltd, who organised the show estimate that over 20,000 business people attended, based on the number of buyer's guides distributed. This figure represents interested potential customers who were entitled to the guide, not merely casual visitors attracted by free admission to the show.

A number of companies choose DATA '83 to launch their latest products. Perhaps most noticeable was President Office Machines, who distribute the Kaypro and Columbia PC systems. President exhibited two new additions to their range, the Franklin Ace systems and a prototype of the "Magnum 256", a portable 16 bit computer which comes with

256K of battery-backed memory and eight line by 80 character LCD display in a unit the size of a slim attache case. The unit will run for 40 hours on its built-in batteries.

The Magnum is based on the Intel 80286 microprocessor, an up-graded version of the 16-bit 8086. Apart from its compact portability the system also provides two RS232C serial ports, a parallel printer port and a composite video output for connection of a video monitor. The optional video monitor plugs straight in and provides an 80 column by 25 line text display.

At less than \$2000 for perhaps the most innovative new computer of 1983 President are definitely on a winner with

the Magnum, although production models of the machine will not be available until later this year.

Currently available are two models of the Franklin Ace computer. The Ace 1000 is an Apple "work-alike" manufactured in the United States. Apple Computer tried to stop the distribution of the Franklin but lost the case on the ground that no Apple patents or copyright had been infringed by the design.

The Ace 1200, also on display, comes with two built-in disk drives and up to 128K of RAM. It uses two processors, the 6502 and a Z80A, so it can run most Apple software plus programs written under CP/M 2.2. For the money (around \$2600), the Franklin Ace 1200 is a powerful and attractive system, with an assured supply of software.

Hyperion Australia were exhibiting a new 8088-based portable computer system, the Hyperion, which is available with the MS-DOS operating system and a range of Microsoft languages.

This system consists of a compact console and detachable low-profile keyboard. Two 14cm minifloppy disk drives are mounted next to an 18cm (diagonal) amber screen monitor in the console, with serial and parallel I/O port connectors at the rear. A 300 baud modem is also built-in, although this uses the Bell 103J standard and is still awaiting approval by Telecom for use in Australia.

At the other end of the scale, Dick Smith Electronics was out in force, showing the Wizzard computer game console and the new VZ-200 computer, a Z80 based system which provides colour graphics and sound and sells for just \$199.

These days it's easy to pick the Apple Computer stand at any exhibition. Just look for the biggest crowd. Demonstrations of the Apple Lisa with the assistance of a projection television system, often attracts crowds six-deep. The high resolution "desk top" display, the use of the mouse as a pointer and the simple, intuitive operating procedures make Lisa easy to appreciate, particularly for those who have never used a computer before.

DATA '83 will be open in Melbourne from the 8th-10th November, at the Exposition Centre, Royal Melbourne Showground. It will be well worth a visit by anyone interested in computers.



The Eagle 1600, distributed in Australia by Scomco Pty Ltd, was introduced at the DATA '83 exhibition. Features include an 8MHz 8086 processor and 10MB hard disk.