

Reviews

THE SMALL SYSTEMS CP/M BOX

The Commodore PET has for several years dominated the microcomputer market, but now, thanks to a spectacular breakthrough in add-on peripherals, the inbuilt limitations of the PET have been completely overcome by the SMALL SYSTEMS CP/M BOX. The PET user need no longer be confined by a limited BASIC in ROM, nor by the upper limit of 32K RAM.

Simply by plugging the SMALL SYSTEMS CP/M BOX into the PET IEEE port and loading the CP/M disk, the PET will run under the world's most popular disk operating system, CP/M (tm), allowing access to almost all microcomputer languages, including CIS COBOL, FORTRAN, CP/M PASCAL, APL, PL/1, CORAL 66, and Extended Microsoft BASIC (both interpreter and compiler), as well as the vast number of commercial accounting suites currently available under CP/M. SMALL SYSTEMS new range of cross assemblers may also be used, allowing the PET to be used as a development system for almost any microprocessor, as well as having access to the most up-to-date software. No internal connections or modifications to the PET are required, and on power-up, the PET functions as normal until the CP/M diskette is loaded.

The SMALL SYSTEMS CP/M BOX contains a Z80 microprocessor which, operating in conjunction with the PET's 6502 allows programs to be executed at 4Mhz with no wait states, resulting in greatly improved throughput.

Business applications and word processing packages designed to work with specific terminals (e.g. Lear Seigler ADM3A, Televideo 9122 or Hazeltine 1500) will need no modifications to work with the PET screen, as the SMALL SYSTEMS CP/M BOX allows the PET screen to emulate any of these devices. Further terminal emulations will shortly be available.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Full 60k byte RAM using 64k Ram chips.

- CP/M version 2.2.
- Z80 CPU running at 4Mhz with no wait states.
- Optional RS232 serial interface (with user definable baud rates) for use with a terminal or printer.
- Dimensions : 25cm x 9cm x 16cm
- Operates with any series 2000, 3000, 4000, or 8000 PET
- Supports up to 8 Commodore disk drives in any mix of 3040, 4040, or 8050 drive types.
- Diskette containing CP/M system with utilities, and full documentation included in price lists. Please specify 3040, 4040 or 8050 disk format when ordering.

PRICES

SMALL SYSTEMS CP/M BOX £550.00 Ex. VAT.
CP/M BOX with RS232 interface £595.00 Ex. VAT
IEEE/IEEE cable.....£ 25.00 Ex. VAT

CP/M Is a trademark of Digital Research Inc.

Z80 is trademark of Zilog Inc.

A version of this Box for Hewlett Packard 9800 Series machines and Tektronix machines will be available shortly.

ROM X SUPERSOFT

This chip is different! You do not lose one of your precious spare sockets, because Supersoft have rewritten the routines on one of the chips which form the operating system of the machine. ROM-X goes in the UD8 socket, and by using the little bit of space which Microsoft left unused, the following extra features are supplied, and they are available immediately on switch-on. You do not have to remember, or type correctly, a SYS call:

Automatic repeat on all keys.

This is the most valuable of add-on features, and once you have used it you will wonder how you ever managed without it.

Escape key. This enables you to exit from quote mode and reverse field easily.

User-definable key. This enables you to program a key to be any character you want. This sounds trivial, but some ingenuity

will help speed keyboard entry. If your debugging technique requires the frequent use of a single keyword, then redefining a neighbouring key to the shifted equivalent of the second character will enable you to command the machine to LIST or RUN in a fraction of a second, particularly if you are the kind of typist who searches the keyboard valiantly for each letter!

Faster display. This speeds up the screen-printing to BASIC 4 standards, without endangering the chips in your machine in the way the "Fast Poke" did.

More accurate clock. The clock's speed is not tampered with as is the case in the BASIC 2 "New Rom machines at present, in the case of certain activities.

Lukewarm start. This gives the effect of a reset button from software, and gives a sporting chance that your crashed program will be intact, when you have followed the instructions.

Key-ahead protection This makes the keyboard buffer act in a more reasonable fashion, so that if you outpace the 10-character buffer, you do not lose everything you have typed in, as is the case with the normal operation. This is particularly important if you have keyed in a Carriage Return! Optional Screen scrolling pause/. This means you can pause the scrolling of the screen if required. Using only the remaining space in an existing Rom, this ingenious piece of programming, makes very full use of limited space. The limited space of course limits the number of facilities, but those provided are very useful, and the fact that they are always there is a major advantage. The use of disks and cassettes is unaffected, and major entry points are unaltered. No conflicts have been reported with any other chips, although the manual engaging expects that some will be revealed eventually! At £29.00, good value, and remember that some of the features benefit you every time you switch on the machine!