

APPLE //c

THE NEW APPLE //c

By: Martin Scerri

There is now another model of the 'tried & trusted' series of Apple]['s - the Apple //c. The following is a summary of information presented at a dealer meeting for the release of this new computer at which I was present.

The meeting started at 1.30 on the 1st of May in the Melbourne Travelodge. It began with a high quality video production of advertising material for Apple products. Included was a 'theme tune' that Apple has adopted - 'We are Apple!' sung to the tune of Irene Cara's 'What a feeling' from the movie 'Flashdance'.

We were told that it took Apple 2.5 years to sell the first 50,000 Apple]['s, 2.5 months to sell the first 50,000 mac's, and only 7.5 hours to sell the first 50,000 Apple //c's. Apple felt that the Apple][+ was beginning to make them too much of a single-product company, until they brought out the 32 supermicro series - but they still intend the Apple][series to last well into the 1990's.

Now onto the machine itself. The Apple //c is designed to be more of a 'plug & go' machine than the][+ & //e have been. All system components (besides screen) are built into the main unit - 128K ram, two serial ports, single disk drive, 80 columns, mouse interface, & color. All this in a package weighing in at 3.5kg! The CPU for the machine is the 65C02 - which means that it runs faster than an Apple][or //e, & there are 27 extra opcodes available.

The intended market for the //c is going to be the high-end, consumer & education market. Apple are now going to provide a co-ordinated software marketing policy whereby 16 'family' packages will be available for the //c, covering various subject areas - most of the software is not originally Apple in-house produced, but may have been on the market for some time now, under the name of the original authors (e.g Gertrudes Puzzles). These packages will be upgraded/customized for the //c to provide a better service for the end user.

Keeping up with their usual standards, Apple have produced another aesthetically pleasing product for the market. I understand that it was designed by a team in West Germany called 'Frog Design'. (One of the team members had previous experience in designing the Sony 'Walkman') Everything is in a new ivory colored plastic, much more pleasing than the 'Apple muck' color we have been used to in the][+. I found the keyboard to be one of the best improvements in an Apple I have seen, being extremely easy to type on & at the same time, giving tactile feedback, letting you know if you've missed out a character. There will also be a 'Dvorak' option available on the keyboard for those so inclined.

'What about add-ons!' I hear the hackers scream - well, if you like adding on accessory cards of ANY sort (including Z-80 for CP/M), forget about the //c. There are no expansion slots whatsoever - what you see is what you get. This does have it's advantages however. It makes the machine extremely easy to handle & causes less hassle for the first-time user. Because of this, the //e is still to be available for people like myself, who insist on adding esoteric appendages to their machine.

But in view of this, I believe that the //c will take the micro industry by storm - with add-ons such as a flat panel display with 80 x 24 characters, it will be the machine to have. It should be available by the time you read this, at about \$1775 for the basic machine. There will also be various new products, such as the LCD flat screen, a monitor designed specifically for the //c & a new integrated software package called 'Apple works'.