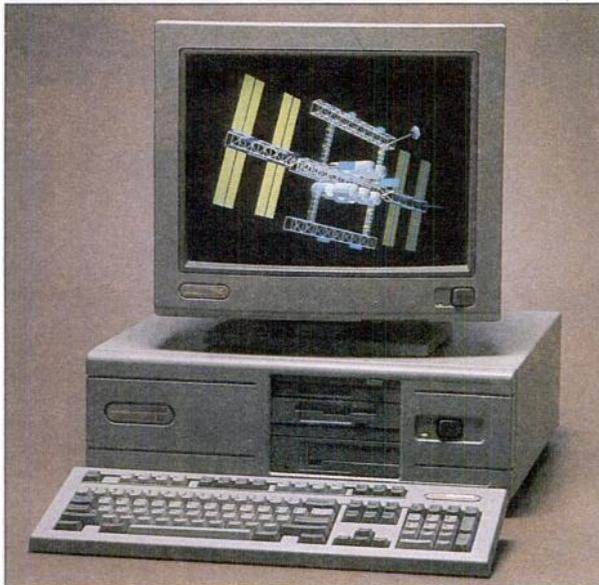


HARDWARE



At an estimated performance rating of 5 MIPS, Compaq's Deskpro 386/33 with 64K of cache is a third faster than its 25-MHz model.

Compaq Unveils 33-MHz Deskpro as Top Machine Targets Performance-Demanding Markets

BY RON COPELAND

Compaq Computer Corp. showcased last week a new top gun, a 33-MHz 80386-based machine with 64K memory cache that offers a 35 percent performance boost over its previous top-of-the-line 25-MHz 386-based model.

Citing increased availability and lower costs, Compaq also announced that it is reducing memory prices by \$100 per megabyte.

The Compaq Deskpro 386/33 is available in three configurations: the Model 84, the Model 320, and the Model 650. All models of the Deskpro include 2 megabytes of 80-nanosecond DRAM on the motherboard, an Intel 82385 cache memory controller with 64K of 25-nanosecond SRAM, a 1.2-megabyte 5¼-inch floppy drive, and an integrated VGA graphics adapter. The Models 320 and 650 also feature a 15-MHz ESDI disk controller.

Rated at 5 MIPS, Compaq has targeted its new flagship system at the performance-demanding CAD, file server, and software development markets.

The PC accounts for 75 percent of the systems sold into the CAD/CAE market, according to Rod Canion, president and CEO of Compaq. Compaq claims that approximately 25 percent of its installed base of 386 systems is used for CAD/CAE applications.

The combination of a faster processor, memory caching, and 32-bit high-speed RAM access offers a 35 percent performance improvement over Compaq's

25-MHz system in processor-intensive applications, according to Canion.

Contributing to this heightened performance is an interleaved memory architecture with paging and a 32-bit memory bus offering zero-wait-state performance 98 percent of the time, according to Compaq.

The system has eight full-size ISA expansion slots, six 8/16-bit slots, one 8-bit expansion slot, and one 32-bit memory slot capable of holding 16 megabytes of RAM. The system also offers five mass storage device bays allowing up to 1.3 gigabytes of data storage, according to Compaq. Optional external disk drive expansion is also available, which increases total storage capability to 2.6 gigabytes. All Compaq fixed drives offer a 1:1 interleave.

The system board is socketed to simultaneously accept an Intel 33-MHz 80387 and a Weitek 33-MHz 3167 math coprocessor. A 300-watt power supply; a 101-key keyboard; and serial, parallel, and mouse interfaces are also standard.

The Model 84 with a 25-millisecond 84-megabyte hard disk will retail for \$10,499, the Model 320 with an 18-millisecond 320-megabyte hard drive for \$14,999, and the Model 650 with an 18-millisecond 650-megabyte hard drive for \$17,999. All systems feature a one-year limited warranty and will be available in volume in June, according to the company.

Compaq Computer Corp., 20555 FM 149, P.O. Box 692000, Houston, TX 77269-2000; (713) 370-0670.

Firm Unveils Multispeaker System

Scott Voice-Recognition Product Can Understand Different Voices

BY PATRICK DRYDEN

A voice-recognition system now available from Scott Instruments lets micro managers, outside developers, or VARs add speech input capabilities to their applications.

The SIR Model 20 is the first multispeaker system — trainable to understand several voices, either local or via telephone — designed to support speech-input applications running on DOS-based PCs, according to the company. Software and one add-in card for both speech recognition and digital audio playback/record/edit are included.

The voice-recognition system supports 160 commands, which are not limited to a single user's voice, the company said.

In addition to making voice recognition available in a group setting, such as all word processor users in a company, the SIR

Model 20 accepts input via telephone, according to company president Frank Newton.

A simple implementation of the SIR Model 20 allows voice-activated control of off-the-shelf software. A development utility links spoken commands to one or more keystrokes so that end-users with a run-time system can operate a spreadsheet, for example, or control existing custom software hands-free.

The system is available in both a development and a run-time versions.

The Application Development System (\$2,495) includes the keyboard-interface module for assigning voice macro key sequences; API source code in Microsoft C, plus a module for authoring and other languages utilizing DOS commands, to link speech recognition to custom application software; manuals; and software for digital audio recording, editing, and playback.

The Customer Application Board (\$1,495) includes run-time software for speech recognition and digital audio functions. Each package includes a full-length standard-bus digital signal processor card with the

company's patented Coretechs recognition processing software, microphone, and headset.

Coretechs signal-processing software normalizes speech patterns by reducing or ignoring many variations in the voices sampled during a training phase.

To train a speaker-dependent application, one user recites the command vocabulary a few times. For a small, closed-group application, several male and female members would recite the commands two or three times each to yield a composite vocabulary that is near perfect for them, said Harford Field, applications manager for Scott Instruments.

For speaker-independent applications, the developer adds training passes from 25 to 50 speakers with a wide variety of dialect and vocal characteristics. The digital template from a fully trained vocabulary can achieve better than 95 percent first-time recognition accuracy.

Adaptive training lets the system learn and improve as new speakers use the application, Field said.

Scott Instruments, 1111 Willow Springs Drive, Denton, TX 76205; (817) 387-9514.

Connect Releases Expansion Unit For Portable PCs

BY PATRICIA J. PANE

Connect Computer Co. has released a dual-slot expansion unit for Toshiba portable computers that lets users add two standard PC expansion cards without sacrificing portability.

The Won Under II costs \$479 and fits the Toshiba laptop Models T1200, T1600, T3100, and T5100. The product supports most PC-compatible expansion cards and is suited for communication applications.

The expansion unit supports such network interface cards as Arcnet, Ethernet, Proteon, Starlan, and Token Ring. Won Under II can also be used for mainframe terminal access, supporting the IRMA card and the CXI 3278 coax card.

The expansion chassis measuring 14½ inches by 6 inches by 2¼ inches, an interface card, and an external power supply comprise the product. The interface card installs in the PC's expansion slot and connects to two expansion cards in the chassis.

The Won Under II is also available for Epson Equity LTs for \$479. A model for Eazy-PCs and the Zenith 183 is \$459. In addition, a single-slot expansion unit that mounts on the bottom of Toshiba T1100+, T1200, T3100, and T5100 is available for \$379.

Connect Computer Co., 9855 W. 78th St., Suite 270, Eden Prairie, MN 55344; (612) 944-0181.

Mitac MCA PC Features 386SX, Small Footprint

BY PATRICIA J. PANE

American Mitac Corp. recently announced that in June it will ship an Intel 386SX-based small-footprint Micro Channel system.

The 16-MHz MPS2386 will include 1 megabyte of on-board RAM, expandable to 8 megabytes; enhanced VGA-compatible graphics on the motherboard; and six expansion slots. Five of the slots are 16-bit MCA; one is an auxiliary video slot for an 8514/A adapter. The system is equipped with parallel and serial ports and a 3½-inch 1.44-megabyte floppy disk drive.

The system can house four mass storage devices — two 5¼-inch drives, one 3½-inch floppy disk drive, and one 3½-inch hard disk drive. The system includes MS-DOS 3.3 and GW-Basic 3.22, although OS/2 is available as an option.

Mitac is targeting the system at companies that view the 32-bit 386 platform as the solution for future OS/2 and software compatibility.

Believing that the market has room for both MCA and AT machines, Mitac is also offering an AT-architecture version of



The MPS2386 Micro Channel system includes on-board VGA.

the system. The MPC2386 provides the same features as the MPS2386 but has ISA expansion slots.

Both models can accommodate a 3½-inch 40- or 100-megabyte hard disk, leaving room for two half-height 5¼-inch storage devices. Options include a 5¼-inch floppy disk drive and a 12-inch monitor.

The basic configuration of the MPS2386 lists for \$2,995. It costs \$4,394 with a VGA monitor and Adaptec 40-megabyte hard disk and controller.

The MPC2386 sells for \$2,595; adding a 40-megabyte hard disk, controller, and VGA monitor brings the total cost to \$3,857.

American Mitac Corp., 410 E. Plumeria Drive, San Jose, CA 95134; (408) 432-1160.