KEEPING UP WITH THE MODEL 100

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What is So Unique about the Model 100?

Why, even granting that I am an evangelist at heart, do I feel so happy about the Model 100?

More in use: There is not yet any competition in sight. More Model 100s are in use than all other laptops put together.

Easier to use: None of the so-called IBM compatibles is remotely as easy to learn to use. Anyone who has already gotten accustomed to the IBM world will of course not appreciate this point. If you already have mastered MSDOS, then fine. But one can learn in 20 minutes with the Model 100 what would take 20 hours with MSDOS.

Much lighter, handier: What other computer, at all comparable, at any price, is only 3.5 lb? And, the newer Model 102 (same as 100 in behaviour) is even 1 lb lighter and a half inch thinner. IBM, Toshiba, NEC Multispeed are 3 or 4 or 5 times as heavy and have ungainly flip-up screens which cause trouble in cramped airplane seats, etc. And are a jungle of complexity by comparison.

(Note, don't think I am overlooking the NEC 8201 - it IS a model 100 in slightly different dress. A small number in use, it rules itself out by not being compatible in a few small, highly inconvenient ways. Incompatible, that is, with the huge number of Model 100s - doesn't have a built in modem, won't run most of the 2,000 programs that are in the public domain for the Model 100, etc..)

Small memory? What about internal memory? You can eat a huge meal with a small teaspoon - because you can stow it away with each bite! So, I carry a two pound battery operated disk drive ($160). Each disk holds 200,000 letters, 33,000 words, or over 100 pages, and you can carry as many disks as you wish. You can put five in a shirt pocket. I'll grant you that I don't think I would like to go back to the cassette recorder storage system, which is all there was the first year.

Low cost: I am not so poor that I could not and would not afford a $2,000 computer, if it were really going to serve my needs. I actually bought my Model 100 when what is now sold for $499 was $1200. I would do it again right now if that were all that were available.

What you get: Most computers come "stripped down." Just the built in "modem" in the Model 100 would cost $150 extra for the IBM or the Macintosh. The built in communications software would cost another $80 to $120. The built in word processing software and the built in BASIC are mentioned in a separate sheet, but would cost hundreds more in an IBM or Macintosh.

1. *Laptop User* - a new magazine. Any day now you'll get Vol 1, No. 1, because I have sent in your name for a free subscription. It is free because it is being subsidized by advertisers, with a mailing list of about 50,000. (There are probably more Model 100/102s in use than all other lap portables put together - on the Presidential plane they say that 60 are going all at once.)

This magazine should give you a few hints. Don't be too carried away by the articles boosting things. I get the faint impression looking through this first issue that the articles HAVE to boost the advertisers. That is often the case, but especially so with a free magazine.

2. Club 100 – high level membership. You CAN, if you wish, pay $30 and be a first class member of the Club 100 (e.g. more than a free magazine receiver). I don't recommend you each pay out $30, because I have done that and I'll at least try to keep you informed. One of the values of this club is still free - namely you will get a little catalogue of about 170 programs that will run nicely in your computer, and you can request them by name, paying between $9 and $14.95 depending on whether you wish to pick and choose or not or just take a standard combination.

Right here our Pasadena M100 Users Group can help you: As a personal friend I am able to send you the entire set of programs if only you tell me how you could draw them into your computer. (E.g. do you have a Tandy PDD disk drive? Do you have the new Tandy PDD2? Do you have the Chipmunk disk drive? Do you have to depend upon a cassette recorder? If you'll tell me I'll send you the right kind of a disk, loaded with these programs. We have some of our own programs to put into this Club 100 pot and even before we send them in we can readiliy send them to you. But I'll put off describing any of our own programs in detail, just because my list for this letter is already long.

3. 20% Discount!. Anything in the realm of computers purchased from Radio Shack can be purchased by schools for 20% off. Radio Shack is perfectly willing for us to buy for people we are trying to help, not directly on our faculty or in our student body. Small items may not be worth it. But a Model 100 costing $499 or a disk drive costing $199 makes a difference. This we can consider part of our public relations, our exclusive focus on serving the mission industry. Also, we buy most of our Radio Shack computers and peripherals in Minnesota, where the state does not charge non-profit organizations any state sales tax. And, the Radio Shack store delivers to any place in the U.S. free of charge. So if you want anything, let us order it for you.

4. The new Tandy PDD2 Disk Drive. (PDD=Portable Disk Drive) This number 2 model is quite an improvement over the previous drive, which however is still of real value. Improvements: It holds 200K not just 100K (the Chipmunk holds 360 K). It uses the same 3-1/2 disks that are already in use in the Chipmunk, the Macintosh, the new IBMs, etc. (These 3-1/2" disks, incidentally are going to be THE disk for the next 3 or 4 years anyway, smaller and 50 times as reliable as the usual IBM or Apple II 5-1.4" disks, and even the price, once $5 is down to 98 cents each now - if you want some at that price and don't want to buy 100 at a time, we'll be glad to supply you.)

(What is 200K? It is about 50-70 doublespaced typewritten pages)

(If you have not seen this drive you could drop in to any Radio Shack Computer Store (not just any Radio Shack store, although an ordinary RS store might have it. There are thousands of the RS Computer stores, however. I noticed that there are five in Charlotte NC for example. (Only one in Pasadena)

5. Can I get along with just the computer, nothing extra? (E.g. no "peripherals")

a. STORAGE?

To store what you produce, efficiently, I truly believe most people will really need at least the $160 Tandy PDD2 Disk Drive, which is just out. It is $199, but as explained above, we can get it for $160. It weighs 2 lbs and is battery operated. Any Model 100 or 102 can plug into it, so we use one for a number of people in the same office. I personally own a much more expensive disk drive which came out earlier, called a Chipmunk, which sells

now for $399 (we can get it for $360). It weighs 3.5 lbs, is slightly
bigger, but is far more efficient in various ways. But the PDD2 and the
Chipmunk are sort of parallel to a Chevy and a Mercedes. They both work
nicely. I'm glad I have a Chipmunk, but I don't think I would have bought it
had the PDD2 been available two years ago when I got what I have. The
Chipmunk puts 358,500 bytes on a disk compared to the PDD2's 202,000. The
main difference is that the Chipmunk files a long file in 2 seconds instead
of 8 seconds, something like that, plus the Chipmunk has a hierarchical file
system, so you can put in any number of files, with folders within folders,
etc.

b.   PRINTER?
I also believe that a printer is a necessity. For $189 Epson sells the LX86,
which produces both letter quality and a range of other dot matrix letters,
at something like 120 characters per second. I use an Epson LQ 800, which
goes at 200 characters per second, and costs $449. I am using it for this
letter. It is small enough and light enough to carry on a plane and I carry
it everywhere I go. I also have a $99 printer that weights 2 lbs and
operates on batteries, which I carry in addition on especially long flights
where I want to print out during the flight.

c.   ALL BY ITSELF?
All by itself the computer is actually an advanced engineering or financial
calculator, if you employ the powerful built in BASIC capacity. This is
absent from almost all computers unless you buy it separately and load it in
when you need it. May cost $100 extra. (Just in case you have never ventured
into this world of BASIC, I have added a sheet **Adding Machine, Calculator**)
        The computer by itself is also a fairly powerful word processor. I
use a Macintosh when I am writing something which is immediately going to be
typeset, and I am at home. But otherwise even when I am not on trips I find
it much easier and more efficient to type into a Model 100. Despite all the
ads about the Macintosh editing in the Model 100 is actually faster. What is
built in is a whole world of efficiency behind the word TEXT on the main
menu. If you press ENTER when the cursor is over this word TEXT you are
asked what the name of the new file is you wish to create. Six letters, no
numbers in first position, etc. I am sure you know all about this already.

d.   A WORD PROCESSOR?
However the manual is not too clear about the use of printer, which is the
most essential additional item. I'll add a word on that. The Model 100 will
print out to any parallel or serial printer whatsoever. I am back from New
Orleans now, and I printed out a two-page note-taking outline at a Radio
Shack store three blocks from the hotel. This is a standard (free) service
on their part.
        But do you need an additional "Word Processing" program in order to
print out? It is not necessary, but is likely handy. If you write in the
Model 100 and merely "upload" to a desk top computer for further handling and
filing and printing, as Tim Stafford does, you can get along without both a
word processing program and a printer, unless you want to print out things,
as I usually do, while on trips. (The reason I had to go to a Radio Shack
store in New Orleans is that for the first time in a long time I simply left
the printer in the living room by accident when I left for the airport!
        The word processor that is built into the Model 100 is actually much
more capable than many understand. I have added a sheet on this (see sheet,
Three ways to print out). However, it is amazing that while the IBM and the
Macintosh are helpless without a word processing program which might cost
more than a Model 100, the Model 100 works more efficiently in many ways even

without an additional word processing program! If you spend $199 on the
SuperROM you have a word processing program which is in several ways quite
superior to the very latest Microsoft Word (3.0) for the Macintosh, etc.
And, in the same ROM chip you have a very powerful spreadsheet program, a far
superior Outliner program (than the Microsoft WORD 3.0 has), and even an
advanced DATABASE program - all for $199! Thus, it is not fair to compare
the Model 100 by itself with an IBM or Macintosh loaded up with a program
costing hundreds of dollars.

FINALLY MY BRETHREN!

If you have gotten this far, let me ask you a favor. Could you give me some
light on the following questions? This will let me help you and others more
effectively:

1. How do you benefit from your Model 100, that is, how do you use it?

2. How do you wish you could use it? What won't it do for you?

3. Do you know anyone else I should add to this list of people getting
updated from time to time about the Model 100?

4. If we were to send you some programs how would you want us to do it?
What do you use, a cassette recorder, a PDD, a PDD2, a Chipmunk?

Next Time:

How to link the Model 100 to the IBM or the Macintosh.

Certain specialized programs, like the one producing the heading in this
letter, which we'll be glad to send you.

Comments on whatever questions come in from you.

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