

## IBM JX Plus Beta Testing In Australia's Outback

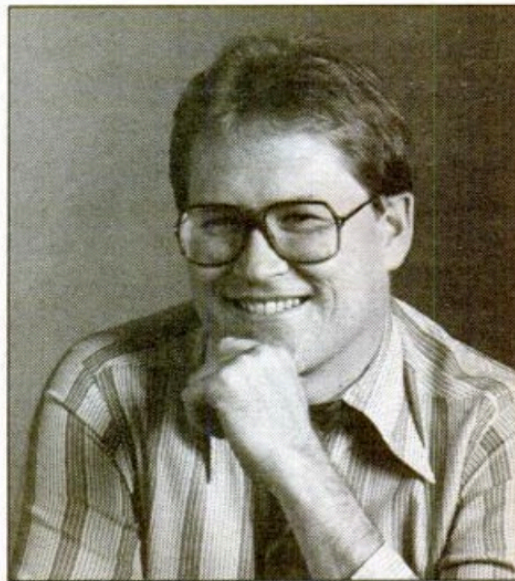
By John C. Dvorak

Everyone is hot and bothered in Australia (especially hot!). It's there that **IBM is beta testing** a computer called the **JX Plus**, a new souped-up version of its popular (Matsushita-made) JX home computer sold in Asia.

IBM plans to roll out the JX in the United States before the end of the year as a replacement for its **brain-dead PCjr**. Highlights: The JX looks good. It has one or two 3½-inch disks and built-in high-resolution color. The JX Plus will use the high-speed 8088-2, which will make it outperform an IBM PC XT. There is some thought that the JX Plus will have a built-in Enhanced Graphics Adapter (EGA) capability. The PCjr has Color Graphics Adapter (CGA) capability only.

Apparently, the success of the Radio Shack Model 1000, which is one of the hottest-selling computers on the market, made IBM rethink its low-end strategy. IBM has an incredible sense of competition. They can tolerate it to a point, but they will not be outdone. The Model 1000 did just that, and IBM will bury it if it can.

Talk About Chips Department. Paradise should be releasing its **whiz-bang** single-chip EGA design about now. At least that's



what the company has promised. This chip, if it works, has all the capabilities of the Chips and Technologies three-chip EGA set. In addition, it sports some sort of **artificial intelligence algorithm** that tests the software it's running so it can adjust itself. This means it turns into a monochrome card or an EGA or a Hercules or a CGA **on the fly** and by itself. Nice work if you can get it.

"**PC-Talk Radio**" in New York will be back on the air in the next few months. If you haven't noticed, computer shows on radio and TV have not been a success. Why? Because they are gosh-awful boring. Any attempt at humor is squelched by the producers, "We can't do *that*, people won't like it. We'll get complaints. We'll lose what little advertising we have." Luckily, these guys at "PC-Talk Radio" have a sense of entertainment. "The Computer Cafe" in Los Angeles was my favorite radio show, but it could never find its way onto a powerful station.

At any rate, "PC-Talk Radio" has a

computer quiz over (516) 921-0358. Dial 670 with a Touchtone phone, and you'll get the quiz. **A good diversion with prizes.** Call (914) 472-0038 if you want to find out more about the show or if it plays in your area.

Obscure Books Department. Here's a teaser from publisher Eben Brown concerning *Hacker's Handbook*, by Hugo Cornwall: "My first instinct on hearing of *Hacker's Handbook* was that it probably contained information that should not be made available to the general public. But now I believe the opposite. If the secrets of hackers are revealed, won't it be so much easier to protect ourselves from them?"

Eben, we're talking "crackers," not "hackers." Get with it. Anyway, the book *Hacker's Handbook* is quite interesting. Since I'm in the process of developing a fictional character by the name of **Felix Maxwell** who needs to know everything in this book, I found it quite valuable.

I suppose if you accidentally called the wrong number and got a computer, there is about a **10 percent chance** that you could log on to it (and probably not do much more) with information provided by this book. Big deal. Mostly, though, it's an entertaining tome about a guy and his computer. I liked it. It's available directly from E. Arthur Brown and Co., 3404 Pawnee Drive, Alexandria, MN 56308; (612) 762-8847. It's \$12.95 — a little steep — so ask them to make sure the copies are autographed!

Checking Out the Grapevine Department. If you follow the various Mac user groups and special interest groups, you'll start to hear about **Spellswell** (a double pun, ugh!). It's a super spell checker for the Macintosh — the best out there. It's only \$49 too. Give Greene, Johnson Inc. a call at

(408) 375-2828 for more information or write them at 15 Via Chualar, Monterey, CA 93940. The company is run by a couple of ex-Atari, ex-Imagic guys with some great tales to tell. How about a **limousine driver** at Atari who was made **V.P. overnight**? You can make up your own jokes.

Impressing the Columnist Department. While on the subject of Mac software, I am very impressed with **Record Holder** from Software Discoveries (99 Crestwood Road, Tolland, CT 06084; (203) 872-1024). This little database manager is underrated, underpriced, and overpowered. At \$49.95, it's a steal.

Essentially it's a configurable database manager. It's so versatile that I think you can make it look like Overvue or Microsoft File or anything you want. For the Mac, it's the only database manager I've seen that **reeks** of the Mac user interface. This is what I think a database on the Mac should be. If you have a Mac, get a copy of Record Holder. You'll be shocked.

End of an Era Department. I began this column four years ago with little fanfare. I've had fun doing it. I'm now ending this column with little fanfare. As many of you know, my writings are all over creation, so I'm sure we'll bump into each other again. This change of habit will allow me to explore new avenues of opportunity. "New avenues of opportunity" means nothing, of course. Hopefully, this column was more than meaningless drivel to those of you who wanted a fresh perspective.

Let's not forget that computers are fun.

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*Inside Track represents the opinion of contributing editor John C. Dvorak, not necessarily the views of InfoWorld.*