
News Highlights



IBM releases the JX

IBM Australia has extended its personal computer line with the release of the JX model, a low-cost desktop machine with a wide range of features. Prices start at just over the \$2000 mark for the base model which includes a colour monitor.

The JX personal computer now becomes IBM's low priced entry level machine. It is aimed squarely at the education and small business markets and is able to run over 100 IBM application packages. It has already been

approved for use in the Victorian education system.

Originally designed for the Japanese market, the JX uses the same 8088 processor and disk operating systems as the IBM PC and XT models but has the Sony 3.5 inch disk drives instead of the older machines' 5.25 inch drives.

An optional expansion unit for the JX has a 5.25 inch drive. The 3.5 inch disks are formatted for 360KB which makes them fully compatible with any IBM

5.25 inch disk, although it does mean that their full capacity is not utilised.

While the operating system may not be new, the hardware of the JX certainly is. It features the first one megabit ROM to be used in a personal computer. This houses the BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) and Advanced Basic. As well, the JX employs five large gate arrays which have been used to replace a considerable number (180 according to IBM) of the conventional TTL chips for increased speed, reliability and miniaturisation.

Five different configurations of the JX are available. The JX1 education system, intended for use in cluster networks is supplied with 64K user memory, two cartridge slots and a colour monitor, and retails for \$2115.

The JX2 starter system comes with 128K of user memory, two cartridge slots, one disk drive and the colour monitor, and sells for \$2881.

The JX3 business system is a further upgrade with 256K of memory and two disk drives and sells for \$3365. Fully optioned up, the JX3 comes with 512K of user memory and a clock/calendar.

Two keyboards are available, a compact unit and a full size office keyboard with separate cursor keys and numeric keypad. This has an improved layout to the much-maligned IBM PC keyboard but does not have the latter's refined key action.