There's a PC in your Future

By Johanne Brown

If Johnny can't read maybe it's because his school is not a part of the new computer culture. America is experiencing a tidal wave of technological advancements that are destined to dominate every aspect of life.

The personal computer (p.c.) is finding its way into many organizations and homes more easily now than it did five years ago. And of course with this influx of computer acceptability comes competition and rapid advancements.

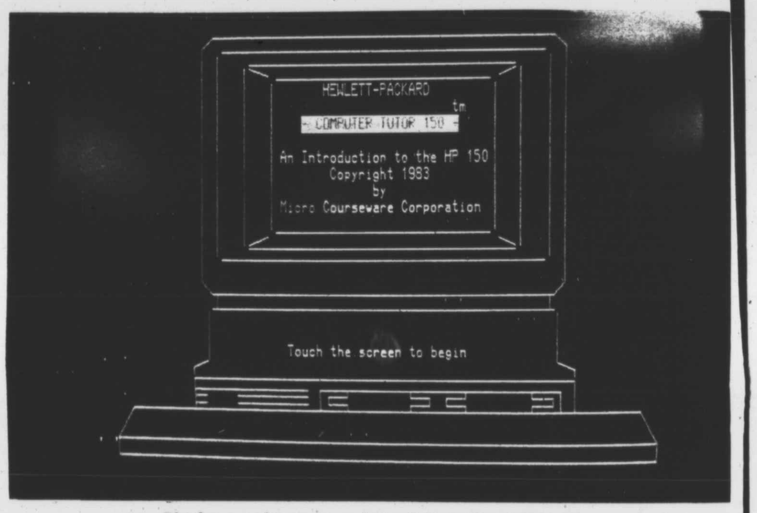
Businesses as well as academic institutions are discovering the new world of the personal computer. And with this new awareness of state-of-the-art systems comes the realization that work is a lot easier "since we have a computer."

Routine tasks that were once a chore to complete are becoming enjoyable to compile and above all, less time consuming. The average person who is accustomed to generating mounds of paper now wonder, "how did I function before the p.c.?"

Perhaps some organizations dream of replacing employees with computers but for now such phoebic reactions are a bit premature. Many of the new personal computers are designed to be operated by humans and are not advanced enough to function alone.

Personal computers are born everyday. Many of the parent companies are familiar names like IBM, Wang, ITT and Apple but there are still hundreds of other companies that have not become household words.

Each company is constantly inventing and updating to the extent that a machine that hits the market today is headed for extinction tomorrow.



Display on the screen of Hewlett-Packard HP 150.

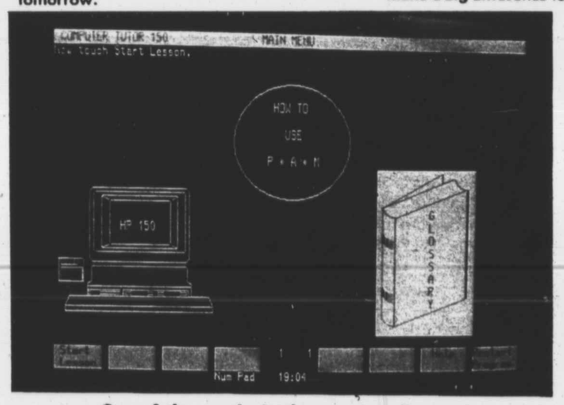
Personal computers are designed to enhance individual performance and participation on the job so it is important that small businesses and the like not be afraid of this new technology.

Besides it is so easy, all you have to do is push a couple of buttons (some systems even come with a remote control system called a "mouse" that allows you to use the p.c. without touching the keyboard) and that could make a big difference to a large company that survives on competitive sales.

Al Otley, president of The Center for Developing Institutions, a management analysis consulting firm located in Silver Spring, Maryland, uses personal computers at work and at home.

His firm is equipped with an "IBM Compatible," a "Compaq" computer with a modem that hooks up to any telephone and saves time and money.

According to the president whose work requires frequent travel, the p.c. goes everywhere he goes. "So if I am working out-of-town, I can write up a project for my client, send all the information by phone back to my office, and have a written proposal by the very next day."



One of the graphs in the program disc used with Computer Tutor.



Keyboard used in working with computer.

At home the young executive uses the Apple IIe, a p.c. he says he selected because it has the most software for home use. "The Apple is good for my wife and bids to use, even my four year old can get into the computer.

The Apple IIe is simple enough that Otley's four year old, who cannot yet read, is able to spell his name and play number games. "He can also play "Torpedo," a battleship game and tic tac toe," adds Otley.

In addition to saving time at the office, this p.c. has other capabilities that work for the Otley household. Now Otley uses it to balance the family budget and is speculating that he will eventually be able to tie into his banking budget.

"I already have grocery shopping down to a science whereby I only have to go once a month, but in the future I hope to be able to feed the grocery list into the computer and never have to go to the store again," the computer fanatic hazards.

The theory of grocery shopping by computer is not all that far-fetched according to Otley, who says that such a system is now in an experimental phase in California and several other states.

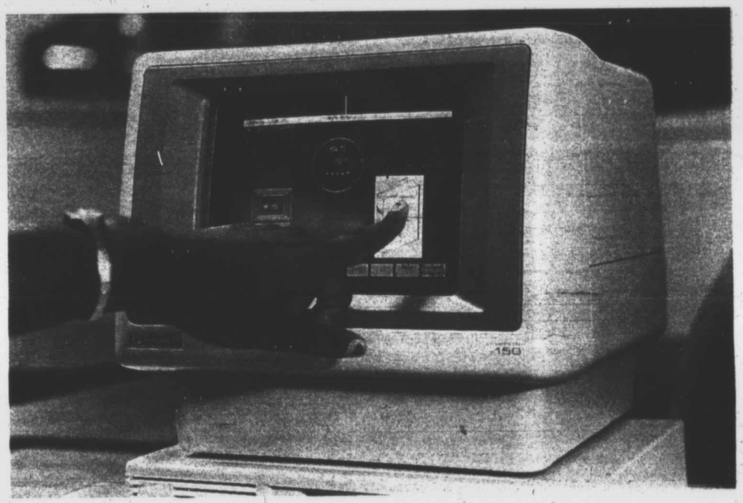
If you have ever noticed the coded lines on store products, called "product control coders" this concept may not be too difficult to imagine.

"These codes include the number of ounces, the size and weight of the products. You will just have to tie into the store computer, punch in your bank account number, place your order and the computer will do the rest," says Otley.

Of course with such a new system several safeguards will have to be taken. Just like with the new automatic tellers, the computer will then check to make sure your account has enough funds to cover the cost of the groceries before the order is released. "After that, the grocery boy will deliver your groceries," concludes Otley.

P.C. pandemonium is sweeping the country at a rapid pace. The main attractions seem to be the speed in which tasks are completed, accuracy, and ease. With the push of a button you can determine how much money your company will gross in a year, or how much money you have spent in the home.

Whenever a new trend sweeps the country, followers of the trend always adapt a favorite. If a particular personal computer does more for your office needs than its competitor then you stick to it.



Closeup of how it looks in relation to the screen.

At Coppin State College in Baltimore, Maryland, administrators and educators have realized that the versatility of the computer has made a big difference in their institution.

Clayton McNeil, director of auxilary enterprises at the college, has found that the Commodore 64 in a variety of situations such as compiling "spread sheets" to prepare a budget and other financial charts; and he has employed the use of the p.c.'s word processor

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Steno-flex programmable dictation processor in operation.