

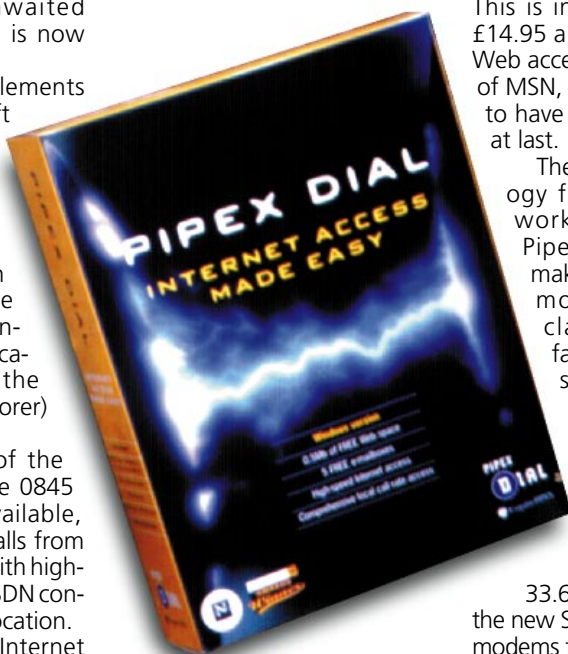
## MS delivers Web service

Microsoft's long-awaited Internet Web service is now available in the UK.

This service supplements the existing Microsoft Network (MSN) which was launched last year, shortly after Windows 95 itself. Existing members of MSN can use the new service immediately by downloading the communications software and the browser (Internet Explorer) from MSN.

One advantage of the system is that a single 0845 access number is available, providing local-cost calls from anywhere in the UK, with high-speed 28.8Kbps and ISDN connections from every location.

Both e-mail and Internet news services are still provided by the dedicated MSN service.



This is inconvenient but, at £14.95 a month for unlimited Web access and unlimited use of MSN, Microsoft does seem to have got the pricing right at last.

The underlying technology for Microsoft's network was designed by Pipex, a company that makes the news itself this month with what is claimed to be the fastest dial-up Internet service in the world.

Pipex Dial 3.0 comes with new software, a new local-access phone number, and the world's fastest modem access: 33.6Kbps when used with the new Sportster VI or Courier modems from US Robotics.

Microsoft: 0345 002000

Pipex: 0500 474739

## A higher-tech Toshiba

Two new Tecra notebooks from Toshiba continue to push forward the boundaries of what can be engineered into a portable PC.

The new 710CDT and 720CDT models are identical in all but screen size: the 720CDT is fitted with a 12.1in TFT screen capable of 1,024x 768 pixels, and the 710 with a 12.1in 800x600 version.

Common features include the use of Intel's new mobile Pentium processor. This runs at 133MHz and consumes only 2.9 volts, sparing the battery to power the six-speed CD-Rom drive. Other power-user features include a 64-bit graphics card with 2Mb of VRam.

For full-motion video, a special PCMCIA

Mpeg card plugs into an enhanced PCMCIA slot called the ZV (Zoomed Video) port. This port communicates directly with the graphics controller, bypassing the main system bus, thereby relieving the processor of the normal heavy overhead associated with full-screen video.

You can expect to pay over £5,000 to join the elite band of Tecra users.

Toshiba: 01932 828828



## Mac machines for the home market

Two new Macintosh Performa machines, aimed at the home user, have been announced by Apple.

Both the Performa 5320 and 6320 are powered by a 120MHz 603e PowerPC processor and each has an AppleCD 600i quad-speed CD.

The all-in-one Performa 5320 can be had in a variety of configurations ranging from 8Mb of Ram with a 1.2Gb hard disk to a machine with 16Mb of Ram, a 1.2Gb hard disk, TV tuner and Mpeg video system.

Available in similar configurations, the Performa 6320 has a modular design, allowing for greater upgrading flexibility.

The Performa range starts from £1,649 (incl VAT).

Apple: 0800 127753



The Royal Mail is offering a free, PC-based, interactive guide entitled *A Guide to Direct Mail* to small businesses interested in organising direct-mail campaigns. Royal Mail: 01865 780400



Open Market has announced OM-Express, a £19.95 (incl VAT) program that works with your Web browser allowing you to view previously-visited Web pages off-line.

Open Market: 01753 622075

US Robotics has cut the prices of its popular modems by about 15 percent. The Sportster Vi 28,800 drops by £34.82 to £199.

US Robotics: 01734 228200

Tel-Me, the pay-as-you-go on-line service for businesses, is now at version 3.0 with four added services: flight and hotel bookings, a news feed from hundreds of worldwide journals and newspapers, and Royal Mail's overnight Deskmall.

Phonelink: 0800 991155



Ellinor has launched the Interact 400, an infra-red touch-screen system which attaches to 14in monitors without the need for modification. It costs £351.33.

Ellinor: 01734 311066

McGraw-Hill has released its 'Busy People' books, offering time-saving tips for the Microsoft Office suite. Each book costs £16.95.

McGraw-Hill: 01628 23432

## Caught up in an international Net

Over 80 major exhibitors packed Olympia for the second Internet World International, held in May.

It was a chance to meet some of the world's most influential Internet developers, but also a venue for them to show off their latest software.

Spider, a Web page designer along the lines of Adobe Pagemill, is available now for the PC from Incontext; a 30-day evaluation version can be downloaded from the Web.

If you prefer an old favourite, Hotmetal Pro version 3.0 now includes drag and drop, more support for multimedia, an integrated graphics editor and expanded support for the Java programming language.

If you're really serious about Java, Symantec's Café is a full programming environment with visual debugging tools.

But if you're a user rather than a developer, take a look into Shakespeare Netspeak, which gives you voice control of your Internet browsing. It can learn up to 900 words and comes with built-in commands for all major Web browsers.

*Softquad Hotmetal:*

0181 236 1001

*Symantec:* 01628 592222

*Shakespeare Netspeak:*

01342 316456

*Incontext Spider:*

[www.incontext.com](http://www.incontext.com)

# Entry-level spec steps up

The association between 'entry-level' and 'Pentium 75' may be outmoded, judging by the price of new desktop



PCs launched this month.

The LC is AST's latest addition to its Bravo range of PCs. Available in P100, P133 and P166 configurations, the LC has 8Mb of Ram, either a 630Mb or 1.2Gb hard drive and a 64-bit SiS graphics controller. Prices start from £1,051.63 (incl VAT).

Pentium Pro prices are also tumbling. Dell's Dimension XPS Pro200n is a 200MHz Pentium Pro-based machine with 16Mb of EDO Ram, a 1.6Gb EIDE hard drive,

a 15in monitor, 64-bit graphics card and eight-speed CD-Rom drive. It is supplied with either Windows 95 or NT, and costs £2,143.20.

Packard Bell's new Executive range starts with the 618AN, which has a 486 DX4/75 processor with 8Mb of Ram and a 630Mb hard drive, and ends with the 918E, which has a Pentium 166 processor, 16Mb of Ram and a 2Gb hard drive. Prices start from £1,199.

*AST:* 0181 587 3000

*Dell:* 01344 860456

*Packard Bell:* 01753 831914

## Canon can with colour Canoscans

New from Canon are two flatbed scanners that promise to bring high-quality colour scanning into the home.

Both the Canoscan 300 and Canoscan 600 are based on Canon's Xenon light technology, and the company claims the machines are only slightly larger than the A4 pages they scan.

The Canoscan 300 offers a true optical resolution of 300x600 dots per inch (dpi) which can be increased through hardware or software interpolation to 600x600dpi and 1,200x1,200dpi respectively.

Being a 27-bit scanner, the

Canoscan 300 can determine 134 million colours, as opposed to the 16.7 million possible with a more conventional 24-bit system.

The Canoscan 600 is similarly specified, but offers the advantage of having a true optical resolution of 600x600dpi for those demanding professional-quality scans.

Due for release some time in July, the Canoscan 300 will



have a recommended retail price of between £300 and £400, with the Canoscan 600 costing about £500 to £550.

*Canon:* 0181 773 3173



**Plasmon Data** has launched a CD writer (CD-R) for just £540. For that price you also get multilingual mastering software; multimedia, audio and video-editing software; and a set of backup utilities.

The CDR4240 is a dual-speed recorder (with a disc access time of 230 milliseconds). The machine supports four write methods:

'disc at once' (used for creating audio CDs), multi-session recording, 'track at once' (which allows the user to record a track, pause, then continue recording), and 'fixed and variable packet' writing (which allows smaller bursts of data, equivalent to the buffer size, to be written). It can also operate as a standard quad-speed CD-Rom drive.

*Plasmon Data:* 01763 262963

**AMD's** long-awaited Pentium-class processor, the K5, has finally appeared under the name 5k86. The processor is being produced in 75MHz (P75) and 90MHz (P90) versions and, according to tests carried out by Panther Computers, their performance is faster than the equivalent Pentium processors.

Panther Computers, which specialises in PCs based on non-Intel processors, is now using the 5k86 in its new Predator PCs. A 5k86 P90 machine with 16Mb of Ram, a 1.08Gb hard

drive, a 1Mb S3 graphics card and 15in monitor, costs £1,350.08. A six-speed CD-Rom drive, wavetable sound card and speaker option adds an extra £188 (both including VAT). *Panther Computers:* 01442 253811

**Brother's** range of computers has been subjected to both price cuts and specification upgrades by the company's marketing division, Kyodai.

Effective immediately, specifications on all models in the Brother Multimedia range have been boosted to include quad-speed CD-Rom drives and 850Mb hard drives. One model in this range, the Professor, has also had its price reduced by £152.75 to £1,173.83 (incl VAT).

The Brother Graduate has received similar treatment, having had its DX2/66 processor upgraded to a DX4/100, while having its price chopped by £129.25 to £915.33.

Kyodai is also offering interest-free credit on the Brother Solo range of all-in-one PCs. *Kyodai:* 01279 416888





# Power to the new portables

Plenty of powerful new notebooks around this month, with several manufacturers launching high-performance models.

Dell's latest additions to its Latitude XPI range have low-voltage Pentium 100 and 133 processors, integrated sound and infra-red communications. The Latitude XPI P100SD, with P100 processor, 8Mb of Ram and a 540Mb hard drive, costs £1,996.33; a P133 version with an 810Mb hard drive costs £2,818.83 (both including VAT).

Also, Compaq has added two new models to its LTE 5000 range: the LTE 5300 and 5280.



Both have 16Mb of Ram, but the LTE 5300 pips the 5280's 11.3in TFT 800x600 display, with a 12.1in screen. The P133-based LTE 5300 with 1.35Gb hard drive costs £5,281.63. The P120 LTE is available with either

an 810Mb or 1.35Gb hard drive, for £4,400.38 and £4,776.38 respectively.

Texas Instruments' new additions to its Extensa range are the 570CD and 570CDT. Both have 8Mb of Ram, an infra-red port and integrated 16-bit sound. The 570CD has a 10.4in TFT colour screen with a 1.2Gb hard drive and quad-speed CD-Rom drive; the 570CDT has an 11.3in DSTN colour display, 180Mb hard drive and six-speed CD-Rom drive. They cost £2,693.35 and £3,378.13 respectively.

Dell: 01344 860456

Compaq: 0181 332 3000

TI: 0181 875 0044

## Samsung presents a screen quartet

Four new monitors have been launched by Samsung, with models aimed at entry-level and professional users.

The Syncmaster 15GLE, the first 15in monitor to be produced at Samsung's Teeside facility, has a 0.28mm dot pitch and supports resolutions of 800x600 at 75Hz, and 1,024x768 at 66Hz. The monitor is fully Windows 95-compatible and costs £351.33 (including VAT).

The Syncmaster 15M and 15Me also have 15in screens



and have stereo speakers built in to the case. Both are Windows 95-compatible with a 0.28mm dot pitch, but the

more expensive 15M supports 1,024x768 at 76Hz and 1,280x1,024 at 60Hz, while the 15Me is limited to 1,024x768 at 66Hz. They cost £341.93 and £311.38 respectively.

At the other end of the spectrum is Samsung's first 21in monitor, the Syncmaster 21GLs. The £1,479.58 monitor has a 0.28mm dot pitch and supports resolutions of 1,600x1,200 at 68Hz and 1,280x1,024 at 75Hz.

Samsung: 0181 391 0168

## New ways to get netted in the UK

Several companies have announced UK Internet services.

Among them, @source is run jointly by Computers Unlimited and Instant Access. It offers 100 percent local-call coverage across the country for around £15 a month. There's also a £25 sign-up fee, but this is waived if you join for at least six months.

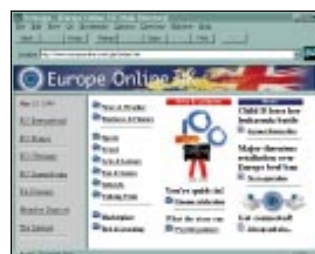
Europe Online has launched what it calls 'the first multilingual multimedia on-line service created by Europeans for Europeans'. Subscribers also get full Internet access. Prices start at £3.95 a month for 3 hours.

California-based Netcom has launched its Internet service for the UK. Netcom offers dial-up software, access, and customer support for around £15 per month. There's no start-up fee, and usage is unlimited. Also available is the Netcomplete Plus package, which includes tutorials, and a guide to the top Web sites. It costs £14.95.

Instant Access: 0181 200 0100

Europe Online: 0800 106610

Netcom: 0800 973001



## Extensa gives more muscle per pound

The traditional high pricing of notebook PCs now seems to be on the wane. Indeed, some are now available at prices comparable to desktop machines of a similar specification.

Texas Instruments, who are ranked sixth worldwide in mobile computing, have announced one such notebook – the Extensa 510.

The Extensa 510 is just £1,756.63 (incl VAT), yet has a Pentium 100 processor, PCI bus, 8Mb of EDO Ram and an 810Mb removable hard disk drive. The display is a 10.4in DSTN capable of 256 colours at 640x480 resolution, and 1,024 x768 on an external monitor.

The Extensa 510 also has built-in 16-bit sound and two Type II (or one Type III) PCMCIA slots. Windows 95 is supplied pre-installed and the full-size keyboard has Windows 95 keys and a Touchpad pointing device. Power is supplied by a standard-size NiMH battery.

TI: 0181 875 0044



# Sites set on Frontpage

Frontpage 1.1 is the latest version of Microsoft's software package for creating and maintaining Web sites.

It's designed to look and work like Microsoft Office applications. New features include Wysiwyg table support; HTML frames (not currently supported by Microsoft's own Web browser) plus a Frames Wizard; Web-Bot components for creating full-text searching, threaded discussion groups, and surveys; and auto-recalculation of hyperlinks when files are moved.

The price will be around £99, but a beta version of the software can be downloaded free from the Web on:

<http://www.microsoft.com/ms/office/frontpage/>

Meanwhile, Netscape has issued beta 4 of its forthcoming Web browser Navigator 3. If you want to check out the new features, it's available from Netscape's Web site at:

<http://www.netscape.com/>

Many of the functions previously available as add-ins for Navigator 2 are now fully integrated into the browser. These include video playback, audio, 3D graphics, Internet phone capabilities, and enterprise customisation. Netscape has also enhanced existing Navigator features, such as Javascript, security, and caching capabilities.

In addition, Apple's expanded its Internet strategy into the home and education markets with the announcement of 'Cocoa', an interactive media authoring tool for children of ten years and above. Using Cocoa, children can build simulations, games, and interactive Web sites, 'just by pointing and clicking'.

Pricing hasn't been set, but the Netscape plug-in, necessary to run Cocoa movies, will be available free for both Mac and Windows.

Microsoft: 0345 002000

Apple: 0800 127753

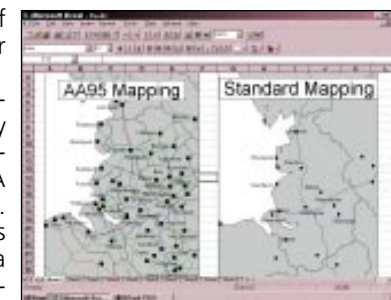


## AA maps it out digitally for Excel

The AA has launched a set of add-in digital maps for Microsoft Excel.

These replace the poorly-detailed UK maps already included in Office 95. Published by Kingswood, the AA Automaps add-in costs £106.

Excel 7 already allows users to display selected data automatically in a geographical context – for example, highlighting towns or areas referred to in charts or graphs, or superimposing data at the



relevant location on a map.

The new digital maps are fully compatible, but offer greater

detail. They include all county boundaries, postcodes, areas, main roads, motorways, and nearly 700 towns and cities. The data is derived from the AA's standard 1:200,000 vector data-set.

Kingswood can also supply more comprehensive data-sets for Britain, Ireland, and Europe, at a range of scales and with maps in both vector and raster format.

Kingswood: 0181 994 5404

<http://www.dircon.co.uk/kingswood>

**Number Nine** has just launched a 128-bit graphics card. The Imagine Series 128 Series 2 is aimed at graphics professionals and more demanding Pentium PC users who want a graphics card that can keep pace with their system.

The £558.13 (including VAT) card has a fully 128-bit architecture, and the 128-bit data bus allows the graphics system to draw either sixteen 8-bit, eight 16-bit or four 32-bit pixels per clock cycle.

Videologic's Graftixstar 600 is a more general-purpose card aimed at games enthusiasts. The £169 card has 2.25Mb of DRam (expandable to 4.25Mb) and is fully Windows 95-compatible.

Mentor (for Number Nine card): 01582 483381

Videologic: 01923 260511



**Olivetti** has published the results of a recent survey revealing that one in three households in the UK owns a computer.

This is an amazingly high figure, and one that is probably distorted by counting thousands of Spectrum,

Oric and Dragon computers gathering dust in attics. Other recent surveys put the number of households owning Windows-capable PCs at one in seven.

The report justifies the figures by pointing to Britain's ever-growing number of wage-earning tele-workers (currently 1.5 million) which, added to the one in five adults who are self-employed and probably working from home, boosts Britain to first place in the Euro-league of home computer ownership.

**Sicos** has unveiled the DMS2000, a new desktop scanner billed as giving users 'a full electronic office on the desktop'.

To support this claim, along with the 800dpi black-and-white DMS2000, Sicos is bundling Personal Image Edition image-editing software and Xerox's Textbridge OCR (optical character recognition) package.

Although being very compact (measuring just 67mmx294mm), the DMS2000 can handle image sizes up to A4, while offering a scan speed of up to six pages per minute.

At £151.58, the DMS2000 is priced competitively and will be reviewed in the August issue of *What PC?*

Eurebis Distribution: 00 353 1 456 9383 (Dublin)



**Carrera Technology**, keen to show it cares, is running a series of free drop-in workshops to help users get more out of their PCs once they have bought them.

The workshops run from 5pm to 7pm and take place at Carrera's centrally-located London showroom in Tottenham Court Road.

The themes for forthcoming sessions include law and accountancy (13 June), small office/home office (27 June), telecommunications (11 July) and the Internet (25 July). For details of what's included in each session or to find out more about future courses, talk to Neil Simpkin at Carrera. Carrera: 0171 830 0586

**Pision Dacom** has launched its new Gold Card Mobile family of PC Card fax modems.

All offer data communications using GSM mobile telephones – users can send and receive data and faxes from their notebook computers without the need to access a phone socket.

The range starts at £199 for a GSM-only card, with



fax and data speeds up to 9,600bps. The Gold Card V32bis with fax and GSM, at £299, also offers 14,400bps fax and data across standard phone lines. At the top of the range there's a V34 (28,800bps) version for £399.

Any users who have purchased a Gold Card since September 1995 can, for £149, upgrade their modem to GSM capability using Dacom's flash memory upgrade system. Pision Dacom: 01908 261686

**Granville Rowe Limited**, a newly-formed company, has announced the launch of the Driveguard (£158.63).

Designed for Apple PowerPC equipment (8500 and 9500 models), the Driveguard is a high-security locking device aimed at both home and office markets. Made of 6mm high-grade steel, Granville Rowe estimates it would take a hacksaw-bearing thief 17 minutes and several blades to sever just one of the Driveguard's twin upright supports.

Granville Rowe: 01799 520844







**Epson** is quick to capitalise on Barrie Thomas's recent award from the British Institute of Professional Photographers for photographs printed on one of Epson's Stylus Pro XL printers. The company has pointed out that the updated Plus model is now available at £1,521 (incl VAT).

**Morgan Computer Co**, the long-time haunt for computer buffs looking for cheap surplus and ex-demo kit, has signed an agreement to sell DTK computers through its new Megatron subsidiary.  
*Megatron: 0121 454 8700*

**Pirated CD-Roms and audio CDs worth £250,000** were seized by customs officers in Hong Kong last month. The US is threatening trade sanctions against China, where the 60,000 discs were manufactured.

**The TSB** is offering its customers on-line banking, via Compuserve. The PC-based service operates 24 hours a day, and all balances and transactions are conducted in 'real-time'. Compuserve subscription costs £6.50 per month, but the service itself is free.  
*TSB: 0500 758002*



**Nighthawk's Wizard Radio** plugs into your multimedia PC's serial port, and adds high-quality FM stereo radio while you work. It costs £53 (incl VAT).  
*Nighthawk: 01799 540881*

# Super-value Superscript

NEC's newest laser printer combines the best of two print technologies. The result is a compact desktop machine capable of churning out 8 pages per minute, yet costing much less than a conventional PCL or Postscript printer.

The Superscript 860 delivers true 600 dots-per-inch resolution, which can be enhanced to 1,200x600.

Normal GDI printers use the computer's processor and memory to produce an image



that is then sent to the printer as a long sequence of dots. NEC's printer has its own

Adobe processor and 1Mb of Ram, so it can receive complete shapes or characters from the PC, which only needs to send dots when a page contains a bitmap image.

This reduces the overhead on the computer's processor, makes printing faster and keeps down manufacturing costs, all of which make it possible for NEC to

introduce the Superscript 860 at £528 including VAT.  
*NEC: 0181 993 8111*

## The third dimension of multimedia

Now that everybody has multimedia, prepare for the next step: an onslaught of 3D add-ons and innovations designed to capitalise on Microsoft's Direct3D enhancements to Windows 95, due for release at the end of June.

STB's Powergraph 3D display card with 2Mb of Ram and a number of other performance-enhancing Windows graphics

utilities, has already been shown at Comdex UK. Slower off the mark is Cirrus Logic, which has just signed up with games console manufacturer, 3DO, to manufacture, market and sell 3D graphics accelerators based on 3DO's M2 hardware.

Compaq will be including 3D graphics systems, designed jointly by NEC and Videologic, in its forthcoming Presarios.

Also, VideoLogic will supply add-in graphics boards for users to upgrade their existing PCs.

The availability of Direct3D will bring enhanced 3D graphics to games and serious software. Software designers can include it in their programs but, for the full benefits, you need new graphics hardware.  
*Compaq: 0181 332 3000*  
*Cirrus Logic UK: 01727 872424*

### Top 20 software packages according to Romtec figures

Position	Package	Publisher/supplier	Type	Last month
1	Office v4.2 Standard	Microsoft	Office suite	1
2	Office v4.3 Professional	Microsoft	Office suite	4
3	Windows 95 Upgrade	Microsoft	Add-on	3
4	Anti-virus for Windows	S&S International	Anti-virus	20
5	PK Zip for Dos	Atlantic Coast	Utility	2
6	Dos Upgrade	Microsoft	Operating system	6
7	cc: Mail for Windows	Lotus	Groupware	7
8	Smartsuite v3/4 for Windows	Lotus	Office suite	11
9	Word v6 for Windows	Microsoft	Word processor	9
10	Notes for Windows	Lotus	Groupware	18
11	WFWG 3.11	Microsoft	Groupware	5
12	Access v2 for Windows	Microsoft	Database	17
13	Organizer v2 for Windows	Lotus	Pim	10
14	Windows 3.1	Microsoft	Operating system	-
15	Office v4.3 Professional Upgrade	Microsoft	Add-on	-
16	Project v4 for Windows	Microsoft	Project manager	14
17	Excel v5 for Windows	Microsoft	Spreadsheet	-
18	Anti-virus for Dos	S&S International	Anti-virus	-
19	WFWG Upgrade	Microsoft	Add-on	8
20	Mail for Windows	Microsoft	Groupware	-

Figures for March 1996, source Romtec. Business application and desktop operating systems unit sales only, OEM sales excluded.

Romtec figures are calculated by grossing up sales from resellers. If you are interested in joining Romtec's Reseller Panel and finding out how as a reseller you can benefit, call direct on: 01628 414013.