



CPU: Intel 8080 8-bit microprocessor
 RAM: 20 KB
 Keyboard: JIS keyboard with 48 keys for characters and a numeric pad (0 to 9)
 Dedicated keyboard equipped with function keys
 Display: 16 characters x 4 lines (total 128 characters: Alphanumeric/Japanese kana)
 5 x 7 dot-matrix red plasma display
 Line printer: Print speed: 84 lines/minute
 Printing method: Belt impact
 Characters per line: 80 columns
 Paper width: 10 inches
 Journal printer: For monitor lists
 Floppy disk drive: 2 slots
 Recording media: IBM3740-compatible, 8-inch disk
 Storage capacity: 256KB/slot
 Power supply: AC 90 to 110V 50/60Hz
 Power consumption: 300 W
 Dimensions, main unit: (W)950 x (D)680 x (H)845 mm
 Weight: Approx. 100 kg

Product Features

The year 1977 saw the debut of the Epson EX-1 dedicated accounting computer, billed as the world's smallest office computer. In addition to representing Epson's* first venture into the computer business, the Epson EX-1 also marked the first use of the Epson brand in an end-user-oriented product. This was therefore a very significant product for the company, even though it was only sold in Japan.

Output, which had been the Achilles' heel of previous office computers, was performed using Epson's M-2610 line printer, which came as part of the package. The M-2610 was capable of producing rapid printouts, and offered more vivid printing of characters than did serial printers. With this line printer at the heart of the system, character display and journal printer (EP-102) mechanisms were also provided. The EX-1 represented a breakthrough in that it was very easy to operate.

Another strong point was the software, which was developed on the basis of needs surveyed from accounting firms. The dedicated software provided with the system supported all daily operational requirements for accounting offices, including slip entry, journal daybooks, ledgers, totals and balances, monthly financial reports, and financial statements. It also supported depreciation, fixed-assets ledgers, payroll calculation, and year-end adjustments.

Background

Amid a market where general-purpose computers reigned, the Epson EX-1 was a rarity in that it focused on being a dedicated computer for accounting offices. Feeling as strongly about the importance of software as they did about hardware, the developers learned about bookkeeping from square one, and they also sought the views of accounting firms to learn about the features demanded and the criteria for a useful machine. All of this research, they incorporated into their work. They also brought together all of the electronics technologies that had been acquired through the miniprinter business. These factors came together in 1977 to give birth to the first office computer, the Epson EX-1.

Impact

The technology underlying the Epson EX-1 became the basis for development and sale of a dedicated computer for doctors' offices, as well as another for filling stations. Although it was only sold in Japan, the Epson EX-1 turned out to be the first of many Epson-brand products to be appreciated by users all around the world. Moreover, the development that went into the specialized accounting software is a direct forebear of today's accounting software business for the Japanese market.

*Then known as Shinshu Seiki Co., Ltd.