

however, making the introduction of new machines much easier.

Neither is there a Blitter upgrade in your immediate future, although this time we can't blame the FCC. Company sources would not reveal release dates, but the product is a certainty for 1987.

The MS-DOS box as shown was about the size of a hard disk drive. No price was mentioned, and the announcement was definitely an "announcement" as opposed to an "introduction." Atari was saying, "Hey, we can do this, guys," rather than "Get out your credit cards, folks."

### English Ingenuity

In the U.K., as in the U.S., the trend is toward using microcomputers for almost every business function, but there are still some businesses that buy more expensive minicomputers because they need multiuser capability—they want several people to be able to use a database or a program simultaneously.

To address this situation, VME Trade Organisation, a relatively new company doing what the English call "badge engineering" has put a modified ST at the heart of a new multitasking business system. On display at PCW

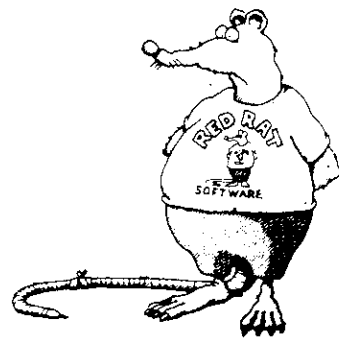
was a machine running a printer, communications software, a 20Mb hard disk, and three terminals. The system will support up to three users: one at the ST, one on a terminal attached via the modem port, and the other via a special cable plugged into the MIDI port.

VME Trade Organisation claims to have 40 retail outlets in the United States, so watch your business papers for their advertising.

### Serious MIPS

Let's talk speed. K-Max is an upgrade box that plugs into the ROM port of the ST and makes it run 10 times faster. Enticing as it is, this is not a casual purchase; it sells for about \$2300. For that money, however, you get an ST that runs at 7.5 MIPS (million instructions per second). For comparison, an Atari 800 runs at about .2 MIPS; the VAX 11-780 is rated at about 1.5 MIPS; and the Atari ST is rated at about .75 MIPS.

The heart of the upgrade is a Transputer T414 chip from INMOS, a semiconductor company owned by the British government. The INMOS Transputer in the K-Max is rated at 7.5 MIPS, and the board has space for two of them for a final rating of 15 MIPS.



The Transputer is one of the first RISC (Reduced Instruction Set) computers, computers that achieve amazing speed by doing only a few instructions and doing them all *fast*.

### What Else Is New

For those who would like to try a language that is like Basic but faster, there is a cartridge-based language called Fast ST Basic being produced by Computer Concepts. It is a complete environment which is quite fast, has a sophisticated programming editor, seven different variable types, and other features. There is also a new Forth available for the ST, GEM Forth from Microprocessor Engineering, Ltd. The most notable feature of this Forth is its multitasking capabilities.

On quite a different (but no less noteworthy) plane are some new games for the 8-bit machines from Red Rat Software. Among them are *Panic Express* (our favorite), *A Day at the Races*, *Freaky Factory*, and *Rocket Repairman*.

### Atari in Antarctica

On the non-commercial side of the show, we saw a fascinating slide show put together for PCW by Lieutenant Commander Howard Oakley, detailing the results of some of the experiments he recently conducted on Brabant Island at the South Pole.

The expedition he was with worked on more than 18 projects in Antarctica, and Oakley chose an Atari ST over a PC XT for compiling data because, "we had to prepare papers, presentations, and talk shows, and we wanted a machine that someone like myself could use—sitting and talking and illustrating points with graphics."

This year Antarctica... next year, who knows where PCW attendees will find Ataris at work. Why not plan a trip to England next September to find out?

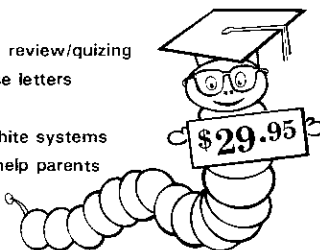
**ATARI ST\***

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