partial listing shows accounts, invoicing, and fixed assets accounting programs available. Packages exist for everything from carwashes to printers.

New Stuff

Software ported over from the IBM PC includes Cashlink ST Accounts and Hotelier--both very good looking packages, but unusable for the American market. Business systems in England use the English accounting terminology, and unless the software publisher revamps the language, the American user will feel very ill at ease (see below). One company, Silicon Chip, has produced a mouse-driven accounting package which they are selling in the U.S. It's called STAccounts.

A good example of "badge engineering" is VME trade. "Badge Engineering is a term which means taking somone else's product, modifying it a little, and engineering a fancy label for your company to stick on. VME is selling ST-based minicomputers. These are multiuser systems which can run a hard disk, a tape drive and two terminals at once. The heart of the system is the ST, to which VME adds a certain amount of hardware, and throws in their own software. The rental cost of the whole shebang is thirty pounds sterling a month ($55.00 in American money). While this story was being written, V.M.E. execs were in town for a trade show, where they claim computer store merchants were waving their American Express gold cards in eagerness.

How Software Crosses the Ocean

There are three ways for U.K. software to get to the U.S.A. in quantity: Licensing, distribution by outsiders, and overseas divisions, that is marketing it themselves. No one option rules out any of the others. A company can license its products to other publishers, have their own offices, and use more than one distributor. It all depends on how the deal is written. In licensing, the buyer makes copies of a master disk,

packages and sells the product, and pays the seller a royalty on each copy. In distribution, the package is shipped whole, i.e. disk, documentation and box all wrapped and ready to put on the shelf. An overseas division can manufacture product or just market it.

Licensing eliminates problems with shipping, storage and customs demands, but creates problems with late or false royalty payments, inadequate support, and the like. Using third-party distributors generally means that the company can take advantage of economies of scale at home, getting cheaper rates on disk duplication and the like. It also means risk and delay in shipping. Surface mail takes a minimum of two weeks to cross the Atlantic, and the faster the shipping, the higher the price. Divisions are nice, but can eat money faster than an old house.

A well-known licenser of software is Antic publishing. They buy programs, write manuals, do the packaging, the selling, and the advertising, often in their own magazine. A-Calc, one of their big sellers, is a repackaged Kuma creation. Their top guy, Jim Capparall went to the PCW show in 1985 and was back this year. "I'm just looking to see what I can bring in" he said of this year's trip. Jim is an energetic man who will talk about everything under the sun, but turns all business when confronted with a software developer.

Jerry Wolosenko runs Apex Resource, Inc., in Boston. He carries products from England now, the Metacomco and Prospero languages, the Kuma packages, the Hisoft assembler, Psygnosis' Brataccas and a few others. He came to PCW '86 to look for more titles to carry. He came back with more products from the companies he deals with now, and three new games from Paradox software. He is very pleased with English products, or he wouldn't go to the PCW shows. "You know, I'm a man of commerce" he said, laughingly. Two of the new products he has picked up are the new Psygnosis games, Deep Space and Arena. Arena is a little "too English," according to Jerry. "The messages that it puts out depend heavily on idiom." he said.

The Genesis of 1st Word:

Two Versions

Leonard Tramiel, Vice President of Software for Atari says: "The editor they had built for their assembler was halfway to a word processor already. We pointed this out to them at PCW, and GST came back to us with First Word. As far as I know, we didn't go knocking on any doors."

Jeff Fenton, the Managing Director of GST says:"We did work on the QL 68008--a basic word processor. Than along came Atari and knocked on our door. Then we got along to Sig (Sig Hartmann, then president of Atarisoft) and ran a race with DRI. We are very good at doing work very fast to a very high standard. From his point of view it was a no risk gamble. A problem that faces U.K. companies is how to get into the U.S. without spending a lot of money. So, First Word was our way. We now find US companies coming to us."