Informational Paper

A REVIEW OF HOME/FAMILY COMPUTER

RELATED MAGAZINES

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December 18, 1984
SITUATION

Youth are being exposed to computers in school. Adults are becoming involved with computers in the workplace. Television, newspapers, magazines and radio remind us of the need for computers in the home.

This barrage of computer information, promoting and exposure creates questions about the future of computers and their use in the home. With this in mind, a UWEX mid-career development grant was applied for and received in December, 1983. This study grant was to focus on the home computer market and share information on findings.

The study is being reported in two papers. The titles are "A Subjective Study of Future Computer Impact" and, "A Review of Home/Family Computer Related Magazines".

This paper deals with a review of home family computer related magazines.

OBJECTIVES

1) To identify periodicals which are available to families.

2) To review general content of magazines readily available to the public.

3) To share information on youth and family related magazines with members of the Department of Youth Development.

METHODS

The study focused on families and computers. Therefore, it was decided to examine only those sales outlets commonly available to families. The following resources were used:

1) Newsstands were periodically surveyed for family computer related magazines.

2) Current offerings from major magazine sales houses like
"Publishers Clearing House" and "American Family Publishers" were examined.

Sample issues of each magazine were selected and read to provide information on a subscription cost, intended audience, and a table of contents. No effort was made to review the many highly sophisticated computer magazines circulated within the industry. Only one user group magazine Hot Co Co was reviewed. It was included as an example of magazine support provided to purchasers by a manufacturer. Hot Co Co was also included because it is a desirable support service and several manufacturers or publishers supply a similar service.

CONCLUSIONS

A REVIEW OF COMPUTER RELATED MAGAZINES

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO YOUTH AND FAMILIES

1. Family Computing - Publisher - Scholastic, Inc.

   Annual Subscription Price - $19.97
   Cover Price - $2.50
   Currently in its second year of publication.

   The magazine is written for the home computer user. Family Computing makes an honest effort to cover the field and keep the computer hobbist up to date on what is new in the field. Most monthly issues carry 3 programs for each of the following makes of home computers: Adam, Apple, Atari, Commodore 64 and VIC-20, IBM, TI, Timex, and TRS-80.

   October, 1984 issue articles:

   - Organize Your Home, Data-Base Style
   - Your Guideline to Computer Books
   - The Never-Ending Season of Sports Software
   - Bartering Your Computer Skills
   - Buyers Guide to Printers Under $600
   - Three New Programs for Most Computers:
     1. Puzzle-Mummy Manuevers
2. Design a Costume for Your Computer
3. A Trick to Accompany Halloween
   - Product Announcements and Reviews
   - New Hardware Announcements
   - Software Guide – Quick Takes on Two Dozen New Programs
   - Home School Connection
   - Gaming Etiquette
   - Telecomputing
   - Learning Logo

2. **Discover** – Publisher – Time Inc.

   Annual Subscription Price – $22.00
   Cover Price – $2.00
   In its first year of publication.

   Discover is a general science information magazine for youth.

   Articles are well written and interesting. All issues reviewed so far
   contain a section on computers. The October 1984 issue contains the
   following interesting computer related articles:
   - Crashing Images, Not Cars
   - Consulting the Electronics Experts
   - Spinning Computer Dross Into Gold
   - Computers in the Dugout
   - Computer News

3. **K Power** – Publisher – Scholastics Inc.

   Annual Subscription Price – $8.97 (7 issues).
   Cover Price – $1.95
   Completing its first year of publication.

   K Power is written for elementary and high school age computer
   interested youth. It has some appeal for adults beginning to investigate
   the computer field. The information is basic, but good. The September/
   October issue has the following articles:
   - Loading the Data Base
   - The Lucasfilm Force
   - The Winner Is...You
   - Getting into the RAM Race
   - Buyers Guide: Joysticks
   - Programs Featuring "Dead Ringer" and "Byte Movie".
     Also "Zip" and "Glutton".
- Pixel That
- Compucopia
- Microtones
- Micronotes
- The Rating Game
- Strategy
- Logon
- Compunize
- Dr Kursors Klinik
- K-Net's Hot Summer

4. **Personal Software** - Publisher - Hayden Publishing Company, Inc.

   Annual Subscription Price - $18.00/Year
   Cover Price - $2.50
   In its second year of publication.

   This magazine makes a real effort to cover currently available software on the market. It is written for the serious hobbist and business user. Probably best suited to a person purchasing a lot of software or to the hobbist with enough dollars and enough interest to want to keep the software library "state of the art".

   The August 1984 issue contains the following articles:

   - New Releases - 126 new software packages reviewed
   - Top 20 - A critical review of the 20 best software packages
   - Test Drives - An in-depth tour of 4 significant programs
   - Buyers Guide - A comparison of over 80 data base programs

5. **Enter** - Publisher - Children's Television Workshop

   Annual Subscription Price - $12.95/Year, 10 issues
   Cover Price - $1.75
   Just entering its second year of publication.

   *Enter* is written for upper elementary and high school age youth and is aimed at approximately the same age groups as *K Power* and *Discover*. For the parent not wanting to buy all three, they might ask their children which one they like best.

   Interestingly, the table of contents is titled "Menu". The October
1984 "Menu" includes the following features, departments and programming:

- Life On-Line
- Plugging In
- Martina's High Tech Trainer
- Is there a Robot in the House
- Computers Go to College
- Feedback
- Bits
- Ask Enter
- Random Access
- User Views
- Software Scanner
- Newsbeat
- Showbeat
- Pacesetters
- Connections
- Pencil Crunchers
- Input
- Basic Training
- Basic Recommends
- Basic Glossary
- Basic Plus

6. **Hot Co Co** - Publisher - Wayne Green, Inc.

   Annual Subscription Price – $24.95
   Cover Price – $2.95
   In its first year of publication.

   The magazine is written for owners and potential owners of TRS-80 Color Computer, MC10, and Dragon users. It is reported because it is typical of some of the support efforts by family-home computer manufacturers. When purchasing a computer it would be useful to ask if similar support is available.

   May 1984 articles are:

   - OS-9 – Power for the Few
   - Where Does the Money Go
   - Ten Seconds to Touchdown (A game titled Lunar Landing).
   - Otho 3, 6 (A Reversi Game).
   - Snark (Teach young people to coordinate Geometry).
   - Colorful Cryptology - Part VIII
   - The Executive Keyboard
   - Co Co in the Chem. Lab
- Are the Stars Random? - Part I
- Kan U Spel?
- It's Sidereal Time
- Multiple Pendulums
- Micron Eye - The Gift of Sight
- Journey to the Center of the Rom - Part VII

**IMPLICATIONS**

1. Publishers believe the market for home computers is significant enough for them to invest money in servicing that market.

2. There are a variety of relatively good magazines available to the home computer user.

3. As the number of home computers increase, more magazines will be published to support this interest.

4. UWEX should be developing a strategy for providing increased information to home computer users. The strategy should recognize that the home computer industry will have a wide variety of makes and models.