

INTRODUCING THE EINSTEIN COMPUTER -----

There are two models of EINSTEIN computer. The original model - the TC01 - was introduced by Tatung in mid-1984, and is believed to be the first "home computer" to be designed round an integral disk drive and CP/M-compatibility, rather than having this added as an afterthought. The standard version came with one 3" compact floppy disk drive mounted in the front of the system box, immediately above the integral keyboard (both being to "business computer" rather than "games computer" standards of design and construction).

The system box has a flat top (to allow a TV or monitor to stand on it) and provides colour video output as standard. The standard TC01 (often affectionately called "Albert") has a single disk drive and 40-column video output, but a second integral disk drive and an 80-column video card are optional upgrades. A standard Shugart external disk drive port allows two further drives to be added. With 80-track DSDD external drives (and an upgraded Dos) installed, this provides over 2 Megabytes of disk storage.

Third-party suppliers developed 5Mb and 10Mb hard disk drives, and also a "silicon disk" to provide a RAM drive.

Commercial software packages such as Wordstar, dBASE & Supercalc were readily available, together with a range of home and business software developed specially for "Albert".

A year after the EINSTEIN TC01 was launched, the Amstrad CPC6128 (with integral disk drive and CP/M option) was put on the market, closely followed by the Amstrad PCW8256.

Tatung responded with the EINSTEIN 256 (so called because the RAM was increased from 64Kb to 256Kb) but this was designed and constructed to compete with the CPC6128 as a games machine, rather than with the PCW8256 as a serious "home-based business" computer.

You can still buy a brand-new EINSTEIN 256 from the main Einstein dealer (B&H Computers of Halifax) as an unusual and eccentric alternative to the Amstrad PCW, but they are not ideally suited to this purpose (the 256Kb of RAM is intended for graphics and sound capability and cannot readily be configured as a RAM drive), and owners report that (unlike the TC01) the single integral disk drive is prone to failure and expensive to repair.

Commercial support (and a repair service) is available for Einstein computers, and they can often be obtained at £15 to £20 at boot fairs, auctions or local ads. At this price they are a bargain buy for limited use or a first computer - even if they are sold without documentation and with little or no software - as such problems can be remedied simply & easily.