

Tandy Upgrading TRS-80 Computer

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COMPANY NEWS

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The Tandy Corporation today will introduce a replacement for the mainstay of its personal computer product line, the TRS-80 Model III.

The new TRS-80 Model 4 will have a number of improvements over the Model III, including extra memory and the ability to display 80 letters on a line of text, instead of 64. The new computer will also be able to run the popular CP/M operating system, which is an internal control program, as well as programs now used on the Model III.

Tandy, which owns and franchises the Radio Shack stores, plans to sell the new computer for \$1,000 with a display screen and 16K bytes, or roughly 16,000 alphabetic characters, of internal memory.

A more useful model with 64K bytes, or 64,000 characters, of internal memory plus two built-in disk drives and a display screen will sell for \$2,000. The Model III, with two disk drives and 48,000 characters of memory, had a list price of \$2,300, although it had recently been discounted.

Apple Improved Earlier

Tandy's move follows by a few months a similar upgrading of Apple Computer Inc.'s Apple II. In both cases the aim was to improve the price and performance of aging machines without outdating the huge

amount of software already available.

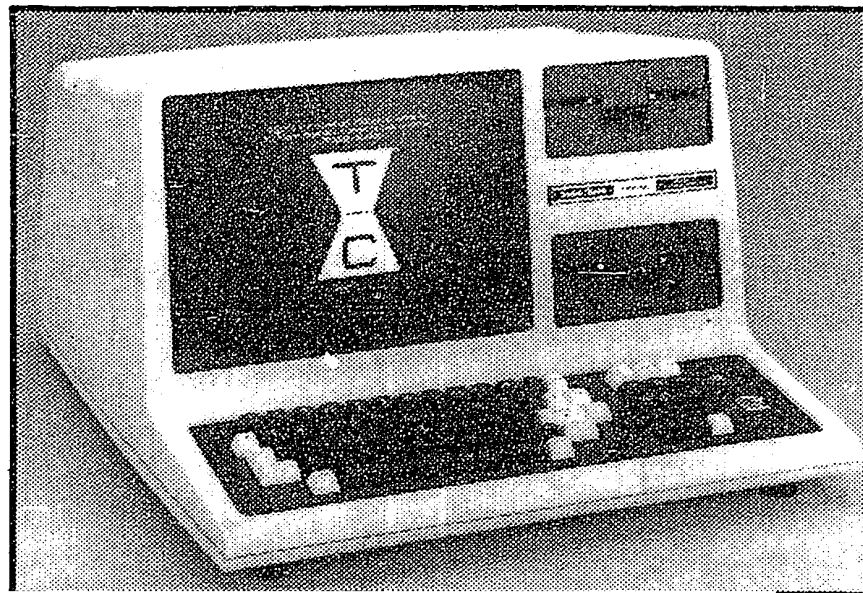
The Model III was introduced in November 1980 to replace the Model I. The product line represented 27.2 percent of Tandy's \$624 million in micro-computer-related sales in the fiscal year ended June 30, 1982. Tandy officials say there are more Model III computers in use than any other machine except the Apple II.

The Model 4 will be faster than the Model III, will have an improved keyboard with three special function keys, the ability to create sounds, and a white casing instead of the dull gray one that has frequently been criticized. The computer will have such features as a "print spooler" that will allow the computer to be used for other tasks while it is printing.

While software for the Model III can be used on the Model 4, some popular software such as the Scripsit word processing package and Visicalc were being upgraded to take full advantage of the Model 4. The company is also planning to sell an upgrade kit to turn the Model III into a Model 4. The kit will sell for \$800 plus installation.

Portia Isaacson, president of Future Computing Inc., a Dallas market research firm, said the Model III was "sorely in need of replacement, no question about that." However, she said, by remaining compatible with the Model III, the Model 4 might not be a big enough improvement.

The Model 4 will sell for about the same price as an Apple IIe with 64,000



The Tandy Corporation's new TRS-80 Model 4 personal computer.

characters of memory but only one disk drive. However, it lacks the Apple's ability to display colors — a feature that makes the Apple more suitable for consumer as well as business use. And the Model 4 uses a micro-processor capable of handling eight bits, or units, of information at a time, instead of the 16-bit processors now used in such machines as the one sold by the International Business Machines Corporation. While Tandy has computers with color and 16-bit microprocessors, they are not in the \$1,000 to \$3,000 price range.

"They need a newer generation product in that niche," Dr. Isaacson said.