The manuals for the supplied software are, for the most part, quick reference guides to the a,b,c,d,e,f of those normally sold with the off-the-shelf versions of the programs. They have mostly been changed to add Monroe's name. The hardware is documented by the guide to operations, a small guide to operations for the hard disk, a CP/M manual, and an MS-DOS manual. The Basic language has its own manual. The tutorial for the operating systems is the documentation's best feature; the rest of the documentation is up to par, but that's all. It's not exceptional.

Most of the Monroe-supplied software we examined included tutorials to help you get started.

If this sounds like the type of computer you've wanted, don't run to your local computer store asking for it. The Monroe System 2000 is available only through Monroe. You will have to call the manufacturer, Monroe Systems for Business, and ask for the phone number of the Monroe representative in your area.

The System 2000 is sold with a 90-day parts and labor warranty. Additional service is available for a cost from Monroe. The firm can provide on-site training and service for all the hardware and software you purchase from it.

On-site service, where available, is provided within one day. One service representative is assigned to your company, and Monroe says that this person is available 24 hours a day.

Monroe is providing a total computer system designed to meet the needs of small businesses. If you're looking for a single source for your hardware, software, training, and service needs, and you don't care about IBM PC compatibility, then the Monroe System 2000 could be for you. If you've already hip deep in IBM PC software, though, it's best to turn somewhere else.

KAYPRO 2X
A return to the philosophy of utilitarian computing

BY JOHN LOMBARDI

Kaypro computers became the premier representative of the generic microcomputer. Kaypro machines have since grown beyond the basics, with expansions and add-ons providing extra memory capacity, hard disk drives, and other features. Fear not, however: The transportable Kaypro 2X carries on the tradition of inexpensive utility computing.

The 2X is stark utilitarian hardware. It is sold with an impressive quantity of software and a woman to dress the Kaypro up. The package provides sufficient computing power to handle many tasks encountered by small businesses, individual professionals, school teachers, poverty-striken writers, and others whose com...
Typists will think the keyboard feels cheap — because it is cheap. Mounted in a detachable aluminum enclosure with a slotted base, the keys all work fine with a very light touch. The placement of the alphabet keys is standard Selectric. No control or special function keys appear, beyond the usual escape, tab, control, backspace, delete, and arrow keys and a numeric keypad. All keys except control keys repeat.

Will this keyboard last a long time? It's hard to tell. The constant pounding of a professional writer may wear it out, but during the period of our test, it worked fine. The computer makes a soft electronic squeak each time a key is pressed, a noise that prompts an urge to squint oil on the keyboard. Unfortunately, you have to run a basic program to turn off this noise off each time you start the machine.

The half-height drives have positive disk latches that pop the disk into position and pop it out into your hand when you open the door — a very nice touch. One of the drives on our test machine squeaked as its recording head moved back and forth across the disk and sometimes required extra time for the drive to move the head beyond the sticking point. The disk drive light stays lit on the currently selected disk drive whether it is spinning or not, and a bright red light next to the screen tells you the computer is on.

In addition to the sticky recording head, our test machine had a defective printer port that would work for only 15 minutes each morning. A friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful Kaypro telephone representative told us to return the machine to a dealer for exchange or repair. Quality control difficulties with these machines have appeared with some frequency, so be sure of your dealer's ability to support the machine before you buy it.

This machine has 64K of memory, but the rest of its technical specifications remain somewhat vague in spite of the voluminous documentation that comes with the machine. Nowhere does it indicate the difference between a Kaypro 2 and a 2X, the options available for this machine, the disk capacity, or what type of microprocessor it has. A good dealer should know these things.

We'll save you the trip, though. The Kaypro 2X differs from the Kaypro 2 in that it has two double-sided, double-density diskette drives with a capacity of 400K each. The machine uses the same 80-column character set as the IBM PC.see the IBM the u PC w conv be

The computer comes with the CP/M 2.2G operating system, a version of CP/M set up for the Kaypro. It installs easily, works flawlessly, and is — well, CP/M. It comes complete with cryptic messages, obscure commands, and the other characteristics that have endeared this operating system to a generation of computer aficionados. CP/M, of course, has all the virtues of a standard program about for the system. The amount of software that is usable on this machine is almost incredible in size, variety, and quality. If a CP/M program has no unusual hardware requirements, it will run on the Kaypro without difficulty.

Like other Kaypro computers, this machine arrives with enough software to sink any novice. Here's what you get: Digital Research's CP/M 2.2G; Microsoft's MBasic (Basic 80); and OBasic, MicroPro's WordStar, Mailmerge (3.3), Datastar, Reportstar, and Calstar; Chang Labs' Profitplan; Oasis Systems' The Word Plus (1.2); and a neat typewriter emulation program called Type-It. You also get some miscellaneous utilities and games.

This is not the place to review the capabilities and limitations of these soft-
ware packages in detail, but a few words about the combination may prove helpful. The CFIIM system includes the normal set of utility programs, including editor, assembler, and debugger. In addition, Kaypro includes a disk conversion program that will convert Kaypro disks into a wide variety of other formats. Unfortunately, this very useful utility will not convert a disk to the PC-DOS format standard for the IBM PC. This omission greatly reduces the utility of the Kaypro within the IBM PC world, and is inexcusable since such conversion utilities exist and could have been included in the grab bag of programs. The operating system disk also has a nifty configuration program that sets up various CP/M parameters for serial printers and the like.

Along with the application software, Kaypro includes some public domain games and two versions of the Basic language. MBasic is a standard microcomputer-interpreted Basic language, with wide support and many programs in the public domain. OBasic is an older version needed for some games and other programs.

The big books in this package, of course, are the major applications. Wordstar and Mail Merge, for word processing, list management, and document assembly, represent industry standards. Kaypro provides the latest version (3.3) of this program set. The spelling checker provided is Word Plus, a well-regarded program.

Complex, powerful, and difficult, MicroPro’s database management system, composed of Reportstar and Datastar, provides more than enough features for data management tasks appropriate for a computer of this capacity.

Spreadsheet calculations can be done with either Calcstar, a relatively old spreadsheet from MicroPro, or Profitplan, a slightly more recent entry from Chang Labs. Neither of these products is as professional in the art of power, flexibility, or ease of use, but both offer useful capabilities.

The documentation supplied for the software in this package all comes in the same size and color, but inside the covers Kaypro has provided reproductions of the different programs’ original software documentation. Some of it is good (the Wordstar 3.3 manuals), and some is thoroughly opaque (Datastar and Reportstar manuals). The computer itself is only modestly documented, with practically no technical information and precious little general information provided. Although there are some nice introductory manuals, they often refer to software no longer with this package or reference other versions of the computer. A knowledgeable friend could make use of this documentation much easier.

So what’s the recommendation on this machine? Well, it’s your standard issue microcomputer, with a complement of excellent to-so-so software. It can’t be expanded, it can’t do anything really fancy, but it performs word processing and basic programming very well indeed, performs database management with unspectacular competence, and manipulates spreadsheet of modest size with considerable facility.

The machine represents frozen technology. New programs for this machine are scarce, improved versions of old programs rare, and future development unlikely. But the price is right, the package works, and you can hardly get a better computing value for your money.

When your requirements grow, you will have to buy a bigger and more advanced computer. Until then, the Kaypro will do an admirable job. Its hard-edged industrial design will appeal to some, its plain competence will attract others, and its outstanding price will convince many more. If you take the Kaypro 2X for what it claims to be and are willing to invest some time to learn how to use it, this can be a most satisfactory computer.

**BUSINESS SOFTWARE**

**A Back to Basics Accounting Package for Small Businesses**

**BY CYNTHIA E. FIELD**  
Review Board

At last there’s a professional accounting package for those of you whose small business doesn’t quite fall into the Fortune 500. The maker is Peachtree Software, and its little marvel is the Back to Basics accounting system. What’s especially attractive about Back to Basics is that versions are available not just for the IBM PC but also for other popular computers — the Apple II series, the Atari 800 and 1200 XL, the Commodore 64, and the IBM PC Jr.

What’s more exciting, you won’t go bankrupt buying Back to Basics. Most versions cost just $195; the IBM PC version, $295.

The package consists of three modules, each on a separate diskette (general ledger, accounts payable, and accounts receivable). You can choose these individually or integrate them. Back to Basics is a double entry, accrual accounting system: the program conforms to generally accepted accounting practices. While its ease of use will please you, its many features should keep your accountant happy. Also, the included password protection gives your figures a measure of security.

Among its features are those you would expect from a serious accounting package. Back to Basics offers you a built-in chart of accounts, listing account names and numbers for liabilities, equity, revenue, cost of sales, and expenses. You can easily modify this standard chart to accommodate the

Cynthia E. Field, a teacher for 14 years, has instructed classes in technical writing, computers for children, electronic spreadsheets, and word processing. She is also a microcomputer consultant and a contributor to microcomputer journals.

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**InfoWorld**

**Back to Basics**

Summary: Peachtree’s accounting system for small businesses is a very capable product with a reasonable price. It can easily handle most needs of small businesses, provides complete reports, and comes with an excellent manual. Though you might want your accountant around when you first use it, it will become a breeze.

Product details: List price, $295 (IBM PC); $195 (others). Version tested available for the IBM PC and compatibles running PC- or MS-DOS. Available for other popular machines. Requires 64K RAM; two disk drives; printer. Published by Peachtree Software Inc., 3445 Peachtree Road N.E., Atlanta, GA 30326; (404) 229-3000.