

Quick Journal history: 40 years ago

By Sandra Amooore (Qsite Treasurer/Secretary)

Did you know that QSITE was once called the Computer Education Group of Queensland? The first edition of the Quick journal was published on the 1st January 1980.

The State Library of Queensland has acquired editions from the establishment of Quick. If you have previous copies QSITE would indeed love to preserve them for future information technology teachers.

Physical and software technology has changed dramatically. These changes began with significant milestones.

Internet: In the 1960 the United States Department of Defense began working on networks. By the end of 1990, Berners-Lee had built all the tools necessary for a working Web: HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and the

WorldWideWeb, the first web browser. By 1995 the Internet was able to carry commercial traffic. **Personal computer:** In 1977 the first mass marketed computers arrived: the Commodore PET, the Apple II and the TRS-80 from Tandy Corporation.

Software: An outline (algorithm), the first piece of software was written by Ada Lovelace in the 19th century. She is credited as being the first computer programmer. The first theory about software was proposed by Alan Turing in 1935.

As the Commodore, Apple II and TRS-80 began to be purchased by schools teachers were indeed lucky for the arrival of one in their classrooms in the 1980s. No networking or Internet so the future was a blank canvas. A brave new world arrived: no curriculum, no mentors and no knowledge.

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The principal of Hatton Vale State School, John Selwood, perceived Computer Literacy as two areas. Computer awareness (Table 1) and Computer programming (Table 2) refer tables below. (*Computer literacy: a suggested model for the primary school*, vol 3 no 3 Apr 1983, pages 6 & 7).

In the computer awareness strand Selwood declared that the idea that the computer is a device for playing games is to be overcome. He acknowledges that many teachers would not agree to introducing programming in the primary years because children do not have a level of abstract thinking to develop programs in a sequential manner.

Topics	Years						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What a computer is	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Following directions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vocabulary	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
What a computer can do	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Learning to use a computer	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Using a keyboard	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Computer advantages	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Computer disadvantages	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Computers in our lives	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Everyday applications	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Future	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
History	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Logic	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
How a computer works	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Parts of a computer	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hardware	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Software	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flowcharting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Storyboarding	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Formulae (variables, constants)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Relations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Binary numbers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Computer generations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Topics	Years				
	3	4	5	6	7
BASIC: PRINT	—	—	—	—	—
Variables/Constant	—	—	—	—	—
Value assignment	—	—	—	—	—
INPUT; REM	—	—	—	—	—
GOTO	—	—	—	—	—
Formulae *Maths functions)	—	—	—	—	—
STRING; DATA	—	—	—	—	—
Relations	—	—	—	—	—
IF/THEN	—	—	—	—	—
ON/GOTO	—	—	—	—	—
LOOPING	—	—	—	—	—
FOR/NEXT	—	—	—	—	—
READ/DATA	—	—	—	—	—
RANDOM Nos	—	—	—	—	—
Problem Solving	—	—	—	—	—
Functions	—	—	—	—	—

Darren Dorn of the Redcliffe High School shows school-mates, Deborah (left) and Mark Wharton, how to start action with a computer, with a little help from George Kocur of Tandy Electronics at the Tandy Educational Laboratory at the Computer Fair at Griffith University for Information Technology Week.



Is investing in the purchase of a computer worthwhile? Michael Gallagher of Heskett Primary School in Victoria (*Investigating the purchase of a computer*, no. 11 Sept/Oct 1983, pages 19 & 20) was excited by the educational opportunities for the use of this new tool. His advice for choosing the best computer for your needs:

- Choose programs which enable the children to learn by experimenting. Avoid programs that teach by telling. Books do that. Don't waste your computer by using it as an automatic page turner.
- Choose programs which allow children to learn skills in realistic contexts. Avoid programs that teach out of context. Many maths drill programs present number facts in isolation. Mathematics is an extension of our language. It enables us to mentally manipulate quantifiable aspects of our world. The mathematical tasks we set for children should always be set in contexts that relate to the world about us.
- Choose programs which develop problem solving ability requiring the use of reading, writing and computation skills. Avoid programs that promote reflex button pushing skills.

- Choose programs which permit a rich variety of user inputs. Avoid programs that accept only a single fixed word or numeral.
- Choose programs which allow children to learn from their errors. Avoid programs that cause children to fear making errors.
- Choose activities that allow the children to program the computer. Avoid activities where the computer controls the child.

I finish this article with the final words from Michael Gallagher's article from 1983, page 20.

In the future, present machines and programs are likely to be considered primitive initial attempts. Most of the development of these machines is yet to come. Nevertheless, we are at a gateway of an exciting new field of human endeavour. Computers are revolutionising our ability to access and manipulate information. I am excited by the fact that I live at this moment in human history. I feel privileged that I am able to introduce school children to computers as mind-expanding tools. I hope you too can share a similar experience.

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      A[INPUT A THOUGHT] --> B[DISPLAY: "DO I WANT THE BEST FOR MY SCHOOL?"]
      B -- NO --> C[BUY OLD TECHNOLOGY — LOSE ALL FUTURE ADVANTAGES: REDO FROM START]
      B -- YES --> D[THEN GET THE BBC MICRO AND ECONET SYSTEM FROM SOFTWARE 80]
  
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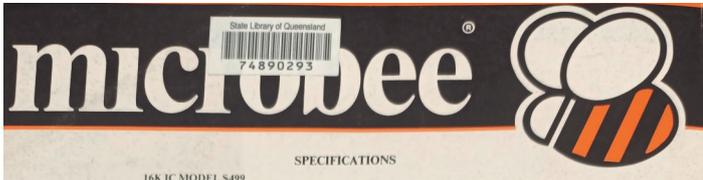
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SPECIFICATIONS

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32K IC MODEL S599 MICROBEE 32K PLUS MODEL S559 CPU: Z80A Clock Speed: 2MHz VDU Display: 16 lines by 64 characters (upper and lower case) Low resolution 128 by 48 (fandy compatible) High resolution 512 by 256 (PCG 128 limit) Text: Microworld BASIC (16K) in ROM Graphics: 32K user RAM (CMOS non-volatile battery backup) Firmware: Full size 60 key positive travel (QWERTY layout). Built-in software controlled at 1200 and 300 baud. Memory: RS232, 1200 and 300 baud software controlled. Keyboard: 8 BIT programmable input or output. Cassette Interface: Built-in loudspeaker programmable under BASIC. Serial I/O: 1V P to P composite video with negative sync. Parallel I/O: 12V1A external power pack.	MICROBEE DISK DRIVE UNIT 1 to 4 drives Microbee 64K. CPM 2.2. 38K formatted per drive. Soft-sectored double sided/double density. Full CPM 2.2 with support utilities WordBee, EDASM, Microworld BASIC, educational, games, communications and diagnostic utility programs.

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