WaPUG AUTUMN MEETING

5 NOVEMBER 1985   BIRMINGHAM

MicroWASSP

1. The original version of WASSP was designed for mainframe computers
    and was released in source code to be mounted by the receiving
    organisations. Whereas mainframe WASSP is now being used by over
    55 separate organisations it was clear that

    (a) maintenance of the code on-site was not straightforward;

    (b) some users were having difficulties in getting access to
         their computers; and

    (c) WASSP was far from being user-friendly as regards data input
         and program selection.

    For these reasons HR decided to explore the possibility of mounting
    the software on 16-bit microcomputers.

2. The basic design of MicroWASSP was done for a Sirius 1 micro, which
    was the market leader at the time. Program menu, data capture and
    edit and graph plotting programs were developed together with
    front-ends for each of the five main programs in WASSP. MS DOS was
    used to package the several resulting programs together with a help
    facility.

3. The interest shown in the Sirius version prompted HR to develop
    next a similar version for the Apricot Xi, and then for the IBM XT.
    Each step has meant additional coding because of the differences in
    screen handling between the machines.

4. The latest addition to the MicroWASSP family is the IBM version.
    This runs on an IBM XT with a colour or mono screen and with 512K
    bytes, 8087 maths co-processor, MS DOS and an Epson FX 80/100
    printer. The price is £4 600 + VAT with discounts for multiple
    copies. This is the same price as for the Sirius 1 and Apricot Xi
    versions, and includes the licence, documentation and first year's
    maintenance. Maintenance includes support in using the software
    over the phone and by letter, corrections to the software if
    necessary, and supply of updates.

5. Generally updated software will be issued at a minimum of six
   monthly intervals as appropriate. If a user identifies a
   particular bug which prevents the completion of a given task and if
   there is no alternative route round the problem, we will undertake
   to supply the user with an individual update. We have also been
   hoping to issue a user note at more regular intervals in which we
   give problems identified by users prior to the next update. As yet
   this has not been done, but we hope to begin this service shortly,
   following the release of the IBM XT version.

6. For ease of maintenance we recommend that users send us a diskette
   containing the data which caused the failure of a given MicroWASSP
   program, together with a clear and concise description of the way
   it failed, particularly any message which appeared on the screen
   and the steps taken by the user up to the time of program failure.
   We can then identify the source of the problem ourselves. If the
   problem is one of incorrect data the solution will be given over
   the phone and then in writing. If the problem involves amendment
   to the software we will follow the approach above. As from 1
   November 1985 we will endeavour to reply to such user problems
   within ten working days. If a longer time is required the user
   will be informed accordingly.

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