



Over The Rainbow

Some home computers can be expanded into sophisticated machines with a variety of add-ons. We take a Spectrum to its limits

Microdrive

The Microdrive uses cartridges containing an endless loop of tape, any given point of which passes the read/write head every seven seconds. Information transfer takes place at 6 Kbytes per second (four times the speed of normal cassette players), and up to eight Microdrives can be connected together, as shown, to give a total capacity of 700 Kbytes or more

Acoustic Coupler

The Micro-Myte 60, shown here, enables one computer to communicate with another

Keyboard

Fuller's FDS keyboard, shown here, provides function keys and a full-sized space bar

Joysticks

Using Sinclair's Interface 2, any joystick that uses the Atari interface can be accommodated, no matter what its operating principles are. Interface 2 has provision for two joysticks to be coupled at any time

RAM Pack

The smaller 16 Kbyte Spectrum can be upgraded by the addition of a 32 Kbyte add-on RAM cartridge

When it was introduced in early 1982, the Sinclair Spectrum was hailed as a real price and performance breakthrough. In 1983, its first full year of production, Spectrum sales (600,000 units) accounted for more than half the number of home computers sold in the United Kingdom, which surprised even the manufacturers. The Spectrum was certainly a vast improvement on Sinclair's earlier ZX81 model, with 16 or 48 Kbytes of RAM as standard; eight colours for border, background and text, and a limited high-resolution graphics capability; an improved — but still ungainly — keyboard; and the ability to generate simple sounds. But all these different facilities did not prevent independent manufacturers from producing a wide range of accessories. Sinclair itself has also been active, adding mass storage, in the form of the Microdrive, and interfaces for plug-in ROM cartridges and joysticks.