Built-in Joystick
A disc with a joystick handle replaces the conventional set of arrow keys

SPECTRAVIDEO 318

PRICE
Approx £200

DIMENSIONS
410×220×80 mm

CPU
Z80

MEMORY
32K of RAM, of which around 12K is available for BASIC programs.
32 Kbytes ROM

SCREEN
24 rows of 40 columns text, with 256×192 high resolution graphics in 16 colours and with sprite graphics facilities. An 80-column option is available for business work

INTERFACES
Expansion connector, cartridge port, joystick ports (2)

LANGUAGES AVAILABLE
BASIC

KEYBOARD
Rubber pressure pad, with function and editing keys and built-in joystick/cursor pad

DOCUMENTATION
Skimpy and prone to error, but the arrival of other MSX machines should encourage independent publications.

STRENGTHS
MSX features including an excellent BASIC, sprite graphics, a full keyboard and built-in joystick. Expandability, especially the ability to grow into a full CP/M business computer.

WEAKNESSES
Shortages of software. No printer interface as standard. Needs dedicated cassette recorder

I/O Controller
An 8255 chip looks after interfaces such as the joystick ports

Sound Chip
Three-voice sound is generated by an 8910 chip

Display Chip
A hastily-added heat sink conceals a 9929 display chip. Such 'kludges' are often necessary on early versions of machines

RAM
16 RAM chips provide 32 Kbytes of RAM

Unusually for a new computer, the 318 requires its own brand cassette recorder. This pushes up the price of the system, although it should make for greater reliability and speed in storing and recalling information.

One of the most attractive features of the 318 is its capacity for expansion. With the addition of the super-expander, 64 Kbytes of RAM, the 80-column card and a disk drive, you have a small CP/M business computer, with access to professional business software. However, it is difficult finding programs that are compatible with the Spectravideo's disk format. This will remain a problem while the machine is new and relatively unknown, but should diminish if the machine becomes popular.