

Tandy MC-10

Although clearly designed to be low in price this computer offers good colour, and many features of more expensive machines

Reset Button

Because it's large and bright red, the reset button is much easier to find than on some other machines. When using the MC-10, take care not to bump the back of the machine too hard here

Cassette Interface

Remote control is provided through this five-pin DIN plug or pins 1 and 3. Signal input is on pin 4, output on 5, and the signal ground is on pin 2

System Bus

This is not explained in the manual, though it is obviously intended to be used with some unspecified expansion units. There are, however, enough lines to handle some complex devices

ROM

This is soldered firmly onto the board, and so is not likely to be replaced with upgrades or alternatives. The Microsoft BASIC is stored on the 8 Kbytes of ROM

The Tandy MC-10 is a compact little machine that achieves a lot using a few sophisticated chips. The keyboard is a button-type, though slightly larger than others of that kind, and possesses a proper space bar. Other features make the machine quite easy to use. Single-key BASIC keyword entry, for example, is achieved by holding the CONTROL key down while pressing the desired function key. The machine also defaults to 'all capitals' mode when it's switched on, and the lower case mode is a toggle — activated by pressing SHIFT 0, and de-activated by pressing the same keys again.

The screen display is smaller than that of most other home computers. There are only 16 lines of 32 characters, and only fairly low resolution graphics can be achieved. The display has other shortcomings as well, including rather limited colour facilities, although the quality of the colour is very good. Most surprisingly, it will not display lower case characters, which are recognised but shown as inverse upper case letters instead. Text can only be green on black or vice versa, and though the block-graphic symbols may be in any one of nine colours, either the letter or the

Tandy MC-10 Keyboard

The keyboard is a button-type, but it's better than many. The keys are hard plastic with engraved legends that take longer to wear off, and there's a real space bar. Unfortunately, there's only one SHIFT key, which is placed on the right-hand side, and the large button on the left is the more conveniently positioned CONTROL key. The feel of the keys is comfortable, but they are not suitable for speed-typing

RS232 Interface

This is also a DIN plug, but is constructed of four pins. Carrier detect is on pin 1, receive data on pin 2, ground is on pin 3 and transmit data on pin 4

CPU

Unusually, the Tandy MC-10 uses a 6803 processor, rather than one of the more popular types. This processor is a member of one of the older families, and isn't as well-known as the 6502 or Z80. However, it's a useful 8-bit chip with a reasonable instruction set

Static RAM

The nominal 4 Kbytes of user RAM is held on these two 2 Kbytes x 8-bit static RAM chips, as are the screen RAM and some system variables

6847 VDP

In common with many other machines, the screen is controlled by a special chip, which in this case is the MC 6847 Video Display Processor. This chip is the same as that used in the Dragon 32, and (in theory at least) can be programmed for different screen formats. In practice, however, this is seldom done