



Green screen video monitor from Altronics

Altronics Pty Ltd has available the Micron 12, a quality 30cm green phosphor video monitor suitable for use with computers of all types. Features of the monitor include a 20MHz bandwidth and operation from the mains or 12V DC battery pack, with power consumption of 40W.

Front panel controls are provided for power, contrast and brightness and by turning the contrast control fully down and the brightness control up an inverse video mode is activated, producing black characters on a green background. In the inverse mode the green background extends the full width of the screen but not completely to the top or bottom of the display. The review unit also showed a distracting flickering line at the lower right side of the screen in this mode but we understand this will be eliminated in production units.

The contrast and brightness controls provide a limited range of adjustment of the inverse display before the screen reverts to the normal mode. Normally the display would be used in the green-on-black mode, with the contrast and brightness controls providing a range of adjustment of the display for various lighting conditions.

The face-plate of the screen is of plain

glass rather than a non-glare material so normal attention will need to be paid to lighting and positioning.

The power switch is a push on/push off type and a red LED power-on indicator is provided. Since the monitor circuitry suppresses noise when there is no video input the screen is completely dark in the absence of a video signal and the monitor appears to be off. The power-on indicator is thus a useful feature as it reduces the possibility that the monitor could inadvertently be left on after the computer has been switched off.

Height/linearity and horizontal and vertical hold controls are pre-set potentiometers accessible from small cut-outs in the rear panel of the unit. Also at the rear is the RCA socket for a composite video signal input and an output for 12V DC, able to provide up to 1.1A. This output is an added attraction of the monitor, ideal for powering the Microbee or any other computer which normally uses a plug pack or special mains adapter.

Although there is a speaker grille on the front of the cabinet there is no provision for a volume control and no speaker behind the grille.

The unit accepts a composite video signal at up to 4V peak to peak with



negative going sync.

The review unit was provided without documentation, so we cannot comment on this aspect of the Micron 12.

The wide bandwidth of the Micron monitor provides a crisp, clear display of characters and graphics, even in an 80 column format, and the picture quality is excellent, with none of the interference and waviness associated with television sets driven by an RF modulator.

Price of the unit is \$199.50, from Altronics, PO Box 8280, Stirling St, Perth, WA 6000. Altronics now offer a 24 hour, seven days a week phone order service for bankcard holders and a "next day" delivery service to anywhere in Australia for just \$4.50 (items up to 10kg).

New low-cost computer has colour graphics, sound effects



Dick Smith Electronics has introduced a new low-cost personal computer, the VZ-200. Features of the unit include a Z80A processor, eight colour graphics, sound effects, Microsoft Basic in 16K of ROM and both RF and composite video outputs for connection to a standard television set or a colour monitor.

Perhaps the most exciting feature however is the price — just \$199, a new low for a colour computer.

The VZ-200 has a 45 key typewriter style keyboard with pushbutton switches (not membrane switches). As the announcement from Dick Smith Electronics puts it "In keeping with the simplified format, the confusing number of switches and controls have been kept to a minimum".

Text is displayed in 32 lines of 64 columns each and graphics resolution is 128 x 64 (horizontal by vertical). Cursor-controlled editing and an inverse video facility is provided as standard and the interpreter allows single key entry of Basic keywords.

As standard, the VZ-200 has 8K of user programmable memory built-in. A 16K memory expansion module is available for \$79 which increases this RAM to 24K, plugging into the expansion socket at the rear of the unit.

A cassette interface is standard and a separate printer interface module (\$49.50) allows a printer to be connected to the computer.

The VZ-200 is available from any of the 37 Dick Smith stores nationwide.