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PS/2 servers to get Pentium, RAID

BY CATE CORCORAN

IBM will soon install higher end system management and reliability features into its PS/2 Model 85 and 95 servers.

In August or September, the 95 will also be upgraded with the Pentium chip, a RAID controller, and SCSI 2 for better performance, said David Saxby, general manager of server systems for the IBM PC Co.

In particular, the Model 95 will gain internal Fast SCSI redundant drives capable of supporting Fast RAID Level 5.

Previously, extra drives were available externally.

The Model 85 and 95, which currently have limited system management and remote management features, will gain more management capabilities in the third quarter, said Dave Andonian, the director of premium brands for the IBM PC Co.

The Model 85 will also get support for SCSI 2, Andonian said.

The two-channel Model 95 will support a total of seven drives, including a 4mm tape drive and a CD-ROM drive.

Hard files will be mounted on a hot-insertion tray, enabling users to replace a defective drive without shutting down the system.

The system will automatically configure to the appropriate drive bay, which takes about 15 minutes, Saxby said.

The Model 95, a 64-bit system, will support 540MB SCSI II fast files or three 1-gigabyte drives, Saxby said.

The Model 95 will come in three processor models based on the 60-MHz Pentium, the 66-MHz Pentium, and Intel's 486DX2/66.

A 4MB write-back and write-through cache will be standard on the 95 server.

The Model 95 will also ship with a new Express Parallel Port, which sends 2MB of data per second directly to two eight-page-per-minute laser printers to reduce LAN traffic.

All the PS/2 servers will ship standard with a 256KB L2 cache, and the Model 95 will have 16MB of error-correcting memory and Super VGA graphics.

The Model 95 will also offer C2-level security. It will come with a "logic lock," which, when enabled, will suspend operation if the system's front covers are forced open.

Prices should be competitive with Compaq Computer Corp.'s ServerPro line.

All the servers in the PS/2 line will support Windows NT when it is available, according to Saxby.

The company will also begin to move symmetric multiprocessing capabilities to its line, Saxby said.

IBM, headquartered in Armonk, N.Y., can be reached at (914) 765-1900.

Model 95 features

- Pentium processor with L2 cache
- As many as seven drives
- Fast RAID 5 SCSI
- Hot insertion, redundant drives
- ECC memory
- Fast printer port
- C2 security

Seiko is offering users a faster method of printing with its ColorPoint line, priced from $7,499 to $10,999.

Seiko's printers offer fast image capture

VSX configuration lets users directly link monitor to printer

BY KELLEY DAMORE

Seiko Instruments USA Inc. last week introduced two color thermal printers and a dye-sublimation printer for the CAD/CAM, geophysical, and medical imaging markets.

The VSX Series printers use a video interface instead of serial, parallel, or SCSI interfaces to connect to a system.

Dubbed the VSX Video Interface System, the configuration provides the user with a direct hardware link from the monitor to the printer. A video bus adapter (VBA) connects each display to the system, providing a separate remote control.

The VBA and the printers are connected with video bus cables in a serial daisy chain, and as many as 16 individual stations can be connected to one or two VSX printers.

The ColorPoint VSX Model 4 and Model 14, both thermal wax transfer printers, offer 300 dot-per-inch (dpi) resolution and can print on A, legal, A4, B4 sized paper. The color ranges from 1.4 million to 16.7 million colors.

The Professional ColorPoint VSX, the dye sublimation version, also offers a 300-dpi resolution and can print as many as 16.7 million colors.

The printers feature a fast image capture that allows an image to be captured and printed in 4 seconds. Therefore, the user does not have to wait until a print job is complete to resume work.

With the multitiling feature, between two and 14 images can be printed on one page.

The Professional ColorPoint VSX and the ColorPoint VSX start at $10,999 and $7,499, respectively.

Seiko, in San Jose, Calif., can be reached at (800) 888-0817.

Flash memory may cost less, replace disk drives

BY TOM QUINLAN

A ramp up in the production of flash memory, or static RAM (SRAM), will determine just how widely the memory will be used in replacing such common peripherals as hard disk drives.

Until now, the nonvolatile, expensive memory has been used primarily for high-speed cache and for use with subnotebook devices incapable of supporting standard hard drives.
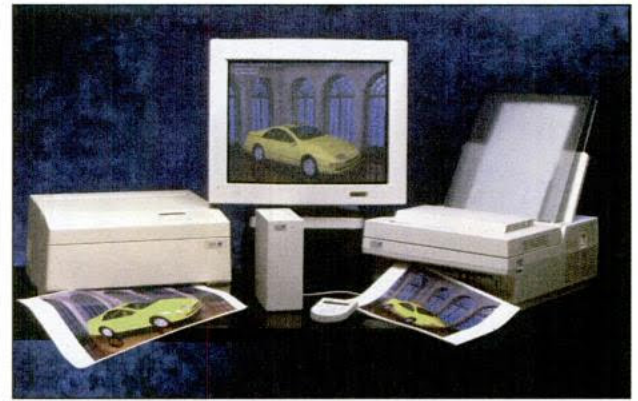
Although Intel and other flash memory proponents — including AT&T, Advanced Micro Devices Inc., and Toshiba

Corp. — had touted other benefits of the memory, such as a lack of moving parts, low-energy use, and durability when compared with standard devices, the memory chip's price was a hurdle.

When first introduced, a 10MB PCMCIA memory card listed for $1,000, severely limiting the uses for the memory.

But Intel said enough flash memory fabrication plants are coming on line to meet the existing demand for the memory as well as support new uses for the memory design.

By 1994, supply will outstrip

demand for the first time, Intel officials said.

By the end of this year, Intel and its manufacturing allies will be turning out 1Mb, 4Mb, and 8Mb versions of the chip, which should drastically lower the per-megabit cost for the memory, officials said.

Another factor in lowering the cost of the memory will be a lower wafer size used in manufacturing the memory.

Intel has already converted its flash memory plant from a 1-micron process to a 0.8-micron process, thereby increasing the number of memory chips each

wafer can produce. That plant will also begin producing 2Mb and 4Mb boot block chips in 1994.

Sharp, an SRAM manufacturing and development partner with Intel, will have on-line in the fourth quarter a manufacturing plant for 8Mb SRAM chips that use a 0.6 micron process.

The NPNX plant, owned by Nippon Steel and another Intel partner for Flash Memory products, is already producing 8Mb chips using the 0.8 micron process, according to Intel officials.