

FOR THE NEW /// OWNER

This is the first in a series of occasional articles in helping "new" owners of Apple ///'s.

Many Apple ///'s have been finding their way from corporations and buisnesses to individuals, small buisnesses and non-profit organizations.

WHAT DO YOU REALLY NEED

You have just purchased your brand new (to you) Apple //. You did not get much beyond the box that the disk drive is in with the keyboard attached with the monitor sitting on top. The question is, "What do I need to be really functional on this machine?"

There is no RIGHT answer, but here is some suggestions for a system. In my OPINION, this is the "minimum Apple // system", if you want full use from the machine.

1. 256K, not 128K RAM.
2. 2 disk drives (ie internal and 1 external).
3. System Utilities, versions 1.1 and 1.2
4. 3 Easy Pieces.
5. Printer
6. A full function Word Processor w/spelling checker.
7. Apple][Emulation disk.
8. An Apple]["Nibble copier"

And if you want ease of use and flexibility.

9. A hard disk (5 Meg minimum, 10 Meg better)
10. Catalyst (a must with the hard disk).
11. PowerKeys.
12. Titan /// +][card.
13. A printer buffer or print spooler.

The absolute minimum system might be 128K with one disk drive, if you bought a "turnkey system" where the program you will be using, say a word processor, is already configured to your system and your printer that came with it. You could sit down type your letter, format a disk, save the file, and print out the file to your printer. In the days of "dealer support" you probably could have gotten away with this for a while. However, this is not very practical now.

Item number 1. 256K ram (random access memory), because the more powerful programs for the A/// require 256K or don't work that well without it. I bought my first 256K A/// when I got tired of running out of ram with my Advanced Visicalc models and with the 700 line limit for text in Word Juggler. BPI Accounting requires 256K as does Catalyst. Next month we may have a source for cheap 256K upgrade boards and the instructions on how to install them for those of you who still have the 128K boards.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: On Three sells 256k upgrade kits.

Number 2, Two disk drives. With most programs you can live with one disk drive, but when you have to make a backup copy of one of your original disks

with a bit copier, you will think very vile thoughts at your lone disk drive. Some A/// programs will not run without two disk drives or are very inconvenient.

Number 3, System Utilities. This is the basic system software. You also need the documentation that goes with it, The Owners Guide and the Standard Device Drivers Manual. For reasons I will not go into presently you need both Versions 1.1 and 1.2. The accompanying disk from Apple was the System Utilites Data. System Utilites has the ability to copy files, copy disks, delete files, lock/unlock files, and work with your SOS driver file. More on the SOS driver file later.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: System Utilites is available from the PD library.

Number 4, Three Easy Pieces. This "integrated" program has Word Processing, Spreadsheet, and a Filing program. The word processor is a "what you see is what you get" type and while not the most powerful WP program, it is easy.

The spreadsheet is fast, easy to use and better than the original Visicalc ///. The spreadsheet can read in old Visicalc files or DIF files. The filing (database) program is an improved version of Quickfile, is easy to use, fast sorting and able to read your old Quickfile data files, DIF files or ASCII files. A strong point in this programs favor is that it is identical in function to Appleworks, the best selling program on the A// series. There are many books on how to use AppleWorks that can be used directly with the A///. This newsletter is done on 3EZP as is the mailing list for ATUNC.

Number 5, A printer. For a computer to be useful, you will need a printer. Words or numbers also seem to end up on paper. Whether you get a letter quality or a dot matrix will depend on your needs. Sooner or later you will probably get both. For business correspondence you will need a letter quality (daisy wheel type). For graphics and speed, dot matrix printers have the edge. The new dot matrix printers with "near letter quality", almost bridge this gap. My preference is for a letter quality for letters and a wide carriage for the dot matrix for spreadsheets.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: For a cheap printer that works well with your ///, try the Seikosha SP1000A (or S). See "Computer Shopper" for best prices.

Number 6, A Word Processing program. As much as I like 3EZPieces, I feel that you will need a dedicated word processing program. My personal favorite is Word Juggler from Quark; however, AppleWriter /// has its own strong points and there are others on the market with their own following. What do these programs do better than 3EZP, that make it worth the extra money? Word Juggler and AW /// Version 2.0 both have spelling checkers, 3 EZPieces does not. The ability to format and edit is enhanced in the dedicated programs beyond 3 EZPieces capabilities.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: The 4.1 version of Applewriter is in the /// SIG PD. (It is 3WDP.01 and its tutorial disk is 3WDP.05) 3EZPs now has its own spellchecker called StemSpeller and is available from On Three.

Number 7, The Apple][emulation disk. This comes with your A/// and allows you to access the largest variety of computer programs on microcomputers. This allows you to run 48K A][games, utilities, and educational software. The emulator is not perfect, as it does not allow you to get the newer 64K or 128K programs, or those that require 80 display, but it is still very useful.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: Two versions of the emulation disk are in our PD.

Number 8, An Apple][nibble copier. In a world of computer dealers who do not even know what an Apple /// is and of companies that have gone out of business (Visicorp) or transferred support of the Apple /// (Apple Computer to Sun Data), you need to keep backups of your original software. Much of this software is "copy-protected", meaning System Utilities will not make you a backup copy that will work. Copy][+ Version 4.3 or 4.4, Locksmith Version 5.0, or Essential Data Duplicator (EDD) all work in the 48K Apple][emulation mode. The later version of these programs Copy][+ 5.x or 6.x or Locksmith 6.x require 64K.

That is the end of the list of my essentials. You would probably add to the list based on your own specific needs, like an Accounting package or languages, but I think this covers the basics. Now the items that I feel make life much easier.

Number 9, A hard disk. SOS, the Apple /// operating system, was designed with a hard disk in mind. A 5 megabyte hard disk will hold 37 A/// floppies of data as well as access it faster. The price has dropped from \$2500+ for 5 Megs to \$500 for the same capacity. Especially combined with Catalyst, once you have one you can not live without it.

Number 10, A hard disk selector program. Catalyst, from Quark, has been on the market the longest, but Selector /// has recently been released by On Three. See last months newsletter for a short comparison of the two programs. Both of these programs allow one to place your applications, like 3 EZPieces, on the hard disk and boot them from there. This makes for a faster boot process and allows one to leave the originals stored out of harms way.

Number 11, PowerKeys. This keyboard macro program allows you to program "macros" into your A/// keyboard. In writing this article I type Solid Apple and T to get "3 EZPieces". Powerkeys has many little utilities that make big tasks into small ones. This program was demo'd at the March meeting.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: This background utility is now in the WAP /// SIG PD. On Three makes a better version, called Desktop Manager.

Number 12, The Titan /// +][card. This gives your A/// 64K Apple][+ emulation. It also allows a 128K ramdisk in the A/// mode. 64K allows running most of the current A][and A//e programs. It does not work for programs that require 80 columns or 128K. There is a Titan /// + //e card available, that allows 80 column and 128K, but it takes 2 slots and in my opinion is overpriced.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: The Titan ///+/// card is no longer available.

Number 13, A print buffer or a spooler. A buffer is a device where your print output goes before it is printed. Most printers have a 2K buffer, while most buffers have at least 64K. A print spooler is limited only by the amount of storage space on the disk you spool to. One advantage of a buffer is that you can take output from your serial port and send it to a parallel printer simply by having a serial to parallel buffer.

Besides this basic set of hardware and software there is a very wide selection of products for the Apple ///. These include:

LANGUAGES --If you want to program in Basic, then you will need Business Basic (available from our public domain library). The latest debugged version is 1.23. There are two manuals that go along with Business Basic.

Business Basic runs in the native A/// mode. If you want to run an Apple][

Applesoft Basic program, you will need an Emulation Disk. This disk allows you to "emulate" a 48K Apple][.

Also in our library is Pascal and Fortran. Fortran requires the Pascal compiler. Not in the public domain is Modula 2. The /// Magazine is trying to get the license to market this program. Cobol is also available commercially.

GRAPHICS--There are several graphics programs available for the Apple ///. Business Graphics (not recommended), DrawOn3 (recommended, a MacPaint like program), PFS Graph, Graph-n-Calc and several others.

SPREADSHEETS--The best Spreadsheet for the ///, even though it is slow, is Advanced Version Visicalc (AVC); however, Visicorp is gone and AVC is not public domain. Copies can be found at swap meets occasionally. Multiplan and Desktop Plan were available for the /// in native mode, but never were that popular. [3 Easy Pieces also has a spreadsheet. Editor].

TELECOMMUNICATIONS-- Access ///, Terminus, MicroCourier and several other communications programs are available for the A///. Access /// has rough edges, but can get it done in almost every situation. Terminus runs from within Word Juggler, is fast, but sometimes too fast. MicroCourier runs a distant third for number of users. There are two other programs called Data Capture and Easy Term but members have had trouble with both.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: We have Access /// in our PD, as well as XMODEM /// (which is easy to use has offers the more advanced XMODEM protocol.)

DATABASES--There is a wide variety of "database" programs that were written for the ///. The majority of them have some problems. For simple files 3 EZPieces does a good job. For a more complex database, I would probably suggest that you jump to Omnis 3. The programs in between like Keystroke and VersaForm all have various problems or disadvantages. /// Magazine sells a database called Data Base /// which seems straightforward but is not as complex as the others.

HARDWARE--A wide variety of hard disks, a 572K 5 1/4" floppy (MicroSci A-143), and the 800K Apple Unidisk 3.5 micro floppy are (were) all available for A///. A wide variety of printer interfaces (Grappler and Pkaso) are also available for the ///. Plotters, modems, and printers will all work on the A/// with the right driver. The problem with hardware is that if the manufacturer does not produce it, there none available. The Titan /// +][card, as well as the /// + ///e card expand the variety of Apple // programs available for use. The 512K board is available for those user of large spreadsheets or accounting packages.

WAP /// SIG NOTE: On Three still sells a number of hard disks that work well with your Apple ///. The 512k upgrade is no longer available (tho people are placing their name on a waiting list). A company called GR&D sells the Titan ///+///e cards (1-313-677-4122).

The main point is that even though the A/// is orphaned by Apple, there is already a wide variety of products available for the A/// and still some more on the way from independant software and hardware developers.

The list I developed is one of many possible configurations of software and hardware. Your own needs will drive you into your own personal setup. My opinions of the various other hardware and software available for the /// probably are not concurred with by some other A///ers, but that is what makes us unique. After all some people like IBM's. I plan to expand on the description of the various types of packages available at a later date. If you disagree with what I have written, please let me know and we will be glad to publish it in a later newsletter.

-- Rod Whitten