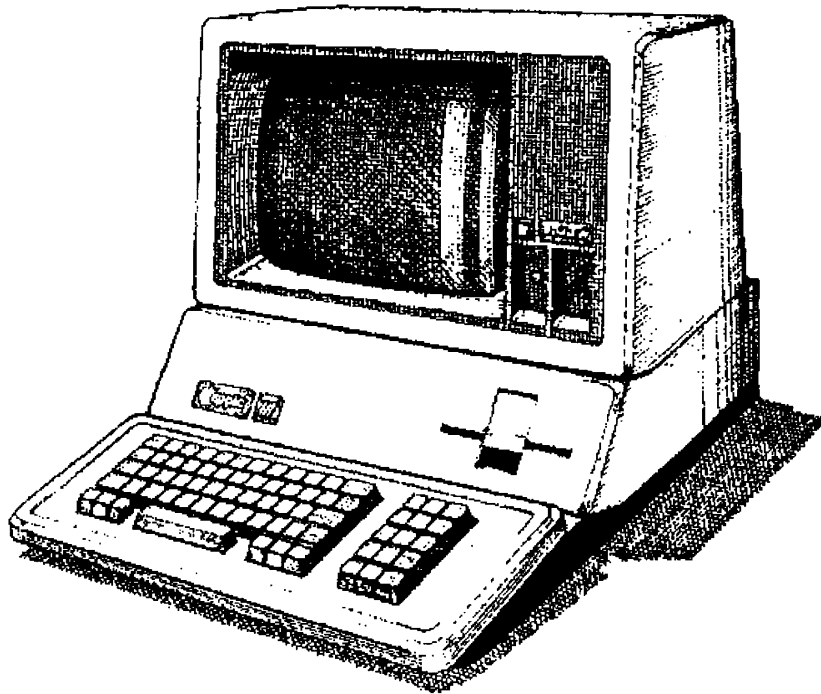




Apple /// Computer Information



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REVIEW : /// E-Z PIECES

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/// E-Z Pieces

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could enter information in your spread sheet model, select certain data from the model using the data base function, and then have pie charts drawn from this data using the graphics function. Thus, instead of buying separate software packages for each application, all you need is one integrated software package.

both easy to learn and easy to use. If you know Quick File ///, then you'll learn /// E-Z Pieces within an hour. But even if you aren't familiar with Quick File ///, you'll still be amazed at how easy it is to learn this integrated software package.

One can almost learn this software package without having to read the manual. The manual, by the way, was quite a disappointment. No tutorial was included, and the manual seemed to have been edited in haste. Luckily, the /// E-Z Pieces user doesn't have to read the entire manual to learn to use the programs.

There are many built-in features which allow the user to learn /// E-Z Pieces. For example, press the Open-Apple key and "?" anywhere in the program and you'll get instant, on-line help. Every screen in /// E-Z Pieces reminds you of where you are, what you can do, and where to go. This information, displayed on the top and bottom lines of your screen, assures you that you'll never be lost in a maze of menu commands. And, you'll find that with /// E-Z Pieces, learning one application leads you to learn the other applications in less time. Many of the commands are the same across the various applications.

Wouldn't it be nice if there were an integrated software package which combined the three most used applications for personal computing: word processing, database management, and spread sheet?

/// E-Z Pieces, an integrated spread sheet, word processing, and data base software, was developed for the Apple /// by Rupert

Lissner. (A version of /// E-Z Pieces available for the Apple //e is called AppleWorks.) Many Apple /// users may already be familiar with another one of Rupert Lissner's software packages, Quick File ///, a database management program.



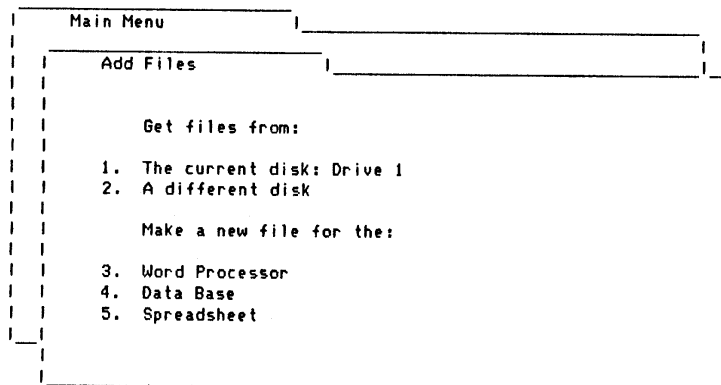
Review by Albert Chu

Integrated software.

This latest buzzword in the personal computer industry is emerging everywhere -- in computer stores, magazines, and trade shows. In fact, "visitors to the West Coast Computer Faire," reported the San Francisco Examiner last March, "(were) astonished at the number of new integrated software products now on the market."

Integrated software allows you to perform several applications with one program, letting you transfer data from one application to another. For instance, the popular 1-2-3 program from Lotus Development is an integrated spread sheet, graphics, and data base program. With it, you

Disk: Drive 1 ADD FILES Escape: Main Menu



Type number, or use arrows, then press Return

166K Avail.

Easy-to-Learn, Easy-to-Use

Compared to other integrated software packages, /// E-Z Pieces is

Because of its analogies to familiar concepts, /// E-Z Pieces is easy-to-use. Your screen is analogous to a desk top; your disk directories to file

folders; and your data files to pieces of paper in the folder. For example, when you boot /// E-Z Pieces, a "file folder," containing a variety of menu choices, appears on your "desk top," with the words "Main Menu" written on the file folder tab. And if you choose "1. Add files to the desktop", another file folder pops up, lying on top of the first folder, with an "Add Files" tab and more menu choices (see figure).

/// E-Z Pieces truly utilizes the Apple /// operating system's power in creating an easy-to-use integrated software package. For instance, you can not only list or delete files from a data disk, but also format a blank disk or create a subdirectory on a data disk. And as long as you have the proper drivers configured, /// E-Z Pieces allows you to print on ten different types of printers, ranging from the Apple Imagewriter to the Epson MX series. These ten printer specifications are standard; you may add custom printer specifications, too.

Now that we've seen some of the features which explain why E-Z is part of this software package's name, let's turn to some of the features of the three application pieces.

Word Processor

Unlike other integrated software packages, /// E-Z Pieces centers around the word processor application. Compared to other word processors, the one in /// E-Z Pieces is fairly powerful.

The power in this word processor can be seen through its diverse printing options. The writer can specify different margins and font types; proportional spacing, justification, centering, underlining, and boldface; subscripts and superscripts; page headers and footers; hanging paragraphs and bullets; and automatic page numbering.

The most powerful feature of this integrated software package can be demonstrated in the word processor. Information from the spread sheet or data base applications can be "cut" to a clipboard (another desktop analogy) and later "pasted" anywhere in a word processor file.

A unique feature of this word processor is the "enter keyboard" printing option. You can ask the printer to

stop when printing so that you can type information directly from the keyboard into a form document. This feature is very useful when you want to personalize letters, for example, by typing in the recipient's name. However, this feature also points to a weakness in the word processor when you want to do a mass mailing. You cannot merge a mailing list from the data base into a form letter, as you can with other word processing programs.

Features I miss in /// E-Z Pieces' word processor include the absence of windows and user-defined glossaries. Windows allow the writer to split the screen into two parts, or windows, both containing the same file. The top window could show the first ten lines of the file, maybe the introductory paragraph, while the bottom window could show the last ten lines of the same file, for example, the closing paragraph. This would allow the writer to edit the closing paragraph in the context of the introductory paragraph without having to scroll through the whole text file.

User-defined glossaries allow the writer to program a certain sequence of keystrokes to a certain key. For instance, instead of typing out the words "/// E-Z Pieces" every time, with the glossary function, I could have typed Control-3 and the words "/// E-Z Pieces" would appear on the screen. Maybe the next revision of /// E-Z Pieces will include these features.

Spread Sheet

/// E-Z Pieces' spreadsheet files can contain up to 127 columns by 999 rows. For a 256K Apple ///, you may have a maximum of about 11,000 filled cells. For a user familiar with VisiCalc, the spread sheet application should be very easy to learn. You also have the flexibility of using a VisiCalc file or a DIF file (such as a file created by /// E-Z Pieces' own data base, VisiCalc, or other programs) as the source of a spread sheet file.

Most of the standard spreadsheet features that you'll find with other spread sheets are available here. This includes varying column widths, where you can set, for example, wider columns for words and narrower columns for numbers; various arithmetic, logical, and financial functions, including @IRR and @NPV; protec-

tion for specified cells; and moving blocks of information from one part of the spread sheet to another, or from one spread sheet to another. This spread sheet, however, doesn't have some features that many advanced VisiCalc users may want. One of these missing commands is the keystroke memory sequence available with Advanced VisiCalc.

You can print out the spread sheet to a printer, to a file in DIF format, or to an ASCII (text) file on a disk. And best of all, you can print to the clipboard and later move the information on the clipboard to a word processor file.

Data Base

As mentioned earlier, the data base portion of /// E-Z Pieces is very similar to Quick File ///. For a 256K Apple ///, you are limited to about 2300 records per file, assuming an average record size of 75 characters. Within this limitation, though, you'll find yourself working with a very flexible and powerful data base.

First of all, the data base file can also accept ASCII files (which may be created from other data base programs or even Apple Writer ///), DIF files (created from VisiCalc or a /// E-Z Pieces spread sheet), or from a Quick File /// file.

Setting up a data base file is very simple, and so is the data entry. There are two report styles: tables and labels. Both are very flexible and allow you to sort from the data base in various combinations of specified selection rules.

And, of course, the integration allows the user to "cut and paste" information from the data base into a word processor file.

A Good Value

/// E-Z Pieces is a well-designed integrated software package which takes full advantage of the power of the Apple ///. Furthermore, if you have an Apple //e at home and an Apple /// at work, your /// E-Z Pieces data files can be used directly by the AppleWorks program.

For a retail price of \$295, /// E-Z Pieces is also quite a bargain. Compare this with other integrated software on competing personal computers, and you'll find it to be a good value, too.

