



New
desk calculator
with 15-digit
capacity and three
independent
accumulators

Electronic Answers to Office Arithmetic

ASKED TO LIST the most desirable features of a non-listing calculator, regardless of cost, a group of prospective users would differ more in their priorities than in the features they specified. A standard of accuracy sufficient for all practical purposes; the ability to handle both simple and complex calculations internally; speed; ease of operation. On these there would be a consensus.

This being so, a bright future can be forecast for East Germany's Soemtron 220. Here is an electronic desk calculator that not only meets user requirements but also offers its particular combination of facilities at a competitive price.

Accuracy depends upon capacity. The 220 has 15-digit calculating registers (one of which can retain a constant factor) and gives a rounded-up 15-digit result in both multiplication and division. In all operations, the position of the decimal point and the sign of the results are automatically controlled.

The machine's ability to handle complex calculating operations directly, without requiring the operator to write down intermediate results, comes from the generous provision of three independent storage registers. Into any or all of these, numbers can be transferred, added to or subtracted from, or displayed at

the touch of a key. The use of these stores, in combination with an automatic squaring facility, makes light work of such tedious calculations as, for example, standard deviations.

Typical of another common class of calculation where it is necessary to draw on a constant and desirable as a check of accuracy to accumulate two independent totals are percentage distributions and currency conversions. The only elementary calculating routine that is not provided for internally is square rooting. Few business users will consider this more than a trivial omission, and on the occasions when square roots have to be extracted the job can be done quite swiftly on the machine by the usual mathematical techniques.

Speed and ease of operation go together. Like all electronic calculators, the Soemtron does its transistorised processing in a matter of milliseconds and the time needed to solve a problem is in practice determined solely by the time it takes the operator to manipulate the keys. Fast operation will come quickly. The keys are well shaped and comfortably spaced. Moreover, the relative positioning of the ten used for entering quantities and those used for initiating an operation is helpful; the hand moves across the

board in a way that is not very different from the movement of a pencil when the same calculation is performed on paper. There are a few key symbols whose meaning is not instantly clear but they will be quickly learnt.

Reliability should be high; except for the keys and the wheel for setting the position of the decimal point, there are no moving parts and transistors and magnetic cores (used for the storage registers) seldom fail. In any event, electronic trouble can be quickly put right—the importers are building up a countrywide servicing organisation—by replacement of plug-in printed circuit boards.

An office would need to be quite small not to benefit from a calculator as versatile as this. Like others of its type, it should perhaps be judged not merely by the number of existing mathematical and accounting processes it will simplify but also by the amount of new information, too time-consuming in the past to be worth extracting, which it can make available to higher management and individual departments.

The sole importers are Office & Electronic Machines Ltd. For a brochure and the address of a nearby dealer who can demonstrate the Soemtron 220, readers should circle 109 on this month's inquiry card. ♦