





As well as sockets for the TV lead, cassette recorder and power supply, the MTX series sockets for external audio, composite video, printer port, cartridge port, and two Atari type joysticks.

In use

My general opinion of the MTX is that 90 per cent of it is great, but the remaining 10 per cent is rotten.

While entering programs, the screen shows a blue background with white letters. If you don't like this combination, then tough, it can't be changed. This also applies to the front panel which is bright red (or my jelly).

Leaving programs is easy enough. The MTX does some syntax checking when a line is entered and if something is wrong, then a cursor points to the offending piece of code, which can then be amended.

As I've mentioned, the good points of the machine include the graphics commands. After a short while, I was drawing arcs and circles and moving sprites about without too much trouble. I was impressed with the speed of the sprite, and I can imagine some good games being written in MTX Basic.

The sound command is also quite easy to master, and interesting effects can be produced with a little practice. A point worth noting about the sound is that once a note or sequence of notes is started, your program continues. It would be possible to have a little man moving about the screen to a tune, unlike the Spectrum where program execution stops when a tone is sounded.

On the minus side, the MTX Basic lacks the good old DEF FN statement which allows you to define functions. In many areas such as games this is essential because it allows you to do some calculations, say in between moving an object. As it is, the lack of DEF FN means that calculations will have to be performed in subroutines instead, which is not so good.

The machine has some other oddities such as not being able to define local colours within test mode, not supporting cassette files and so on. Even though the machine is very professional, Memotech could have used a 128 K080 for the Basic, this would have allowed them to do a really professional job — as Atari did with the Discs.

Software

Continental Software has been set up to produce software for the MTX series and they are going to be releasing quite a lot of games in the near future. The two games — *Thunder* and *Dragonis* — which come with the MTX were produced by them, and although hard to judge, were quite good compared to other versions available on other machines.

There will no-doubt be some of the old favourites such as chess, galaxians and so on. And I understand that several software houses were given earlier models of the MTX 800 so that they could develop programs.



Verdict

In terms of value for money, I think the MTX series is outpriced by about 140 on each model. But, I can also see the more enthusiast looking out the cash for a very powerful machine to use as a development system.

On the other hand, I would suggest that the average buyer looks at this machine not only for games playing, but as a general purpose micro.

MTX Sound Commands

arc, arcoshan, freq, vol, freq gradient, vol gradient, time, action, screen sets the number of blocks of memory for extended sound command

MTX Graphic Commands

align p,align
angle (0)
PI (0)
arc (x, theta)
ATTN p, size
circle x,y,r
color (p,r,g,b,k)
CON X,Y
CTLERN p,x
DRAW X
DU
GAMESIZE p,x,B bytes
GAS X,Y,B
HLS X
HVSX X,Y,B
MOTX,Y
SPRT X,Y,pat,sp,
SPRT X,Y,pat,sp,
VLOC dx, dy
VLOC

Align previously defined sprite
Sets absolute angle in radians
Adjusts angle by X
Draws arc of a circle
Adjusts attributes
Draws circle with radius and centre x,y
Sets colour for graphics screen
Creates virtual screen
Moves cursor to x,y
Control sprite parameters
Draws line of length X
Enables direct screen input
Gamesize character pattern
Resets bit pattern from graphics screen
Sets foreground colour
Moves sprite
Sets paper colour to X
Plots a point in graphics screen at x,y
Plots character at current cursor location
Creates sprite

Moves graphic screen relative to sprite plane
Selects virtual screen