



Cassette Port

The TI99/4A can work with two domestic cassette recorders, and can control the motor of one of them. This means it can cope with crude business programs, which require the copying of data from one deck to another

CPU

The TMS9900 is an early processor, which is why it is physically large. All the address and data lines as well as control lines have separate connections. More modern processors share functions of pins and so reduce the total number on the chip. Unlike other home computers this is a 16-bit microprocessor

Peripheral Port

This is just a PCB edge connector that other units link up with. Texas call it their CRU (Communications Register Unit) interface. Before the general-purpose expansion unit was introduced, individual peripherals were plugged into each other in a long line. This is called 'piggy-backing'

ROM Pack Connector

ROM packs, which Texas call 'Solid state command modules' plug in here. The mechanism is considerably more robust than on most machines

Scratchpad Memory

The chips marked 6810 are special scratchpad memory essential to the operation of the 9900. This microprocessor is different from all other microprocessors in having no internal memory locations (registers) and so needs to use some external memory. This scratchpad memory is not accessible to normal programs

TI99/4 A

PRICE

Obtainable from about £60

SIZE

380×260×70 mm

WEIGHT

1.8 Kg (4lbs)

CLOCK SPEED

1 MHz

MEMORY

26 Kbytes ROM, 16K user RAM, 8K graphics RAM. There are an extra 256 bytes of 'scratchpad' RAM not normally available to the user. These are used for the internal registers of the 9900, most CPUs have them built in

VIDEO DISPLAY

Character display of 24 rows of 32 columns. There are 16 colours which can be used as foreground and background colours. No user graphics are available on the basic machine but individual 8 × 8 character cells can be defined with a sequence of 16 characters

INTERFACES

Cassette, joystick, video (not TV), a cartridge slot and a connector for the expansion bus

LANGUAGES SUPPLIED

BASIC

OTHER LANGUAGES

Extended BASIC, TI LOGO, UCSD (University of California at San Diego) PASCAL, TI FORTH, and Assembler

COMES WITH

Power supply adaptor, TV adaptor, cassette connector and manuals

KEYBOARD

Typewriter-style with 48 moving keys, including control and function keys. The numeric keys double as function keys, depending on the added software cartridges

DOCUMENTATION

There is one main manual with an addendum for the UK market, which describes how to connect up the computer and how to use the 'solid state command modules'. This introduction is very short and has many diagrams but no photographs. There is a detailed list of commands available in the BASIC, a section giving some example programs, and a short glossary at the end of the manual