Internally, the Microwriter is designed to be as portable as possible. Both the internal microprocessor and its memory are CMOS (Complementary Metal Oxide Silicon) devices, which help reduce the power consumption. Enough power for 30 hours of use is provided by a rechargeable Ni-Cad pack. To display the characters, a 14-character LCD display (which scrolls horizontally as text is entered) is built into the unit, but a television set can be connected through an optional interface. This allows on-screen editing of the stored text to be achieved once the user has returned to the home or office.

As well as an RS232 serial interface for connection to a printer, the Microwriter is equipped with a cassette interface, which allows the text stored in its memory to be permanently saved or loaded back. The serial interface also enables the Microwriter to be used as a single-handed terminal to an ordinary computer or word processor. Documents keyed in while away from the home or office can be loaded into a full-sized system for more complete editing or manipulation.

Text within the Microwriter can be partitioned into separate documents, and this enables several blocks of unrelated text to be entered and dealt with separately. Simple editing facilities are provided: text can be added or deleted and it is possible to move large blocks around by using the cassette interface as a temporary buffer.

The designer's intention was that the six-key Microwriter keyboard would be incorporated into other electronic devices. For all its good qualities, however, the Microwriter has had only limited appeal, and it remains to be seen whether home computer manufacturers will take up the idea.

On/Off Switch
Switching off and on will not lose data, and you can immediately resume writing the same document

Clock Crystal

Ni-Cad Batteries
These cells are recharged by means of an external transformer

CPU
Both CPU and RAM are CMOS (Complementary Metal Oxide Silicon) devices to reduce power consumption

Power Socket
For recharging or mains operation with an external transformer

Expansion Interface
For future expansion, this port includes the microprocessor's address and data lines

EPROM
The word processing program and sophisticated communications software is incorporated into a single EPROM, which is cheaper to produce in small quantities than ROM

A Bunch Of Fives
Microwriter's documentation includes mnemonics and illustrations to help the user learn the different combinations of keys necessary to create the alphabet. The sixth key is used in combination with the others to provide further punctuation and editing commands

STEVE CROSS

LIZ DIXON

n o p q r s t u v w x y z