

The Computer Museum

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SLIDES/GRAPHICS AVAILABLE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMPUTER MUSEUM INVITES PUBLIC INSIDE NEW, UPGRADED GIANT PC TO TRY OUT ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Boston, MA (October 3, 1995)—On October 21, 1995, The Computer Museum unveils its new exhibit, the networked, multimedia upgrade of its giant personal computer, *The Walk-Through Computer™ 2000*.

The Walk-Through Computer 2000 is The Computer Museum's cornerstone exhibit, a working model of a PC the size of a two-story house, packed with state-of-the-art technology—just like the kind anyone can buy today at a computer store.

Venturing into the giant machine, visitors grasp the magic of the latest technology firsthand, seeing for themselves what it has to offer. The million-dollar upgrade is driven by a high-speed Pentium® processor, surrounded by multimedia boards, connected to a CD-ROM drive, and networked—at 50 times scale.

Journey into the Multimedia, Networked PC

Visitors to the exhibit can put the huge PC through its new paces by clicking and rolling a car-sized mouse. They can answer the giant computer's incoming e-mail, explore full-motion video and stunning images, and play with text on a 12-foot-tall color monitor.

Climbing over a streamlined keyboard, visitors step through a hole in the giant computer's chassis to find themselves in canyons of all-new printed circuit boards loaded with suitcase-sized chips expanding the PC's capabilities. The flashing buslines on the motherboard floor lead eventually to a powerful, new central processor, with its intricate circuits glowing like a metropolis viewed from an airplane.

More than 30 hands-on experiences throughout the exhibit bring each new, over-sized component to life. For example, visitors take charge of the whole computer by controlling the execution of instructions at the seven-foot-square Pentium processor. Lights representing the flow of information race out along the computer's buslines to carry out visitors' commands.

"It's an unforgettable experience to feel like a Lilliputian inside this Gulliver of a computer," said Dave House, Intel senior vice president. "I know of no better or more fun way for anyone, especially kids who have an insatiable curiosity about computers, to learn about what's inside these seemingly magical machines."

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“By magnifying and simplifying the multimedia features, the giant PC brings the mystery and excitement of computing to teachers, kids, parents, and grandparents,” said Suhas Patil, Cirrus Logic, Inc., chairman of the board. “Cirrus Logic is pleased to be a leader among the corporations that made the exhibit possible.”

Hands-on activities illustrate and explain nearly all the parts in today’s PC:

- At the hard drive, saucer-sized heads fly to scoop data off the eight-foot platters. Visitors flip magnets to write messages and spin the disc to read them.

- At a huge video board, loaded with video memory and processing chips, the big computer displays a digital image of visitors’ faces. Visitors can manipulate their own images to see how easily reality can be distorted in digital pictures.

- At the ceiling-high audio card, visitors enhance or distort the sound of their voices to grasp how computers store and manipulate sound.

- At an eight-foot-long CD-ROM player, visitors write a message onto coaster-sized pits on a six-foot compact disc and use a laser to extract the data.

- At the RAM, visitors fiddle with bits of the computer’s temporary memory and see what happens when they shut the power off.

- At an over-sized modem, visitors create and send their own messages, using audio tones, to learn the nuts and bolts of how computers communicate with each other, such as when sending electronic mail or hooking to global networks like the Internet.

The Walk-Through Computer 2000 upgrade took The Computer Museum 18 months to design and build. The permanent exhibit involved the creative and technical expertise and support of over 60 people from 14 different corporations around the world, and more than \$1 million in sponsorship.

Principal Sponsors: Cirrus Logic, Inc.; Intel Corporation.

Major Sponsors: 3Com Corporation; Adaptec, Inc.; American Power Conversion (APC); Bose Corporation; Canon Computer Systems; The Dennis C. Hayes Foundation (Hayes Microcomputer Products, Inc.); Kensington Microware Ltd.; NEC Technologies, Inc.; Philips Electronics; Phoenix Technologies Ltd.; Quantum Corporation; and Texas Instruments.

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AUTHORITATIVE KIDS' SOFTWARE GUIDE RATES THE BEST ... WITH SURPRISING RESULTS

BOSTON (September 20, 1995)—A lively new guide to kids' software from The Computer Museum challenges the assumption that the most popular software is actually the best for kids. In fact, the best titles for children ages two through 12 are not always on the best-seller lists, but they are identified in *The Computer Museum Guide to the Best Software for Kids*.

The *Guide* goes beyond the best-known titles to find software that really challenges kids to think and learn. Out of nearly 1,000 programs, the *Guide* selected 215 that represent the best in design and graphics, the best in replay value and the best in hands-on learning for kids.

Combining the insights of experts at the country's only computer museum with the real-life perspective of test families, the *Guide* features easy-to-use lists of recommended titles, helpful ratings and plain-talking reviews. It organizes the best titles by subject and age to make it easy for parents to pinpoint software that's right for their kids. And it uses the opinions of real kids and parents, who tested software in their homes, to help readers choose programs that match their kids' learning styles and interests.

"Because it's a daunting task to shop for kids' software, many parents simply go with titles or characters their kids know," say *Guide* authors Cathy Miranker and Alison Elliott. "Our book gives them different options. For parents who want the computer to do more than jazz up flash cards or repackage movies and TV shows, *The Computer Museum Guide* recommends software that encourages kids to create, to experiment, to surmount obstacles and to solve problems. It's designed to help families build a library of software that enlightens, entertains and that will be used again and again over time."

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The Computer Museum Guide features reviews with more emphasis on evaluation than simple description. It rates every program it recommends to help make buying decisions easier. And a unique set of "Best Lists"—"The Best Software for Your 6–7-Year-Old" or "The Best Software for Kids and Parents to Use Together," among many others—often differs from the best-seller lists by including software from smaller publishers that are rarely promoted by mass merchandising.

"Computers are a powerful tool for learning, and children are fascinated by them," says Gwen Bell, founding president of The Computer Museum in Boston. "With the *Guide*, we can help families find software that inspires kids to explore and learn by doing, similar to the hands-on experience we offer here at the Museum. We looked for titles that use the power of the computer to create unique new learning experiences for kids—not software that simply replicates classroom exercises, arcade games or TV viewing."

Slated for annual publication by HarperCollins Perennial, the first edition of the *Guide* goes on sale Oct. 4 with a cover price of \$16. Families can purchase it through the Museum's bookstore at (617) 426-2800 x307 and check out The Computer Museum's World Wide Web site at <http://www.tcm.org/> for timely updates throughout the year.

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PHOTOS/SLIDES AVAILABLE



COMPUTER MUSEUM OFFERS *INTERACTIVITIES* WEEKEND/HOLIDAY PROGRAM

GUIDED EXPLORATIONS OF THE WORLD OF COMPUTING

The Computer Museum invites visitors to experience an exciting series of guided explorations into the mysteries of computing that includes programming a human "robot" chef and Web-surfing for kids. Led by enthusiastic Visitor Assistants (VA's), visitors will go beyond the obvious to grasp the ideas behind robotics, computer languages; networks, the amazing power of the personal computer and how it works, and computer history. Free with the price of Museum admission.

Interactivities Program:

Can a Robot Make a Sandwich? Help "program" a human robot chef to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and understand how challenging it is to program robots to act like people. **(12:00pm, 3:30pm)**

Introduction to the Internet. Find out how to explore the world's largest network, including surfing the Internet's popular World Wide Web, in this hands-on "seminar." A high-bandwidth T1 line permits faster Internet access than possible via modem. **(1:15pm)**

Internet for Kids with Weekly Hot List (age 10 and up). Learn the ABC's of surfing the Internet via the Web, find "cool" (fun) sites for kids, such as *Beakman's World* or *Lite Brite*, and take-home hot list of the Museum's top sites for kids. **(4:00pm)**

How Do Computers Know What You Type? Ask eight "yes" or "no" questions in a guessing game, based on Twenty Questions, and see how a computer's basic language of ones and zeroes is built on a similar binary system. **(2:00pm)**

Animation Festival. Screen some of today's finest computer animation, from entertainment simulations and cartoons to historical visualizations. The screening includes a video introduction by computer animator Ed Hill, who explains how computers can be used in animation. **(2:30pm)**

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People and Computers Guided Tour. Travel back 50 years with a Museum VA through “time tunnels” to trace PCs back to their giant ancestors of the 1940s and 1950s. Discover the impact of computers on our lives, with interactive computer stations, touchscreen video displays, and stories from your guide that bring each milestone to life. **(11:15am, 1:30pm, 3:00pm)**

Interactivities is offered as a permanent feature during weekends, holidays, and Boston school vacation weeks.

Free with the price of admission: First Come, First Serve.
For more information, call (617) 426-2800 x630.

The Computer Museum is the only museum in the world devoted solely to people and computers. It features 160 easy-to-use interactive exhibits, including *The Walk-Through Computer™ 2000*, *The Networked Planet™*, a multi-media robot show, and the finest collection of vintage computers and robots in the world. LOCATION: Museum Wharf, 300 Congress St., Boston, MA. ADMISSION: Adults \$7.00; students and seniors \$5.00; children four and under and Members free. HALF PRICE: SUNDAYS 3-5pm. WINTER HOURS: OPEN TUESDAY-SUNDAY, 10am-5pm. SUMMER: DAILY 10am-6pm. For more information, call The Talking Computer: (617) 423-6758 or visit our homepage on the Web: <http://www.tcm.org/>.

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COMPUTER MUSEUM LAUNCHES COMPUTER CLUBHOUSES IN TWO BOSTON COMMUNITIES, PLANS CLUBHOUSE NETWORK NATIONWIDE Kids and Their Creations Featured December 7

Boston, MA (November 17, 1995) - The Computer Museum will launch satellite versions of its award-winning, innovative Computer Clubhouse in two Boston communities early in 1996. The Clubhouse satellites will enable hundreds more inner-city youths to get their hands on powerful computer tools and create their own projects.

The Computer Museum will provide expertise, training and support for Clubhouse satellites at Roxbury's John A. Shelburne Community Center, opening in January, and United South End Settlements, opening March 1. Taking the Clubhouse into Boston neighborhoods is the first step in the Museum's long-range vision to establish a network of Clubhouses in low-income communities around the country and the world, using The Computer Museum Clubhouse as a model.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: Thursday, December 7, 3pm - 7pm:

To celebrate, The Computer Museum opens the Clubhouse doors to its friends and supporters to reveal this unique learning community in action. Young members will demonstrate and explain their works-in-progress. Projects include a computer-controlled LEGO city, an online art gallery for the World Wide Web, a 3D-modelled underwater world, and computer-animated graphics and music.

With computers in less than 15 percent of Latino and African-American households in this country, and Massachusetts in the lowest quarter in classroom access to computer technology, the gap between the technology "haves" and "have-nots" presents a critical educational challenge.

In 1993, The Computer Museum, in collaboration with the MIT Media Lab, launched its first Clubhouse to help close that gap. Since then, more than 1,000 young people, aged 10-18, from Boston's underserved communities have been introduced to sophisticated professional software and computer technology in an inventive after-school learning environment. Guided by adult mentors, youths work in a community of their peers on their own creations—from a computer-controlled laser light show to robots and computer games. They experiment with scientific simulations, mix music in the Clubhouse sound studio, and create multimedia presentations.

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“The Clubhouse is a new kind of learning community, where young people develop new skills and new ways of thinking about learning and themselves. Rather than playing computer games, they create their own. Rather than ‘surfing’ the Web, they design their own Web pages,” said Clubhouse Advisor Mitchel Resnick, assistant professor, MIT Media Lab. “The best way to develop the skills and attitudes needed to succeed in a digital world is to live in a ‘digital community,’ interacting not only with computers, but with people who know how to explore and express themselves with the technology.”

Clubhouse mentors also support kids in finding practical uses for their work. One Roxbury youth, who wants to become a video-game designer, has learned to manipulate powerful computer tools to create his own games. Another, who mastered sophisticated digital-image-editing software, now works as a graphic designer for a prominent Boston consulting firm.

“The Computer Museum is one of Boston’s cultural crown jewels. The Reebok Boston Out-of-School Time Initiative brings the Museum’s Computer Clubhouse to two neighborhoods, creating safe places where young people can experience the confidence that comes with success,” said Sharon Cohen, executive director of The Reebok Foundation. In one case, a 13-year-old boy reported that before the Clubhouse opened, he “had nothing to do. Now, along with other people there, I am creating an animated cartoon in 3D. It takes a lot of time, but it’s worth it.”

Crystal Houston, program director, Shelburne Community Center, explained, “Our young people are eager to get their hands on and explore the latest software and computers. Above everything else, having a Clubhouse here in Roxbury will expand their creativity and tap into resources they didn’t know they had.”

The Computer Clubhouse supports The Computer Museum’s overall mission to educate and inspire people of all ages and backgrounds about the technology, applications and impact of computers. The Clubhouse is made possible this year with support from the Boston Globe Foundation, Cabot Corporation, Jessie P. Cox Charitable Trust, Eastern Enterprises, Fleet Bank of Massachusetts, Forte Foundation, Stephen J. Gaal, Intel Foundation, John Hancock, Arthur D. Little Foundation, Mass. Cultural Council, Meek Family Foundation, Millipore Foundation, Oracle Corporation, Polaroid Foundation, Reebok Foundation’s BOOST (Boston Out-of-School Time) Initiative, The Riley Foundation, State Street Foundation, Anna B. Stearns Foundation, and others.

Visit the Clubhouse Online Art Gallery at
The Computer Museum’s Web site: <http://www.tcm.org>