

Honeywell's New Line: Stay with a Winner

IBM talks softly but carries a big umbrella. Honeywell, with three new machines and other assorted products, is talking loudly and, at the same time, has opened its own new umbrella — not as big as IBM's to be sure, but not as expensive either. The new Honeywell equipment is broad and covers the low and medium ends of its existing line. In addition, Honeywell is expected to round out the high end of its line later this month with a brace of big machines.

The technical aficionados won't be overly intrigued by the new Honeywell machines. There are, for instance, no claims at setting new industry standards, no semiconductor memories, no virtual memories, no exotic technical "break-throughs." However, anyone with more than a passing interest in price/performance specifications will find "The Other Computer Company's" new machines interesting.

Honeywell, which electrified the industry last year with its daring acquisition of GE's computer operations, is playing it safe with its new equipment. Essentially, Honeywell is repeating its timeworn and successful approach to selling computers: huddle under

IBM's pricing umbrella by offering more bang for the buck.

The stepping-stone machine for what Honeywell calls "a new family within the Series 200" is the 115, introduced less than a year ago. More than 300 of the 115s were delivered last year (orders for nearly twice that were received) and Honeywell decided the concept was so good it would bring out some sister machines embodying the same concepts. Thus, the 115/2, the 1015, and the 2015 (the new "15" family).

The Model 115/2 has a memory cycle time of 2.25 usec, and its 32K main memory is expandable to 64K. In a typical 32K configuration with console, a card reader/punch, printer, and two disc drives, the 115/2 would lease for \$4,073 per month on a five-year contract.

The medium-scale system, the 1015, has a memory cycle time of 1.6 usec and a 64K main memory expandable to 128K. A typical configuration will rent for \$8,371 a month.

The 2015 has a main memory of 96K — expandable to 256K — and has a 1.3 usec cycle time. A typical configuration would lease for \$12,800/month.

One logical question: What happens to the Series 200? Honeywell

says it plans to continue to make all its machines in the 200 series, but many are betting that the 200 line will be deemphasized as the new machines are promoted. In fact, a likely lineup of Honeywell's new "hard sell" line would be: the 115, 115/2, 1015, 2015 and, from the Series 200 line, the 3200 and the 4200. The line would



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A plan for compatibility.

likely be rounded out at the bottom by the Model 58, the Bull machine that is Honeywell's answer to the System/3. At the top, Honeywell is expected to emphasize the new high-performance machines, already noted, which should be unveiled any day now. The new machines will probably be enhancements of GE's old 600 line and, indeed, are slated to be built in the former GE Phoenix plant.

While the Model 58 has been successfully sold in Europe for nearly 18 months, Honeywell's decision to market the machine aggressively throughout the U.S. is a significant move. Honeywell is hoping it can convince users that it has a better price/performance than IBM's System/3.

All this takes us to a problem: a major drawback of the Honeywell line is its lack of compatibility within the line. The "15" machines are compatible with the Series 200, and all of the machines in the Honeywell line have been designed to easily convert IBM programs.

But most of the Honeywell and General Electric machines are not compatible with one another. On the



MODEL 115/2 in \$4K-8K per month range.