Program Your Microcomputer in BASIC

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Preface

This book is intended to introduce the BASIC language as offered on many microcomputers to the evergrowing number of people who have access to microcomputer systems. The reader is led through the use of elementary BASIC instructions by a series of carefully selected examples, and by a series of activities, each of which deals with a single instruction, or group of instructions. No previous knowledge of computing is needed, and such computing concepts as are necessary for the understanding of the text are explained as they arise.

To use this book, as Mrs Beeton almost said, 'First get your microcomputer'. Then read as much of the manufacturer's manuals and handbooks as you can follow, which probably will be just enough to get your computer working. Manuals tend to start easy but get obscure very quickly. This is where this book comes in. Once you have read the first twenty-four pages you should be ready to start on the activities. These activities are designed to be carried out in conjunction with the manufacturer's manual. No two versions of BASIC are identical so the activities should help you to understand the manuals better and just what your particular version of BASIC allows you to do.

Activity 15 is the most difficult, but potentially the most useful, feature of your computer; always assuming that it has some sort of backing store. With backing store you can save and retrieve information at will.

Take the activities slowly and make sure you understand each example. When in doubt, return to the manufacturer's manual. When you have successfully completed the activities you are on your own and should be able to write useful and exciting programs.

The author is very grateful to his many friends in the worlds of computing and education. They have all provided a great deal of help during the production of this book. In particular must be mentioned Roy Jones, Principal of Stamford College for Further Education, for the use of the college's 380Z, the Vice-Principal of Peterborough Technical College for the use of the college's CBM 3016 and Brian Duckworth, Head of Electrical Engineering at Peterborough Technical College, for the use of his department's SWTP 6400. Last minute help from Pat Ingram of the Cambridge Computer Store was also greatly appreciated as were the suggestions for improvements from Merl K. Miller.

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