Color printers for workgroups

Tektronix (Wilsonville, OR) introduced two thermal-transfer color printers, which the company is marketing as the first color 600-dpi (dots per inch) desktop printers suitable for office workgroup use. The high-end Phaser 220i ($5,995) and low-end 220e ($3,995) are the latest additions to Tektronix's thermal printer line, introduced in 1992.

Previous models 200i will be discontinued while the 300-dpi 200e model is marked down permanently to $2,995 from its original price, $3,695. Both new Phasers use a RISC processor and churn out two pages per minute.

Thermal transfer refers to a printing process in which a heated wax transfer occurs. "The wax is on a ribbon which is pressed through by a head," said Michelle Riddle, application engineer for Tektronix. And to facilitate thermal printing on most laser papers (i.e. regular office paper), Tektronix sells a patented "ColorCoat" technology embodied in the ColorCoat ribbon ($504).

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The Phaser 220 printers are designed for users in business, graphic arts, and some scientific and engineering applications. Mainly, the printers will function as an in-house means of producing slick, colorful, business presentations, including graphs and transparencies, a compa-

ny spokesperson said. Both printers include the latest version of Adobe Systems' PostScript Level 2 page-description language as well as support for Hewlett-Packard's Graphics Language (HP-GL) and Printer Control Language (PCL5) for monochrome fonts.

The new products use Tektronix's

proprietary technology called TekColor SuperCell 600 which provides 600-by-300-dpi output, meaning the printer prints 600 dots vertically and 300 horizontally. But while both feature standard parallel, serial, and AppleTalk ports, the Phaser 220i adds Novell NetWare and Apple EtherTalk support with a $695 Ethernet option. TCP/IP costs an additional $295. Shipping now, the printers are covered by a one-year warranty.

X and multimedia

In a separate announcement, Tektronix revealed it will offer multimedia features with its current XP100 and XP350 series of X terminals. The new capabilities are namely those of audio, video, imaging, and graphics and are sold as embedded options in XpressWare 7.0 (pricing undetermined at press time) X server software is due out May 1, 1994.
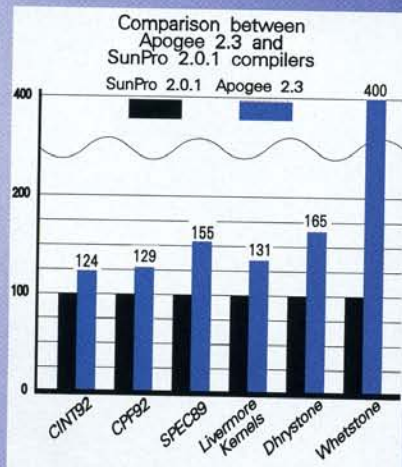
Tektronix mainly chose the multimedia path because X terminals are good at sharing network resources. Also, Tektronix said, X terminals outperform PCs in networking and graphical display. An X terminal with access to digital video, audio, imaging page description, and graphics information makes it a little less like an X terminal and more like a workstation. The Tektronix multimedia technology is safe and solid, the company said, based on industry standards such as MPEG and PostScript.

The announcement involves deals with other vendors. For the audio portion of the offering, Tektronix turned to Digital. For document display, the company licensed Adobe's Display PostScript and Acrobat. Tektronix said it is

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Tektronix's new Phaser 220i ($5,995) is marketed as the first 600-dpi desktop printer.

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the first to develop X terminal intercept driver for Sun environments.

The add-ons are actually software embedded in XpressWare 7.0, and all but the audio are unlocked by a keycode given to the user after purchasing that specific option. (The audio is software plus a 4231 card). AudioXpress and VideoXpress are each $200, AVXpress (audio/video) is $300, ImageXpress costs $220, and PSXpress (Display Post-Script/Acrobat) is $250.

Tektronix Inc., PO Box 1000, MS 63-583, Wilsonville, OR 97070, 503-682-7377. — *Shalini Chatterjee*