

Heidersberger

To Clone Or Not To Clone

First Macintosh Clone appears

by Klaus Madzia

A small taiwanese company showed the first Apple Macintosh Clone at the CeBIT fair. It's undetermined whether the system is infringing in Apple's copyright.

While clones have become a way of life in the PC- and MS-DOS arena, nobody has yet been able to sell even a single Mac compatible computer, without leaving themselves open to the possibility of a legal action initiated by Apple Computer.

Enter the taiwan-based company Akkord, a small manufacturer that employs about 120 people. Akkord had the audacity to ship a system to a friendly german distributor, Jonathan Computer Deutschland, that published following press release.

"Finally, we are able to introduce to you the fruit of our labor: Jonathan, the first tomato-compatible PC. Available at a price that is easy on the wallet. "

Obviously, the fear of litigation prevented the company from calling Jonathan Apple-compatible. But CeBIT Show News visited the booth A53, at Hall 6 to find out how compatible Jonathan really is.

"It works! I tried Page Maker, Microsoft Word, even a copy protected game and they worked fine." attested Benjamin Heiderdoerfer, Editor of the German Macintosh-monthly MacUP, and in no way affiliated with either Akkord or Jonathan or CeBIT Show News. Mr. Heiderdoerfer tested Jonathan for three days on the show and is extremely satisfied with the compatibility issue.

Legal issues are something different. According to Mr. Fukunaga, a friend of Akkord's president Mr. Marc Haran, Jonathan is going to be sold without any Macintosh ROMs.

ROMs, the Read Only Memorys, make up a large percentage of a computer's intelligence and the Macintosh ROMs are heavily protected by US copyright.

According to Renate Knuefer, spokesperson for Apple Germany, several US companies tried to clone the Macintosh ROM set. Apple prosecuted every ROM cloner and won the case, Ms. Knuefer maintains.

No wonder that Akkord is leaving the sockets for the Mac ROMs open on its machine. "But, you can buy Mac Plus 128 K ROMs from several US mail-order vendors for about 89<sup>90</sup> Dollars." explains Mr. Heidersdoerfer.

The system that was shown on the CeBIT floor contained original Apple Macintosh 128 KByte ROMs, according to Mr. Heidersdoerfer.

Obviously Apple wouldn't be happy with somebody cloning thier system But Ms. Knuefer is not worried. "I don't think they ~~AAkkord~~ are going to suceed. We haven't examined the system yet, and until we do I can't tell you if it does infringe on any Apple copyright."

Assuming Apple lawyers give Jonathan a clean bill of health, and the Cupertino, California based manufactor doesn't sue Akkord, Ms. Knuefer still doesn't believe Jonathan is going to have an impact in the market.

"Look, in Germany Apple is selling to small and medium sized bussiness and coroporations. These customers demand a service and maintance of a highly sikjed dealer, all this costs money. They are not going to buy from a small box-mover, who can't provide any service." maintains Ms. Knuefer.

But Mr. Heidersberger believes that Akkord isn't after the business market. "They want to provide a low-cost Macintosh alternative. Somehting that is more powerfull than the Mac Plus and cost a lot less than the Mac SE."

The technical data seems to confirm Mr. Heidersberger's opinon. Jonathan has a 68000 Processor, running at 7,8336 Mhz. It comes with one MByte RAM built in, and is expandable to 4 MByte. The system features an internal 800 KByte Floppy, that is able to read and write Macintosh disks without any compatability problems, according to Mr. Heidersberger.

The rest of the specs read excatly like the Mac Plus's:

- battery internal clock
- two serial RS-232/422 ports
- two ports for connectivty
- internal and external SCSI interface
- four channel sound generator
- external floppy port
- keyboard
- mouse

But Jonathan does not look like an avergage Mac Plus or SE. The case look more like a small PC, connected with an external monitor and PC-keyboard.

CeBIT Show News tried to contact an official Akkord spokesperson, but only Mr. Fukunaga, a self described "friend of Akkord" was availabe for comment. According to him Akkord has not determined price and availability of the system.

Jonathan Computer Deutschland is not affiliated with Akkord,  
but acts as a communications link with the company.

Jonoathan Computer is showing Jonathan at Boot A53, Hall 6.