
Subject: Re: What is the oldest computer that could be used today for real work?

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Tue, 07 Sep 2021 16:14:30 GMT

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Originally posted by: drb

> I have most all of the manuals as well. It was used as a database in a
> radio station in the early 80's. I never actually sat down and figured
> out how it works, but it does boot when you flip the switch; numbers
> come up on the green screen.

User programming is done in BASIC. It's a curious implementation, with a lot of fairly powerful stuff for business applications, statement labels, some sort-of cursor editing of statements. Most IBM supplied utilities are not in BASIC; I think it may have been possible for some ecosystem developers to get the tooling to do assembler or maybe compiled development.

There were two types of base machine: the all-in-one type, and a floor standing one with separate screen and keyboard. Peripherals included several printers, a twinax-based network for interconnecting stations, and a hard disk unit that could be shared across the network. 8085 processor, paged address space so that the machine can (and does) have well over 64k of RAM, and quite a bit of ROM too.

IBM sold various software for them, including a menu-driven application development system that wrote BASIC applications. There was at least a small third party ecosystem.

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