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Acorn Gives Schools The Education Advantage at BETT 95

Acorn Computers, the leading supplier of computers to UK schools, is taking 'The Whole School' as its theme for BETT 95, showing how its new interactive and flexible technologies can form an integral part of the life of a school. Acorn will be showcasing and offering hands-on demonstrations of many innovative new products and services designed to give schools the best available choice of IT, including its highly successful Risc PC, launched earlier this year. The Acorn 'Workbench' will give educationalists a glimpse of the technologies students will be using in the future and the popular theatre sessions and advice clinic remain key features this year.

Peter Talbot, General Manager, UK Education, at Acorn, comments: "The 'Whole School' approach Acorn is taking as its theme for BETT 95 reinforces the strategy we have been following in recent years and reflects the trends we are picking up from education. Computers and interactive technologies are now seen as a core resource for both children and teachers and for management and curriculum use. New developments in portables, communications, and networking technologies are extending the concept of the 'Whole School' to include resources in the home, local community and on the information superhighway. With many of these technologies in action on the Acorn stand, visitors will see for themselves that Acorn really does offer schools the greatest choice, flexibility and educational advantage."

The Information Superhighway

Surfing the information superhighway will soon be commonplace for schools with Acorn's new range of e-mail and Internet-related products to be launched at BETT 95. E-mail software for internal communication and information sharing within schools and access to the wealth of material on the Internet and World Wide Web will be on show, as well as ways to control access to ensure the right information gets to the right person.

An interactive set-top box from Online Media, the newest division of Acorn Computer Group, will also be on the stand for visitors' use to access show information and to give a glimpse of the possibilities this technology may soon be able to offer education.

In addition, the educational benefits of these information-rich technologies from Acorn will be demonstrated by schoolchildren using the facilities of the 'Library of the Future' in the Class Act area sponsored by Educational Computing & Technology.

Talking and Working Together

Flexibility and choice are a key element of Acorn's educational computing policy and Acorn's Universal Networking strategy, in action at BETT 95, is expected to set standards in educational networking for the 21st century. Acorn has chosen the show to launch 'Acorn Universal Client' software which will allow Acorn computers to connect easily to other Acorn machines and, for the first time, to third party servers in the PC, Unix and Apple worlds to share and access information held in a mixed educational computing environment.

An IBM PC 486 card and other PC 486 cards, enabling the Acorn Risc PC to run both IBM PC and Acorn RISC OS software, will also be on show. Other new networking products designed to simplify and improve networked resources, particularly shared multimedia resources, will be on show at BETT 95, including Access Release 2 and Access +.

Portability

Acorn is bringing the ideal of one computer per child within reach for more and more schools with its practical and economical range of Pocket Books, which will be on show on the Acorn stand. The Pocket Book, which was recently featured in the NCET portables study, will also be seen in action in the Class Act area, where pupils from Lord Grey School, Milton Keynes will be demonstrating truly personal computing with these powerful, hand-held computers.

Acorn Advantage

Phase II of Acorn Advantage, a groundbreaking promotion to enable schools and parents to boost the range of cross-curriculum resources available to schoolchildren, will be announced at BETT 95. In addition to points being allocated to purchasers of Acorn equipment which can be redeemed by schools for free educational items, purchases from selected third party suppliers will also carry points. With thousands of schools already registered for Advantage and nearly half a million parents packs requested, the success of the scheme to date is unquestionable. Phase II is expected to boost the number of registered schools to over 10,000.

Integrated Learning Systems (ILS)

Acorn supports the development of Open Integrated Learning Systems (OILS) to fit the needs of teachers and schools. Acorn is currently working with Systems Integrated Research plc (SIR) to port their data management system and ILS learning software to the Acorn environment. In the future the increased use of independent and distance learning will make it more important that appropriate information on the activity of learners is made accessible to teachers and Acorn is working with a number of commercial and educational partners to ensure open standards are adopted to facilitate this.

Multimedia

Multimedia has long been a key strength of Acorn computers; BETT 95 sees a preview of the latest version of the powerful Acorn Replay application, which firmly positions Acorn ahead of the field. Replay, which has been a Full Motion Video product since 1992, now includes Apple's QuickTime and AVI, the Video for Windows standard, as well as MPEG capability, allowing video from any source to be run on Acorn machines. Other multimedia-related announcements include software to enable Acorn machines to run PC CD ROMs without a PC card.

The Acorn Risc PC 16-bit Sound Upgrade allowing CD-style stereo sound will also be on display as will the Acorn 300i, a double speed CD ROM drive for the Risc PC supporting Kodak Photo CD and offering full MPC compatibility.

Special Needs

Helping education to maximise the learning opportunities for children with special educational needs within the school structure remains a priority for Acorn. As well as sponsoring the Micros for Special Needs focus area at the show, Acorn will be announcing a number of new developments and schemes at BETT 95, including a prospectus of AECs and dealers with expertise in special needs, a regular newsletter and an Acorn special needs forum. The newly announced special needs Risc PC and special needs multimedia Risc PC from Northwest Semerc, will also be on show.

Founded in 1978, with 1993 revenues of £54.3m, Acorn Computers is the premier supplier of IT solutions to UK education and has been the leading provider of 32-bit RISC based personal computers since 1987. Acorn works - closely with a strong community of industry partners, users and software developers to provide innovative technology solutions for the education, consumer, publishing and international markets.

The Acorn Computer Group is a holding company for Acorn Computers Limited, Acorn Australia, Acorn New Zealand, Acorn GmbH and Online Media. Acorn Computer Group owns 43% of ARM Ltd. Online Media, a division of the Acorn Computer Group, was launched in 1994 with the mission to design world class, interactive multimedia products.

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