

Wanted: Software writers for the 71

BY ROBERT BARKAN

If you're a professional software writer looking for a new market, HP is looking for you. HP will pay a 50 percent royalty on HP 71 software packages that it accepts for sale through its new Software Distribution Center (SDC) run by the Users Library in HP's Corvallis, OR facility.

HP also will include summaries of accepted programs in a software catalog to be included with each 71.

The SDC will duplicate the software for customers on whatever medium you provide—magnetic cards, minicassettes or 3.5-inch disks. You also must provide the documentation. If you supply quantities of the manual, the SDC will inventory and distribute them; if you supply just a master copy, the SDC will distribute photocopies of that.

To qualify for acceptance by HP, a software package must be one that, "has a special or unique application; is reliable; has been rigorously tested; is functional or entertaining; is user-friendly; is versatile."

But, before you whip out your 71 and start programming, be warned that, although a flyer publicizing the SDC will be included with every 71B sold, HP will be very choosy about the software it accepts for SDC distribution.

HP's objective is to stimulate the creation of a sizable array of software in order to make the purchase of the 71 more attractive to potential buyers, particularly those in the many narrow and specialized markets in which the power of the 71 can be exploited uniquely and fully.

Therefore, HP will accept for the SDC only software packages that contain first-rate, professionally developed software and documentation.

REFERENCES REQUIRED

HP has established stringent selection criteria for this third-party software program. Prospective participants will be asked to furnish, for example, a market plan for the proposed software: who the product is targeted for, when it will be available, how many they expect to sell, etc.

And to ensure high quality in the software itself, HP will ask for, "evidence of comprehensive testing through six user references."

Since HP will require developers to provide support for accepted programs, the company will want to see evidence that the developer has sufficient professional experience and works under professional business practices. Therefore, in addition to scrutinizing the product, HP will ask prospective participants for information about their businesses; what other products they have worked on, etc.

For those who make the grade, HP will offer a 40 percent discount on "one customized HP 71 system" for use in developing the software. This system could include HP products not specific to the 71, if such products were required for the proposed application, such as data transfer between a 71 and an 87.

HP has made it relatively easy and inexpensive to develop software for the 71. You won't need a VAX or an HP 3000. You could write code using just a 71, but HP is providing software

that will enable you to write a program as a text file on another microcomputer, such as an IBM PC or a Series 80 computer, then transfer it to the 71.

Additional software enables you to use the keyboard and display of the other computer so that you can write and debug programs for the 71 without transferring files, just as if the 71 had a large keyboard and large display.

The basic system you'll require for developing software for the 71 using a host computer consists of the following (prices shown are before the 40 percent discount):

- 82401A HP-IL Interface, \$125. This plug-in is required for connecting the 71 to the host computer. It also contains the DISPLAY IS statement, which enables you to send output to the CRT of the host computer instead of to the LCD display of the 71.
- 82164A RS-232C Interface, \$295, or 82169A HP-IL/HP-IB Interface, \$395,



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IN THE DECEMBER/JANUARY ISSUE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPUTING

Data
communications
on the Series 80

A look at
HP and Bering
Winchesters

Using DOS
batch files on the
110 and 150

depending on which computer you use as a host.

- 82441A Forth/Assembler Pac, \$150. This plug-in contains a Forth operating system, an assembler, a text editor and the KEYBOARD IS statement, which enables you to use the keyboard of the host computer for controlling the 71. (For a discussion of the advantages of Forth for writing application programs, see "HP 71B: A Fistful of Power" in the April/May issue of *Professional Computing*.)

- If you don't have a host computer with terminal emulation capability, you can nevertheless write HP 71 Basic programs as text files to the 71 for execution. To transfer files you'll need the 82440A Software Development Utility—\$35 with software on minicassettes, \$40 with software on magnetic cards. To connect the computers, you will need the appropriate HP-IL interfaces listed above.

For more information about writing software for HP's Software Distribution Center, write to the center, c/o HP, at 1000 N.E. Circle Blvd., Corvallis, OR 97330.

CURRENT SOFTWARE

Here's a complete list of the software that HP expects to have available for the 71B by the time you read this:

- 82441A Forth/Assembler Pac (\$150)
- 82480A Math Pac (\$95)
- 82481A AC Steady State Circuit Analysis Pac (\$75)
- 82482A Finance Pac (\$75)
- 82483A Surveying Pac (\$150)
- 82484A Curve Fitting Pac (\$95)
- 82485A Text Editor Pac (\$75)
- 00071-90064 Math Solutions Book (\$12.50)
- 00071-90065 Games Solutions Book (\$12.50)
- 00071-90066 General Utilities Solutions Book (\$12.50)

The software packages called Pacs come ready-to-use in plug-in ROMs. The software packages called Solutions Books provide listings of the Basic programs for you to key into the 71's RAM, but you can also obtain the programs prerecorded on minicassettes or on magnetic cards from HP's Users Library in Corvallis.

The prerecorded minicassettes cost an additional \$12; the magnetic cards cost an additional amount that had not been determined at the time of this writing, but which were expected to be priced higher than the cassettes. □