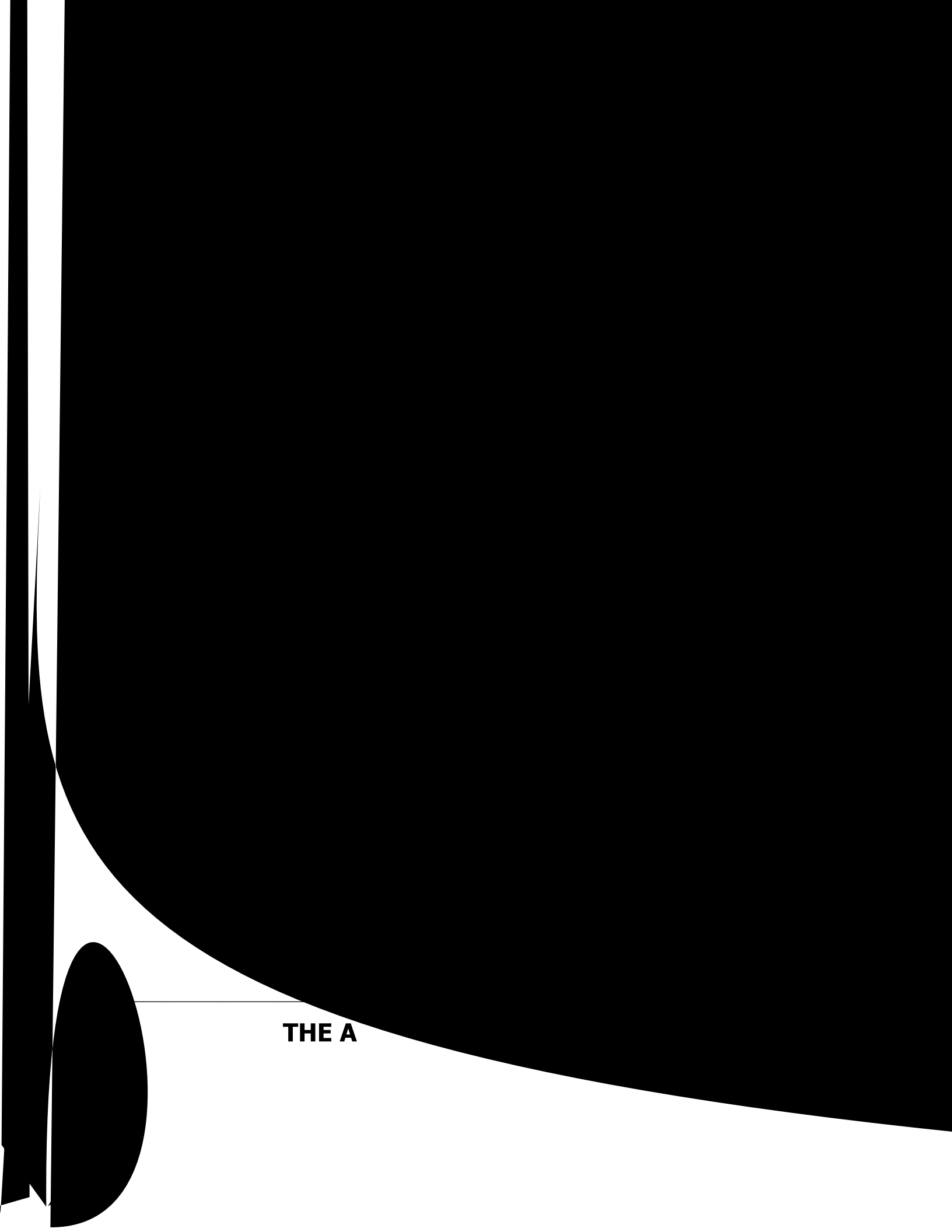
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4) WHAT ABOUT SOS - THE ///'S OPERATING SYSTEM?

1) First ever written to be user friendly.
2) Data base capabilities. Hierarchical file-structure.
3) Manages ALL memory locations and I/O.
4) One disk format for ALL allows file sharing and communication.
5) Able to share files with Apple //e; IIc and IIGS ProDos systems.
6) Easily updated without hurting existing compatibilities.
7) Ability to rewrite software drivers instead of changing hardware.
8) Will locate which drive a file is in for you.
9) Error proof menu system.
10) Automatic date/time stamping of every file.
11) Any destruction of data requires confirmation.
12) Interrupt driven.
13) Device-independent I/O.
14) Stores information using all empty space.
15) Programs that request printing could continue during printing.
16) Powerful drivers for graphics, console, audio, printer and RS232.
17) Programs can run 20% faster by pressing Control-5 on keypad (no video).
18) Uses all available memory.

David Craig Comments:

The Apple ///'s memory addressing was implemented in a very unique way. The ///'s brain was the 6502 microprocessor chip which could only address 64 KB of memory. But Apple added special circuitry to the /// so that this microprocessor could access up to 512 KB of memory. This was based on what is called "bank switching" which in effect fools the microprocessor into accessing different chunks of memory even when that memory is way beyond the normal 64 KB upper limit. The ///'s 64 KB memory was arranged into two sections with a middle section occupying 32 KB and the remainder (which itself was split) into the other 32 KB. The middle section could be replaced by up to 15 different sections or banks. This combination of 15 32 KB switched sections and one fixed section allowed the /// to have access to a maximum of 512 KB of memory (i.e. 512=32x(1+15)). (On Three did produce a card that provided that amount.)

Apple /// applications could instruct the ///'s hardware to use a specific section or bank in the variable memory area. Or, the application could use a special form of memory addressing called "extended addressing" which allowed the program to read or write a byte from any section or bank regardless of whether that section or bank was active. For example, a program could be running in bank 4 of memory and it could read byte number 1000 from bank 7 without doing any special "bank switching" operations. This "extended addressing" made the /// a very unique machine for its time.

If you are interested, there is still an Apple /// discussion group. To subscribe, send a message to majordomo@altair.com with the text: subscribe apple3-l in the body of your message.
You'll get info back at that point. Send comments or suggestions to: jeff@altair.com.

(THANKS to Jeff Fritz at West Virginia University for hosting this Listserve for many years.)

14) WHAT ABOUT AN OUTBOARD POWER SUPPLY FOR THE APPLE ///?

Many years ago, Washington Apple Pi worked with Dr. Stephen Buggie to developed a new, cheap power supply for the ///. This was an outboard power supply, originally made for use in PCs. It worked great and supplied ample power for the /// and four slots worth of cards. The cable from the new power supply snakes into the /// from the back through the Slot 1 opening. It did NOT prevent the use of a slot one card.

The price at the time was $27.00 plus $5.00 postage to Dr. Buggie.

Stephen Buggie, Ph.D. (buggie@unm.edu)
Dept. of Psychology/ED.
Univ. of New Mexico
200 College Rd.
Gallup, NM 87301

21) WHAT ABOUT MODEMS?

You'll need to track down an older modem with a 25 pin serial connector. Any one will do, but the terminal programs above have settings that only go up to 9600 baud. Your best bet is to use a 2400 baud or 14,400 baud modem - they will work fine and are very inexpensive (get one at a computer garage sale or your local user group).

25) ARE THERE ANY APPLE /// WEB SITES?

WAP continues to support the /// at http://www.wap.org/a3/default.html. There is a lot of Apple /// information, along with a searchable database of Apple /// articles going back to its earliest years. Plans are underway for an upgrade.

There are a growing number of sites that look at the history of the /// in the broader context of Apple Computer history or the history of computers in general. A search of Google, Yahoo or other search site brings up a number. Here are some that you might find of interest:

www.apple-history.com/aIII.html
www.digibarn.com/collections/systems/appleIII/
www.vintage-computer.com/apple_iii.shtml
www.applemuseum.bott.org/sections/computers/III.html
www.oldcomputers.net/appleiii.html
www.fortunecity.com/marina/reach/435/aiii.htm
www.cyberstreet.com/hcs/museum/apple3.htm
www.wordiq.com/definition/Apple_III
www.fact-index.com/a/ap/apple_iii.html
www.apple2history.org/history/ah07.html
www.tonh.net/museum/apple3.html
www.total.net/~hrothgar/museum/AppleIII/
www.syssrc.com/html/museum/html/apple3.html
www.allaboutapple.com/museo/reportages/apple_iii/apple_iii.htm
www.landwww.snail.com/apple/local/design/apple3.html

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28) IT'S THE 21ST CENTURY! WHAT'S NEW WITH THE ///?

2004

Project CFFA: Believe it or not, there's an Apple II card that provides a CF (Compact Flash) and IDE hard drive interface that works in the ///. A driver is available that makes it all possible. Goto http://dreher.net/?s=projects/CFforAppleII=projects/CFforAppleII/main.php for information.

A3CD (DVD?): Washington Apple Pi's compilation of all things Apple /// is anticipated for release in the fall of 2004. It includes a tremendous number of articles about the ///, pictures, audio files, etc. Check www.wap.org for availability, cost and information.

A3PD Public Domain Library on CD: This is an ongoing project to move WAP's Apple /// PD library of 250 disks onto a CD. Check www.wap.org for availability.

Apple /// DVDs: Washington Apple Pi has developed a two set DVD with all ten chapters of the "How To Use Your Apple /// in 10 EZ Lessons" (1-5 on DVD1, 6-10 on DVD2) VHS tape. There are also a number of Apple /// iMovies – which honor On Three and discuss the Apple /// horses animation. Photos and some A3 information is also on these disks. Check www.wap.org for more information. By the way, a ///er in Japan wants to turn these DVDs into a Japanese version!