



Printing method: Impact dot matrix  
Character set: JIS 128 or ASCII 96  
(operator-selectable)  
Character formation: 9 x 9 dot matrix  
(character part)  
Print speed: 80 characters/second  
(normal characters)  
Line length: 40, 66, 80, 132 (columns)  
Dimensions: (W) 374 x (D) 305 x (H)107 mm  
Weight: 5.5 kg

### Product Features

Epson\* developed and brought the MX-80 to market with the intention of offering a full-fledged printer for use with personal computers. Amid the rapid growth of the IT industry, Epson attracted great attention for developing the industry's leading small, lightweight printer intended for use with personal computers. The MX-80 offered precision by using bidirectional printing with logic seeking. Also included was a nine-pin microdot print head employing a mechanism whereby nine narrow wires, called needles, slid in response to oscillations generated by an electromagnet in an actuator. The needles would strike the sheet of paper through an ink ribbon. The impact of the needles would leave dots that were placed so as to compose characters. Moreover, with its 9 x 9 character composition and user-selectable line length (40, 66, 80, or 132 columns), the MX-80 also delivered highly advanced functionality. To make the product light, its case was made of plastic, and a large, harmonica-type print ribbon was used in order to increase ribbon lifespan by at least a small margin. Further, it was equipped with one more motor than previous printers in order to avoid paperfeeding problems. In addition to these features, detachment of the print head was simplified by developing a one-touch mechanism for removing and reattaching it. Ease of use was designed into the printer down to the smallest details. At the time of the MX-80's introduction on the market, the printer lineup included multifunction Type I (super business printer) and high-resolution Type II (super bit image printer) printers. These printers' target users ran the gamut from hobbyists to business users. Also, the Type III printer was the first to use the ESC/P printer command that would grow into a de facto standard.

### Background

The appearance of the microprocessor in 1965 ushered in an era in which computers would become a mass commodity. This phenomenon led Epson to consider printers that could be connected to computers. Thus, taking advantage of precision technologies that it had refined in its watch and miniprinter businesses, the company set about developing a printer for use with computers.

In 1977, Epson announced the MODEL-10 tabletop line printer. From there, it went on to announce its first dot-matrix printer, the TP-80, in 1979. In doing so, it succeeded in riding the wave of increasing computer ubiquity to favorable sales. Further improvements to this product led to the commercialization of the small and light MX-80 computer printer in 1980.

### Impact

Successful in meeting the needs of its day, the MX-80 elicited a great response around the world, appearing in one data show and electronics show after another. It also received favorable notice for ease of use and for its intuitive user interface. The year after going on sale, it held a 60% share of the Japanese market. It was also received well in the United States, where its small size, light weight, and compact style made it a virtual standard in for the IBM personal computers that were populating the U.S. market. The MX-80's contribution to the successful establishment and expansion of Epson's sales network in the United States was substantial.

\*Then known as Shinshu Seiki Co., Ltd. (name changed to Epson Corporation in 1982).