

indeed, that box was larger than the ones the machine itself came in. When we got it open, we found it was more documents than software. Volume after volume of documents, mostly about UNIX. Formidable.

There was, however, a thin thing no more than half a dozen pages long that called itself a *Quick Reference Guide*. I thought that would surely do the trick. Alas, no. It merely tells you, "To turn your computer on, press the switch, located on the back of the computer just above the power cord, to the ON position." Nothing else. With grammar like that, why should I expect information? There was another little packet, but that consisted of pages that I could, if I really wanted to, insert in the spiral-bound *Quick Reference Guide*, after which I'd have a summary of DOS commands. Since my problem was that I couldn't get to DOS, that didn't seem a useful thing to do.

Next thing to do was fish around in the software box. Sure enough, there was a boxed book called *Getting Started With Your AT&T Personal Computer 6300 Plus*. As is customary nowadays, the pages of the loose-leaf book were shrink-packaged separately from the tab cards; it takes a good five minutes to render the thing usable. Eventually I got it together, only to discover that it wasn't much help.

There was a DOS disk in the package with the book. I put it in the floppy disk drive and reset the machine. The 6300 trundled for a while—it makes all kinds of tests for you—but eventually it came up with the A> prompt. So far so good. Now to see what's on the hard disk...

I can't find the hard disk. The system won't believe there is a C drive. Not only that, but it thinks B is the same floppy disk drive as A. I suppose there's a reason for that, but I guess I just don't care what it is.

Examining the *Getting Started* book reveals there's a great deal of discussion on partitioning the hard disk. I suppose that's what I'd have to do. That's a procedure guaranteed to scare the liver out of any casual business user, but I expect I could manage it—except that I'm afraid to try. After reading the legalese paper they sent with the machine, I'm afraid to do much of anything with it.

UNIX

When I saw the PC 6300 Plus in Atlanta, the product manager cautioned me: "This is a DOS machine that happens to know UNIX, but please, please, don't stress UNIX. Stress that this is an AT that runs PC and AT programs."

Still, it's obvious that the machine comes up in UNIX when you boot from the hard disk. It does all the UNIX-like tests and demands that you log on. Since

I don't know how to log on, I had to wait for my son Alex who is a UNIX wizard. He managed to log on, I think as "root."

Meanwhile, I tried to follow what he was doing by reading the "Getting Started with the UNIX System" section of the *Getting Started* manual. That's a remarkable document. It shows you a picture of how to turn the machine on and how to insert a floppy disk—this in a section on getting started with UNIX. Foo. Anyone who doesn't know a lot more about computers than how to insert a floppy disk isn't

going to get anywhere with UNIX. I rather soon gave up on the *Getting Started* document.

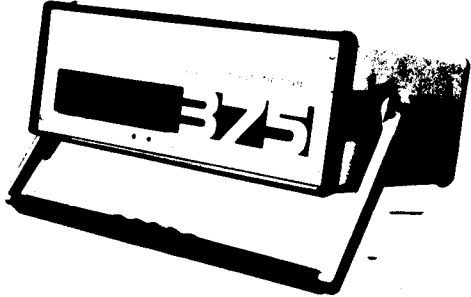
Meanwhile, Alex did get UNIX running, and he discovered that this particular AT&T 6300 Plus has about 500K bytes of unused space on its hard disk.

Somehow I don't think I much want a machine that has no more than 500K bytes for me to use. I suppose I could go downstairs and get the little 500K-byte bubble memory board out of our IBM PC (the PC thinks that's a remarkably fast fixed disk

continued

SYMMETRIC
AT&T BELL LABS
 COMPUTER SYSTEMS

THE 375 - A SOFTWARE DEVELOPER'S DREAM



THE BEAUTY AND THE BSD

\$4,995*

OVER 1,000 PROGRAMS, 3,000 FILES !

<p>Full 4.2BSD UNIX™ Each 375 comes standard with a complete configurable 4.2BSD UNIX system. We don't skimp on software. And we can even give you EMACS, INGRES, TEX and SPICE for those special applications.</p>	<p>Loaded With Languages Turn on your 375 and start developing your own applications. It's that easy. C, FORTRAN, PASCAL, BASIC, APL, Assembler, LISP and PROLOG: they all come standard on every 375.</p>
---	--

Loaded With Standard Features

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ 50MB Winchester Disc Drive ★ 1MB 5¼" Floppy ★ 2MB RAM (8MB optional) ★ Integral SCSI & ST506 Interfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ 4 RS232 Ports (up to 36 optional!) ★ Parallel Printer Port ★ External Winchester and Floppy Ports ★ Series 32000, 10MHz, VM, FPU
--	---

Also Available: 10 Mb ETHERNET, up to 280MB disk memory, streaming tape, and more !

A Portable Computer for the Serious User

At last, a powerful, portable (22lbs) scientific computer for all your serious work. The 375 combines the advantages of a VAX™ with the size, versatility, and price of a micro. All the software tools are there. It's even small enough to leave on your desktop or take wherever you need it. **And it's available direct to you right now !**

CALL US TODAY (408) 279-0700

SYMMETRIC COMPUTER SYSTEMS - 1620 Oakland Rd. Suite D200 - San Jose, CA 95131

* Prepaid. Sales tax and Shipping Costs not included.
 UNIX is a registered trademark of AT&T Bell Labs.
 VAX is a trademark of Digital Equipment Series 32000 is a trademark of National Semiconductor Corp.