

## ICL 2900 Series, Models 2950 and 2956

### New Product Announcement

On October 19, 1978, International Computers Ltd. added another mid-range system to its 2900 Series and announced new software that will allow 2904/50 users to upgrade, without reprogramming, to the 2950 or the new 2956.

Representing what ICL calls "progressive product evolution," the 2956 is basically a 2950 with an enhanced order code processor (central processor) and a memory composed of 16K-bit chips instead of 4K chips. A 2950 can be upgraded to a 2956 by replacing the order code processor, the store control unit (SCU), and the memory.

Users of 2950 and 2956 systems will now have a choice of three operating environments: the new DME/2 (Direct Machine Environment/2) for running 2904/50 programs, DME/3 for running 1900 Series programs, and VME/K (Virtual Machine Environment/K) for running 2900 Series programs.

Both the 2950, announced in November 1977, and the 2956 have microprogrammed, pipe-line processors. Each can support one or two device control units (DCU's) and one store control unit (SCU). DCU's have a transfer rate of 2 million bytes per second and the SCU has a transfer rate of 10 million bytes per second.

A 2950 can have a memory size ranging from 0.25 million to 1.4 million bytes under DME or from 0.5 million to 2 million bytes under VME/K. A 2956 can have a memory size ranging from 0.5 million to 2 million bytes.

Prices for the 2950 range from £300,000 to £600,000, for the 2956 from £500,000 to £750,000. Deliveries of the 2956 will begin in the first quarter of 1979, with DME/2 scheduled for release in September 1979.

DME/2, like DME/3, is a combination of microcode and software. DME/2 enables a 2950 or 2956 to emulate a 2904/50, allowing a user to transfer his software from the smaller machine without modification. At some point, however, users must rewrite their job control programs and modify their applications programs if they want to take advantage of the virtual machine, virtual ▷



*The new ICL 2956, above, like the ICL 2950, can be assembled in configurations that eliminate the need for raised flooring.*

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▷ memory facilities of VME/K. To ease this transition, ICL has been urging both its 1900 Series and its 2903 and 2904 users to write their new programs in conformity with ICL's "forward compatibility standards." Programs meeting these standards can later be recompiled to run in 2900 Series mode.

To simplify installation, a 2950 or 2956 system can be interconnected in a "Y" configuration that eliminates the need for a raised floor. The 2950's and 2956's also require a less strictly controlled atmosphere than the larger 2900 systems. The field engineer's console, a separate unit on the 2960, has been combined with the operator's console on the 2950 and 2956, thus allowing the operator to run diagnostics.

New peripherals announced with the 2950, and now also available for the 2956, include the EDS-80 Exchangeable Disc Store, an 80-million-byte disc drive with an average access time of 38.3 milliseconds and a peak transfer rate of 1.21 million bytes per second. Another new device, the LP-720 band printer, operates at speeds up to 720 lines per minute.□