

About MICROpendium

MICROpendium

MICROpendium started life in February 1984 as a magazine named Home Computer Compendium. By May 1984 the magazine name was changed to MICROpendium after Home Computer Compendium publishers were threatened with a lawsuit by another publisher because of the use of the name "Home Computer Compendium". The idea for MICROpendium was the product of Texas residents John Koloen (Publisher) and Laura Burns (Editor), who produced the early issues by Koloen trading computer consulting time at the newspaper he worked for, in exchange for the use of the newspaper's typesetting equipment after hours.

Including the three Home Computer Compendium issues, a total of 146 monthly MICROpendium magazines were published between February 1984 and March 1996. There was no April 1996 issue. Because "MICROpendium began to decline", according to Laura Burns, MICROpendium went bi-monthly with the May/June 1996 issue. Although the magazine now had fewer issues, Koloen and Burns retained the 'traditional' full-size, newsprint format they had been using from the beginning. But in September 1997 the magazine was forced to adopt a new size, using two-pages of text for each side of an 8.5 inch by 11 inch photocopied sheet of paper. At some point '...we started looking for other jobs' according to Burns. Eleven of the 8.5 inch by 11 inch photocopied sheet of paper issues were produced, ending with the May/June 1999 issue which had only one byline on the front page, "MICROPENDIUM CEASES PUBLICATION".

The initial subscription fee for the magazine was \$12.00 for 12 issues, delivered via USPS Domestic 3rd Class Mail. Delivery via USPS 1st Class Mail was higher, as was the cost of delivery outside of the United States. The price for a single issue was set at \$1.50 in 1984, a price that held steady until November 1987 when the cost was bumped to \$2.00 for a single issue. That went to \$2.50 in October 1989, \$3.50 in August 1993 and finally \$6.00 with the May/June 1996 issue. In February 1985 the yearly subscription price went to \$15.00 for 12 issues. This price held until April 1986 when subscriptions for Domestic 3rd Class Mail delivery went to \$17.00 for 12 issues, as advertised on the last page of each issue. Curiously, one could still find the \$15.00 for 12 issues subscription price in the MICROpendium information column on the Table of Contents page until the October 1986 issue. The cost of a 12 month subscription went to \$20.00 in October 1987, \$25.00 in October 1989, \$35.00 in August 1993, which is where it stayed until the end of the magazine.

Home Computer
Compendium



In a sort of birth-life-death cycle typical of magazines in the computer industry at least, MICROpendium started out printing 24-pages per issue, moved to 32-pages per issue in September 1984, 40-pages per issue by November 1984, 48-pages in June 1985, hitting an all time high of 56-pages in the October, November and December 1985 issues and again in the November 1986 and 1987 issues. In the magazine's heyday, advertising revenue would generally support 40 or 48-pages per issue. This number dropped to 32-pages per issue in March 1992, a pages-per-issue number that would stand until March 1996 when 40-pages per issue came back for a brief stint with the switch to bi-monthly issues in May/June 1996. With the introduction of the '8.5 inch by 11 inch photocopied sheet of paper issues' in September/October 1997 the number of pages per issue varied from 24-pages to 56-pages until MICROpendium ceased publication.

In August 1990 Bill Gaskill, "well-known chronicler of the TI" according to Mid-South 99er Gary Cox, sent an article to User Group newsletter editors entitled "Transitions". In that article Gaskill spoke of the demise of numerous computer magazines he had subscribed to that targeted the MS-DOS and general interest reader. The article concluded with a plea for readers to become MICROpendium subscribers, so that same deadly fate would not befall owners of the TI-99/4A. It seems fitting to include an excerpt of that section of Transitions as an epitaph to what was the longest running commercial publication supporting the Texas Instruments 99/4A Home Computer (and the Myarc Geneve 9640) ever.

"MICROpendium stands alone as the only commercial publication supporting our computer (Asgard's Reflections magazine not withstanding). Without it, the TI-99/4A and Geneve community would cease to exist as we know it. If it can happen in the mighty MS-DOS world, it can sure happen one day to us. Wouldn't it be a tragedy to receive a notice in the mail one day that MICROpendium had closed its doors? I think it would. If you are not a MICROpendium subscriber already, then please become one today. If your computer means anything to you, and if you want to continue to see new products developed for it, MICROpendium must survive for developers to have a national audience to market to. Without a medium such as that provided by the folks at MICROpendium, there would be no way for new products to be announced, and hence no new products. Subscription cost is \$25 per year for 12 issues, mailed to MICROpendium Box 1343 Round Rock, Texas 78680. It is truly an investment in your computing future."

John Koloen and Laura Burns photo by Gary Cox ([compliments of TI99ers.Org](#))

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