

## Calculators: New designs make it easy to work, play

NEW YORK (UPI) — The electronic calculator has come a long way. The hand-held machine that used to just add 2 and 2 has developed to the point where it can do the work that needed a room-sized computer 10 years ago.

The market for just plain calculators is reaching saturation point, according to industry spokesmen. The result is the buyer is being offered an ever wider selection of specialty calculators — such as the Biolator.

Designed for those who follow the biorhythm theory of personal cycles, the Biolator is described as "a pocket-sized electronic wonder

that for any given day tells you how you're doing physically, emotionally and intellectually." It is just one of dozens of new calculator designs being introduced by manufacturers to keep sales going.

Production of calculators jumped from 1 million in 1971 — when the calculator you now buy for \$15 would cost \$150 — to more than 20

million in 1976. Total industry sales in 1976 hit \$618 million.

Industry officials predict production of 30 million units in 1977 and then a leveling off followed by a decline in both sales and production into the 1980s.

Several companies have been forced out of the retail end of the

business by the price war of the last two years.

But those who remain hope to produce something to tickle your fancy.

Akira Shimizu, vice-president of Casio, said recently: "In 1977, calculator manufacturers will compete in terms of product innovation to expand the market. There just isn't enough room for all companies to bring out the same products with the same features and at the same prices."

Richard Perdue at Texas Instruments, one of the leading manufacturers, said: "There is saturation in some areas, but we keep coming up

with new ideas. We are constantly making our own products obsolete."

Texas Instruments is into the programmable calculator, which in fact is nearer to being a computer.

"We're also seeing people use the same calculator at work and play," said a TI spokesman. "We have programs that allow the calculator to work out flight plans for the private flier or a winning course for a yacht racer."

The calculator also is moving into schools in a big way, despite some wariness over the danger that students will be discouraged from


learning how to solve mathematics problems for themselves the way.

Toys are next. One company already has introduced an electronic hockey game based on a calculator. A number of companies are looking into the possibility of sophisticated toys, but they are reluctant to discuss details.

"There's going to be an electronic invasion into a sphere of life," said Robert E. Anslow.

From basic math to electronic pinball machines — the calculator has come a long way.

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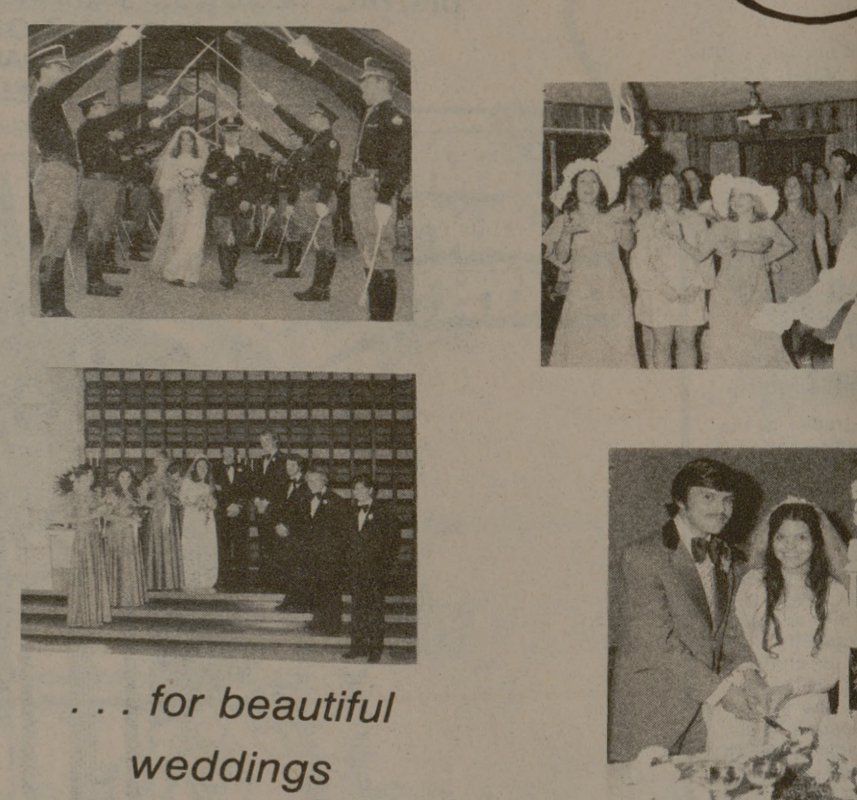
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