American Express launches computer graphics service

American Express is offering a concept-to-completion computer graphics service to the business community. Custom-designed computer-generated slides can be ordered from the service, which provides a range of graphic design capabilities from one-dimensional pie charts to complex graphs.

A computer imaging system with three levels of capabilities can generate basic business slides of graphs and charts in 64 different colors in less than 15 minutes for either business presentations or multimedia stage shows, according to the company. Slide information bypasses the typesetting, mechanical art, photography, and photo processing steps and is transmitted directly to a main computer and camera. The general turnaround time is 36 hours, and a rush service is available.

The audiovisual staff works with business and commercial clients, develops themes, and creates sound tracks and original music. Executive counseling on the effective delivery of the audiovisual presentations is also available.

Cost varies from $20 to $80 per slide, depending on complexity.

Reader Service Number 34

CAD system is based on Data General series

Summagraphics Corporation’s Icon is a computer-aided design system based on Data General’s Desk Top Generation series computer. It can be used for applications in the architectural, engineering, construction, and printed circuit board markets. Complete application programs are available for architecture, civil engineering, surveying, cost estimating, printed circuit design, mechanical and electrical design, and word processing.

Icon creates, previews, edits, stores, and recalls graphics in a self-contained workstation that is available in single- and dual-user configurations. Each workstation has an integral digitizer with menu and two tilt-and-swivel monitors. The system features a 19-inch raster graphics display with 1280 x 1024 resolution and a prompting alphanumeric display with instructions and built-in Help tables that detail the steps required for an operation. Icon’s monitor also offers enhanced graphics functions, including pan and zoom, rubber-band, and dynamic drag.

Each Icon workstation costs $37,250 when based on a typical four-workstation configuration.

Reader Service Number 35

Plot preview station helps eliminate inaccurate plots

The Gerber Scientific Instrument Company is offering a graphics option for use with the PMS 7000 production management system and the Series 3100 and 4100 controllers.

The plot preview station with 12-inch-diagonal monochrome screen allows the operator to review plot files and plot data on the CRT. The graphics feature of the CRT permits the operator to zoom in and pan the actual drawing to check the plot for data integrity before activating the plotter. Corrections to the data can be incorporated by switching to the alphanumeric mode.

Features of the plot preview station include pan and zoom keys to pan right, left, up, or down in two panning modes. Zoom rescales the graphics to display a selected area at greater magnification; eight levels of zoom are available. In addition, a portion or an entire plot can be viewed remotely by the system operator. The station also features a 512 x 512 graphics display, and operator prompts and responses in plain English. The unit displays 80 characters per line by 24 lines and can be enhanced to 80 characters per line by 20 lines.

The optional CRT, with a full ASCII alphanumeric keyboard and graphics cursor control keys, can be ordered in place of the standard alphanumeric CRT currently supplied with a 3100 or 4100 controller or the PMS 7000. The plot preview option consists of the graphics video display, keyboard, and plot preview software. It is priced at $5075.

Reader Service Number 36

Radio Shack’s color computer offers 64K

The TRS-80 64K Extended Basic color computer, part of Radio Shack’s disk-based color graphics system, offers programming capabilities and optional expansion to 64K memory. The built-in Extended Basic language can be used to access 32K of memory, and full 64K memory can be utilized by adding a Color 2 disk kit and the OS-9 operating system. The computer is capable of further expansion by adding a printer, plotter, digitizer, graphics tables, up to four disk drives for increased storage, or a telephone interface for communications.

The programming feature of the computer allows multicharacter variable names (two significant); string arrays of up to 255 characters; full-feature editing; tracing; floating point nine-digit accuracy; trigonometric functions; user-definable keys; specific error messages; and Peek, Poke, and USR commands. It offers one-line commands for generation of detailed color graphics and 256 x 192 resolution (49,152 pixels).

The 64K color computer sells for $400, the Color 2 disk kit for $400, and the OS-9 operating system for $70.

Reader Service Number 37