TM-930   1990

Receipt / Journal / Slip Printer
Printing method: 9-pin serial impact dot matrix
Fonts: 7 x 9 and 9 x 9
Number of columns: 40 / 30 (for journal/receipt);
                    88 / 66 (for slip)
Interface: RS-232C / Centronics-compliant
Print speed: 211 / 158 characters per second
Copies: Original (1) + 4 more
Dimensions: (W) 251 x (D) 298 x (H) 197 mm
Weight: Approximately 6.0 kg

Product Features

The TM-930, a terminal module printer for use with PC-based, open-architecture POS systems (PC-POS), made its first appearance in 1990. The culmination of Epson's miniprinter technology, the TM-930 was adopted by top American retailer Sears Roebuck & Co. in 1992, propelling Epson to a position as a leading supplier of PC-POS printers.

Development of the TM-930 was based on the M-930 printer mechanism, which was already on the market. Based on technology developed in the existing printer mechanism business, the mechanism provided the reliability demanded of a finished PC-POS printer. It was also designed for longevity, with a mechanism rated for 5 million lines and a print head rated for 100 million characters. The TM-930 was a serial-impact dot-matrix printer capable of printing receipts, journals, and slips. It also allowed selection of 58-mm or 70-mm roll paper, and could print slips as large as A4 size. This versatile printer could also produce four copies, plus the original. Further, as a printer geared toward PC-POS, the TM-930 was equipped with RS-232C and Centronics-compliant interfaces, and allowed for easy construction of a PC-POS system. Finally, the printer was equipped with what would evolve to become ESC/POS®, which would become the de facto standard control command system for POS printers.

Background

At the start of the 1980s, distributors and retailers began introducing POS systems (Point of Sale system, used for monitoring sales in real time). Computerization in the retail industry accelerated suddenly. The first POS systems, however, were built around dedicated computers and required large outlays of capital, which limited their spread. Amid these developments, the increasing affordability of personal computers gave birth to the concept of an open-architecture, freely extensible PC-POS system. Turning its attention to this concept, Epson began to diversify from its OEM business, whereby it supplied printer mechanisms to dedicated POS system manufacturers, and also began working to grow its business in self-branded printers. Toward this end, the company engaged in development of a PC-POS terminal module printer that would take advantage of its expertise in mechanical printers. The fruits of these efforts were the TM series. In view of the requirement to promote standardization, the TM series were equipped with what would involve into ESC/POS®, now the standard for POS printer control command systems. These developments culminated, in 1990, in the appearance of the TM-930. To strengthen TM-930 sales, Epson established partnerships with system integrators (SI) and value-added resellers (VAR), and focused on making inroads into retailers with its PC-POS systems.

Impact

The release of the TM-930 terminal module printer marked diversification in Epson's business-printer business from OEM printer mechanisms toward expansion of the finished printer business.

Epson contributed significantly to the development of the PC-POS market in two ways: first by successfully penetrating the market with printer technology whose high reliability met stringent POS needs; and second, by providing "ESC/POS®," the control command system that would become the industry standard for POS printers. PC-POS systems spread rapidly as America's top retailers adopted open-architecture PC-POS. The wave went beyond the United States, carrying the product into Europe and Asia. Meanwhile, demand for PC-POS printers also grew quickly. The sequence of events surrounding the introduction and sale of the TM-930 established Epson as a leading company in the market for PC-POS printers.