



# THE CALCULATOR AND THE COMPUTER

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BY JANE SMITH

CeBIT 2004 took place in Hanover, Germany 18–24th March 2004 a showcase for innovative products and solutions and a venue that sparks new investments. CeBIT ranks as the world's number one event for the ICT sector. It is the only trade fair where representatives of business, science, politics and media can see all the latest trends in a single location. This year the theme was, 'Where Technology does Business'.

In conjunction with CeBIT, the ICT World Forum is also held. The forum attracts a broad network of leaders from business, government and academia together focusing on the key issues facing the global ICT industry in the year ahead. The theme of the forum for 2004 was Achieving Business Profitability with Technology.

Whilst this is all very well, little will be relevant to the immediate business of selling products for some time to come but it is where the trends are set and the 'die is cast'.

For us, the day-to-day challenge is to keep abreast of new product developments and technologies that we can embrace to build sales. It is with this in mind that we wanted to just touch of the area of calculators. A very traditional market

sector that trundles along year after year, the main players such as Canon, Citizen, Texas Instruments, Casio and Busicom will all confirm that whilst prices have fallen reducing the overall value of the market sector, volumes are holding up.

**“GBC's 121xPC Link's absence of drivers enables true 'Plug-&-Run' functionality,”**

**ELKE HAHMANN, GBC**

But, we have also discovered a new twist that will bring new players into the market and challenge the traditional volumes over time. USB calculators are now coming to market to work interactively with your computer and in particular Excel spreadsheet packages.

Currently many people work away with Excel with their calculator beside them, inserting the results into the spreadsheet as they go. But wouldn't automatic transfer make things so much easier? Well now it is possible. We spoke to two manufacturers bringing models to market.

Steve Couling, product manager for Kensington Products at Acco told us they had developed the Kensington USB Calcpad because of the massive growth in Notebook users (especially for business use). To improve working efficiency for heavy numeric use on laptops and because of increased mobility, instead of having to carry both a calculator and a numeric keypad you only have to carry one product. The USB Calcpad combines a numeric keypad with calculator functionality. It has a retractable USB Connector and has a built in 'SEND' function, which allows you to send manual (calculator) calculations direct into an Excel spreadsheet.

Nikki Brennan, marketing executive for Canon explained that they too had launched two new USB calculators. The LS-120PC specifically designed to work with spreadsheets and a smaller LS-12PC model especially for notebooks.

In terms of future developments it is likely that a range of wireless products will emerge in response to the increasing need for portability and working space efficiency. ■