Samantekt eftir Jóhann Gunnarsson

Um liti á tölvum og ritvélum framleiddum af IBM.

Svo sem kynnt hefur verið á fundum í Öldungadeild SKÝ er í gangi verkefni á vegum Tölvusögusafnsins (Computer history museum, **www.computerhistory.org**) í Mountain view í Kaliforníu sem gengur út á að gera upp og halda gangfærum tveimur tölvum af gerðinni IBM 1401. Í tengslum við það verkefni er tölvupóstlisti þar sem við og við er dreift minningabrotum sem gætu verið áhugaverð fyrir tölvuáhugafólk utan þess þrönga hrings

Þar á meðal er upprifjun nokkurra fyrrverandi starfsmanna IBM um það hvernig litir, aðrir en grár og svartur, komu til sögunnar. Við leyfum okkur hér á eftir að birta þessa fróðleiksmola lesendum Söguvefsins til skemmtunar. Fyrst skal þó getið tveggja tímaritsgreina sem fjalla um 1401-verkefnið:

Wired Magazine: **http://www.wired.com/wiredenterprise/2013/02/restorations-2?pid=589**

IEEE Spectrum: http://spectrum.ieee.org/computing/hardware/rebuilding-the-ibm-1401

Á myndum sem fylgja fyrri greininni sést að tölvan skartaði blárri rönd þvert yfir að ofan, og er hún kveikjan að umræðunni um liti.

Í seinni greininni er minnst á íslenska tónskáldið Jóhann Jóhannson, sem hefur samið tónverk um 1401-tölvuna, IBM 1401 - A Users Manual. Það vantar reyndar í frásögnina að fyrsta útgáfa þess verks var samin í samvinnu við dansarann Ernu Ómarsdóttur, og fluttu þau verkið saman víða um lönd að minnsta kosti 60 sinnum á árunum upp úr 2002. Bæði Erna og Jóhann eiga feður í öldungadeildinni. Greininni fylgja auk þess nokkrar skemmtilegar myndir frá gamla tímanum.

- En þá er að snúa sér að litunum.

John Pokoski wrote:
Thanks Robert, I enjoy these posts.
I forgot about the blue stripe at the top. I seem to recall that customers could specify another color (at a price). I think I recall red ones.

Van Gardner wrote:
Here is some tourist information about the colors. It all started when IBM offered the customer a choice of color on typewriters. There was set of standard colors some of which I remember: Classic Blue, Flame Red, Garnet Rose, Light Gray, Pearl White , Raven Black, Sky Blue, Sunrise Yellow, Willow Green. In 1971 orders for new typewiters was down and IBM started taking trade-in IBM machines on new orders. These machines were sent to the plant and completely dissassembled and cleaned. All worn parts were replaced and these machines run down the assembly line and adjusted to meet new machine specs. All of these machines were painted Charcoal Brown and sold to employees only at a large discount. I bought an Executive with a wide carriage and carbon ribbon for $220.00 plus $6.60 GA (Georgia) sales tax. IBM deducted $9.44 from each pay check untill it was paid for with no interest charged. A new Executive like mine would have cost $525.00. I still have it somewhere in my attic.

In 1955/56 when I was in 704 school in Poughkeepsie they had a computer room on the back of the plant with a 702 that they actually did the plant's payroll and other data processing. It was a nice looking room that they showed potential customers on tour. The whole front was plate glass windows they could look through.

There was a desk for a receptionist with a yellow typewriter and yellow telephone. The receptionist had long blond hair like Betty Grable and always wore a yellow sweater. Every day at lunch I would go by there to see if she ever wore anything but a yellow sweater. I never saw her in anything but yellow if she was there. I wondered if that had been written into her job description.

When Lockheed at Marietta, GA got their 705 Model 3 they paid $3,000.00 for an RPQ to get their's painted Garnet Rose. That was the first colored system I ever saw. Later on Martin Aircraft in Orlando, FL got a 704 system with each box a different color. When the 7000 series machines came along I was working on a 7094 in a test cell at the Poughkeepsie plant and the next cell had a 7074 that was going to the U.S. Justice Dept. and it's main frame was blue and it had 7340 Hypertape Drives with red and white vertical panels. You could not look over to that test cell without thinking about the American flag.

When Customers began to get multiple systems they would get different colors and refer to them as Old Red or Old Blue.

Joe Frank wrote:

Van, I liked your color stories about the various machines we made, but times do change the customs.

We made a 1401 Model F for the Bank of Colorado. The first computer ever installed in Colorado, in 1962. It went into the first Mile High Building in Downtown Denver. The customer wanted yellow accent panels at the top and bottom of the gates (A+B sides) and yellow side panels. The 1403 and the 1402 also had yellow accent panels. THE PROBLEM!!!

The CE's ran into a rash of printer checks, which no one could correct. I was sent out from the factory to get it fixed. By the time I got to the bank from Endicott, the customer had applied a name to that Computer System...--- THE LEMON!! As I remember we tried to stay away from selling the yellow panels for obvious reasons.

The best color combinations, in my mind, were on some of the early, 360/30 systems They were absolutely glamorous on any customer raised floor computer centers. Even in the early days, I remember going to a bank on Wall St, and seeing the system. A lot of peripherals from Tape Drives, Printers, Readers, 1419s a sea of IBM equipment, basic charcoal gray with red panel accents, I remember the customer bragging and saying, "Welcome to the most colorful computer center in the world. The one they had at the Time Life Building in New York City, around the corner from the Taft Hotel was just as colorful, with one very distinct advantage. It was installed on the first floor of the building, with large windows, and faced out to the avenue. That computer became a very big reference sell for us.

On to Typewriters

I transferred to Lexington in late 1973. We had a ton of stories about typewriter colors, which didn't quite make the cut. There was a lime green which initially had some favor, but after a few months, the secretaries thought no-no, not good for a queasy stomach early in the morning. Tags like that made the Marketing gurus stay away from the wrong colors. Yellow was in the mix, but like the lemon story above, could impact the reputation of the Selectric Typewriter.

Van, I don't know when you bought your brown typewriter, but in the four years I spent at Lexington, I don't remember brown for the same reasons.

A WHITE TYPEWRITER. A once in a century special typewriter, made for whom -- why the POPE of course. For Pope Pius XII. The only white one ever made. (in the '50's)

THE 1976 SPECIAL PATRIOT SELECTRIC TYPEWRITER.. We all were kind of giddy about this machine. This was the 1 MILLIONTH SELECTRIC. I had a meeting with the managers of the Selectric Line. They wanted to do something special with #1,000,000.

My suggestion, Let's make this typewriter for Bart Stevens and award him #1 Million. Bart was the President of OPD (Office Products Division) with Headquarters in Franklin Lakes, NJ. Bart was a dearly loved president right down to the assemblers on the floor. Tex Shaver was the Manager of Typewriter assembly. His suggestion, make it a red, white and blue typewriter and make it look like tha American Flag. Now when this unit was completed, we exhibited it in the plant cafeteria. We could have sold a lot of this model because of the 1976 patriotic mood in the country. Bart loved his typewriter. But, there was a snag!!! If Bart accepted this typewriter, he would have to pay taxes on it. I think the problem stemmed from the fact that we had not included anyone from the controllers function in the planning. And you know they all wanted to make this happen, so they simply rounded up the Award to include sufficient funds for a tax free special award.

COLORS, COLORS, COLORS!!!! As you may all know, or may not know, we had over 250 color combinations for the Selectric. But, 90% or better of typewriters being sold by 1976, were blue, charcoal gray, red and black. If we could take all the other models out of the line, there was a pretty good savings potential. But the biggest and most important marketing strategy turned out to be the DELIVERY SCHEDULE. When our customers made up their mind that they wanted a typewriter, they wanted it NOW!!! Now meant within TWO WEEKS OR LESS. When faced with the choice of 250+ models or a two week delivery schedule, this decision became a no brain-er!! It may not sound like much, but when we were looking at producing a million Selectrics a year, a 5 or 10 dollar/machine reduction in cost, could be turned into $5 to 10 Million dollar advantage. It's amazing what we were able to accomplish on a product like the IBM Typewriter...

That's my story about COLOR, sorry for running on and on, but I wanted to share the fun with you.

PS.

Ef ég man rétt, sem enginn skyldi nú lengur treysta, var fyrsta tölvan frá IBM sem kom með öðrum lit en gráum og bláum, System/3 sem seld var Iðnaðarbankanum. Hún var að mestu rauð að lit. (J.G)