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Series Producer: Roger Tucker

Contributors in clip: Wynne Brindle, Darrell Ince

Clip transcript:

Wynne Brindle:

Another device that's made its appearance in recent years is the micro computer. The cheapest models are now available in the High Street for less than £100.

To look at the impact of micro computers on the OU, we first spoke to Darrell Ince and asked him about OU courses that are specifically designed with micro computers in mind.

Darrell Ince:

Well this is HEKTOR. It's a micro computer that's being developed at The Open University for use on some of its courses. TM222 is about the architecture of a digital computer and we use HEKTOR to get over concepts about the machine and about programming.

There're also a pair of courses which were financed by the Department of Industry. There's PT501 which is really a course for managers, telling them what a micro computer is, what software is, how it can be used in their products etc.

And PT502 which is a course for engineers, the sort of thing they would do would be use a micro as part of a monitoring system which might monitor the temperature of a blast furnace.

Fourthly, there'll be industrial applications of computers. Now this is a proposed master's course which has been financed by the Science and Engineering Research Council. And what... who this is intended for is engineers and technical managers who feel they've been slipping behind or there's big gaps in their knowledge; they're seeing micro computers come into their work and they don't know what to do with them. And so a student on this course will use either HEKTOR or something very similar to do two types of computing. You'll either use the computer in a stand alone way or he'd use the computer as a terminal using the phone link that he has in his home to do the sort of very big computing, the computing that requires lots of space and lots of power which a micro computer couldn't really handle.