



Amstrad PPC

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The **Amstrad PPC512**^{[1][2]} and **Amstrad PPC640**^{[3][2]} were the first portable **IBM PC compatible** computers made by **Amstrad**. Released in 1987,^{[4][5]} they were a development of the desktop **PC-1512** and PC-1640 models.

As **portable computers**, they contained all the elements necessary to perform computing on the move. They had a keyboard and a monochrome **LCD display** built in and also had space for disposable batteries to power the PC where a suitable alternative power source (i.e. mains or 12-volt vehicle power) was not available. The PCs came with either one or two double-density double-side **floppy disc** drives and the PPC640 model also featured a **modem**.

Both models were supplied with *PPC Organiser* software and the PPC640 was additionally supplied with the *Mirror II* communications software.

Hardware [\[edit \]](#)

The two computers had very similar specifications. The **PPC512** had an **NEC V30**^{[1][3]} processor running at 8 MHz, 512 **KiB** of memory, a full-size 102-key keyboard with a numeric keypad, a built-in **liquid-crystal display** (not backlit)^[6] that could emulate the **CGA** or **MDA**^[2] and either one or two 720k 3.5-inch floppy drives (the model was either the **PPC512S** or **PPC512D** depending on the number of drives it had).^[7]

Amstrad PPC512/PPC640



Amstrad PPC512

Manufacturer	Amstrad
Type	Portable computer
Release date	1987; 38 years ago
Introductory price	US\$1,099 (equivalent to \$3,042 in 2024)
Operating system	MS-DOS 3.3
CPU	NEC V30 @ 8 MHz
Memory	512KB (PPC512); 640KB (PPC640)
Storage	3.5-inch floppy disk drives
Display	Monochrome non-backlit LCD; 640 × 200 resolution
Graphics	Monochrome Display Adapter, CGA



Amstrad PPC512, closed



Amstrad PPC640

The **PPC640** was otherwise identical except that it had 640 [KiB](#) of memory, a built-in 2400 baud [modem](#) (unusually fast for its day), and its case was a darker shade of grey. Both versions of the machine had an empty socket on the main circuit board so that an Intel [8087](#) coprocessor could be installed to permit hardware processing of floating point arithmetic.

The PPC included standard connectors for [RS-232](#), [Centronics](#) and CGA/MDA video, allowing existing peripherals to be used.^[2] All the signals used by the 8-bit [ISA bus](#) were also available through a pair of expansion connectors. There was available an external card cage for expansion cards.

Sound	PC Speaker
Input	102-key keyboard with numpad and function keys
Connectivity	RS-232 , Centronics , 2400 baud modem (PPC640)
Dimensions	4 × 17,5 × 9 inches
Weight	12 lb (5.4 kg)
Backward compatibility	IBM PC compatible
Predecessor	PC-1512

Four possible power sources could be used:^[8]

- Ten C-size [alkaline batteries](#). ($10 \times 1.5 \text{ V} = 15 \text{ volts}$, but the load was such the voltage dropped to nearer 12 volts in use)
- [Mains adaptor](#)
- [Car cigarette lighter](#)
- An Amstrad PC-MD, PC-CD or PC-ECD monitor (These monitors all contained a power supply.)

The physical layout of the components was unlike most laptop designs: instead of the lid containing the screen, it contained the keyboard. The [hinges](#) were therefore at the front of the main unit, rather than the back. The LCD was hinged separately and folded down into a recess on the top of the system unit. The one or two floppy drives were located on the right-hand side. When closed, the size of the PPC was 45 cm wide × 10 cm high × 23 cm deep.

A bank of six [DIP switches](#) was used to select whether the video hardware emulated CGA or MDA, and whether to use an internal or external monitor.

No official [hard drive](#) option or [docking station](#) was manufactured, but both were sold by third-party manufacturers.

Software [[edit](#)]

[MS-DOS 3.3](#) was supplied with all PPCs, along with *PPC Organiser* – a [memory-resident](#) suite of utilities including a card file, diary, calculator and telephone dialler. In addition, the **PPC640** was supplied with *Mirror II*, a communications package for use with the built-in modem.

The MS-DOS [boot disk](#) also included a utility which could be used to switch between the internal display and an external monitor without rebooting.

Amstrad PC20 / Sinclair PC200 [[edit](#)]

Main article: [Sinclair PC200](#)

In late 1988 Amstrad created a desktop computer based on the PPC design, intended for the home market.^{[9][10]} This machine was available in two versions, [Sinclair PC200](#) and **Amstrad PC20**. The **PC200**^[11] had a black case and 'Sinclair' branding, while the **PC20**^[12] was white and branded 'Amstrad'.^{[13][14]}

References [[edit](#)]

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External links [[edit](#)]

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