The Intel 8086

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There has been a lot of talk about 16-bit microprocessors lately. You are probably interested in how they work and how they differ from present 8-bit microprocessors. This may seem more important to someone designing systems for a living rather than to the casual computer experimenter; but ultimately personal computing will be affected.

The majority of systems currently available use 8-bit processors primarily because few cost-effective 16-bit processors were available when these systems were designed. As new personal computers are conceived, the designers will have more 16-bit microprocessors to choose from, and in my opinion, the latter will win out.

Software development is much more expensive than hardware development. It is much cheaper to write one line of code executing a hardware multiply instruction than to write an algorithm to do the same function on a processor devoid of this direct capability. Reduced cost of development should be reflected in lower retail cost. There are always exceptions to the rule, but once amortized and in volume production, the 16-bit microprocessor should prove to be the logical choice for medium to high-level applications.

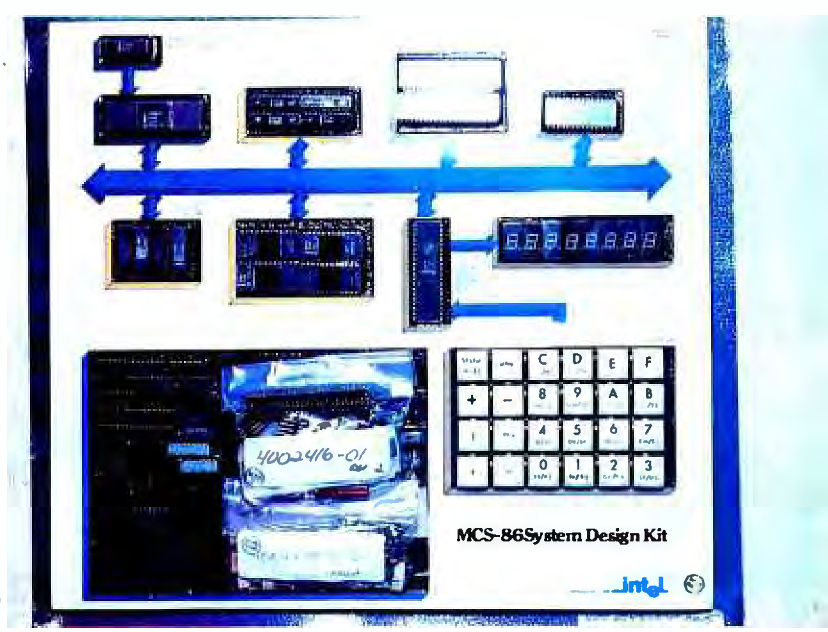

Photo 1: *SDK-86 system as delivered from factory.*

The Intel 8086

It isn't necessary to wait any longer if you have a burning desire to learn about 16-bit microprocessors. The latest one available and in volume production is the Intel 8086. The 8086 is a 16-bit microprocessor which is upward-compatible from the 8-bit 8080/8085 series processors. The 8086 contains a set of powerful, new 16-bit instructions. This enables a system designer familiar with 8080 devices to start coding immediately and gradually gain expertise in using the additional 16-bit instructions. It is important to realize that when I refer to compatible instructions I mean functional compatibility. A program written for an 8080 would have different object code than an 8086. This is only a slight inconvenience considering that this former 8080 program should run about ten times faster on an 8086. The evolutionary step between the 8086 and 8080 is far greater than that between the 8080 and 8008.

The apparent goal of Intel designers was to extend existing 8080 features symmetrically and add a wide range of new processing capabilities. The added features include 16-bit multiply and divide, interruptible byte-string operations, 1 M byte direct addressing, and enhanced

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bit manipulation. Arithmetic operations are accomplished in American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) or binary-coded decimal with a one-instruction hardware conversion.

In addition to the capability of handling data in bits, bytes, words, or blocks, the 8086 incorporates many features formerly found only in minicomputer architecture. It also supports such operations as reentrant code, position-independent code, and dynamically relocatable programs.

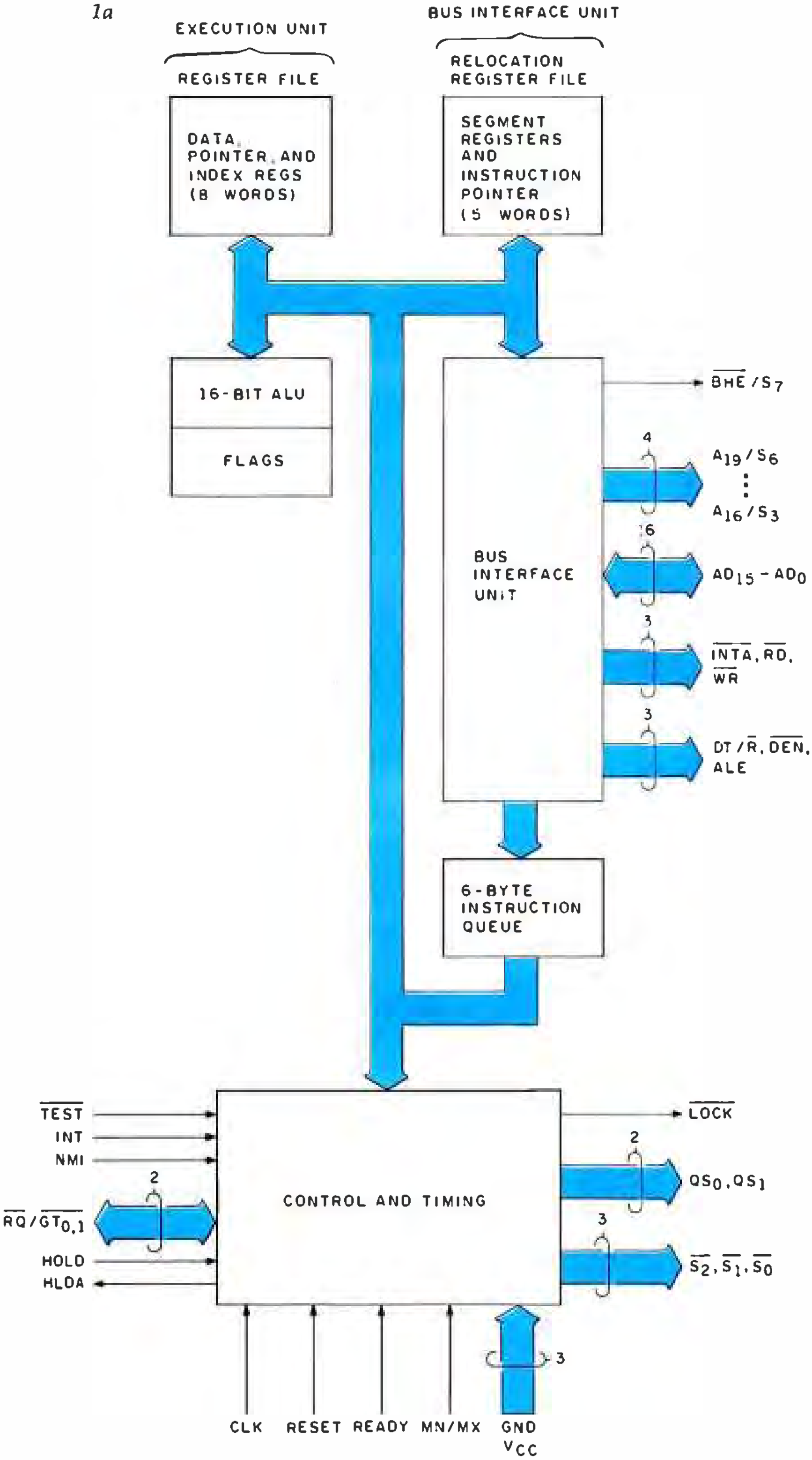
The 8086 is fabricated with a newly developed, high-speed metal-oxide semiconductor (H-MOS) process which is considerably faster than standard MOS. Running up to 8 MHz, the 29,000-transistor 8086 is the fastest single-chip central processor currently available. Unlike the 8080/8085 processor's registers, the 8086's registers can process 16-bit as well as 8-bit data.

Figure 1a shows an internal block diagram of the 8086. The 16-bit arithmetic/logic instructions are handled within the general register files. This section contains four 16-bit general data registers, two 16-bit base pointer registers, and two 16-bit index registers. Figure 1b illustrates an 8086 register model for comparison to the 8080.

The four data registers, addressable also in 8-bit partitions, are primarily from the original 8080. There are twice as many general-purpose registers as there are on 8-bit processors.

The relocation register file is the other unique 8086 enhancement. This group is referred to as the segment register file, and extends direct addressing capability to a full megabyte of memory. This file has four address pointers which contain program relocation values for up to four 64 K byte program segments. In addition, a fifth pointer serves as an I/O (in-

1a



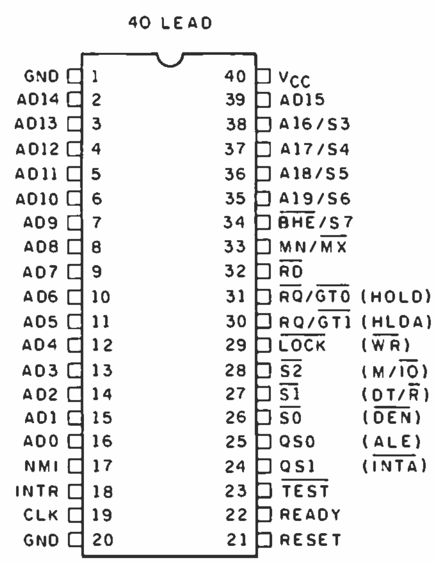
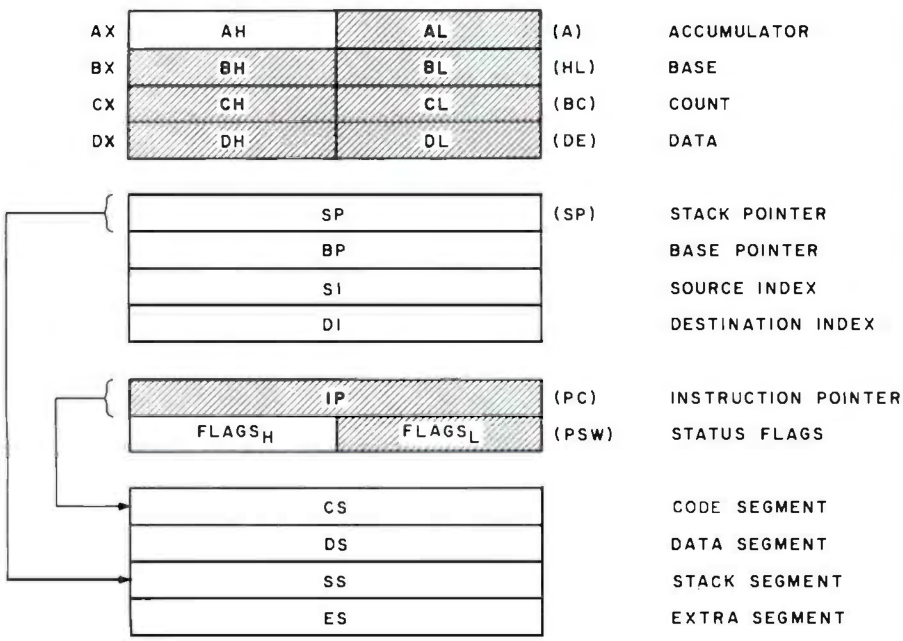


Figure 1: *An internal block diagram and pinout specifications of the Intel 8086 (figure 1a). Figure 1b shows the 8086 register model illustrating the differences between the 8086 and the 8080. Figure courtesy Intel Corp.*

1b 8086 REGISTER MODEL; (8080 REGISTERS SHADED)



put/output) control providing address space for a full 65,536 I/O ports.

Logically the 8086 operates more like larger computers than like a classical microprocessor. This is accomplished through independently controlled bus interface and execution units (figure 2). The major contribution is to speed processing by overlapping instruction fetch and execution. Up to six bytes of instruction are placed in a queue before execution. As each instruction is processed, the following instructions move up one position and a new instruction is fetched and placed in the queue. This simultaneous fetch and execute capability induces more efficient use of the memory bus. It is possible for two single-byte 8086 instructions to be executed within the time for one memory cycle. The result is improved performance, given the same bus bandwidth and memory speed as other systems.

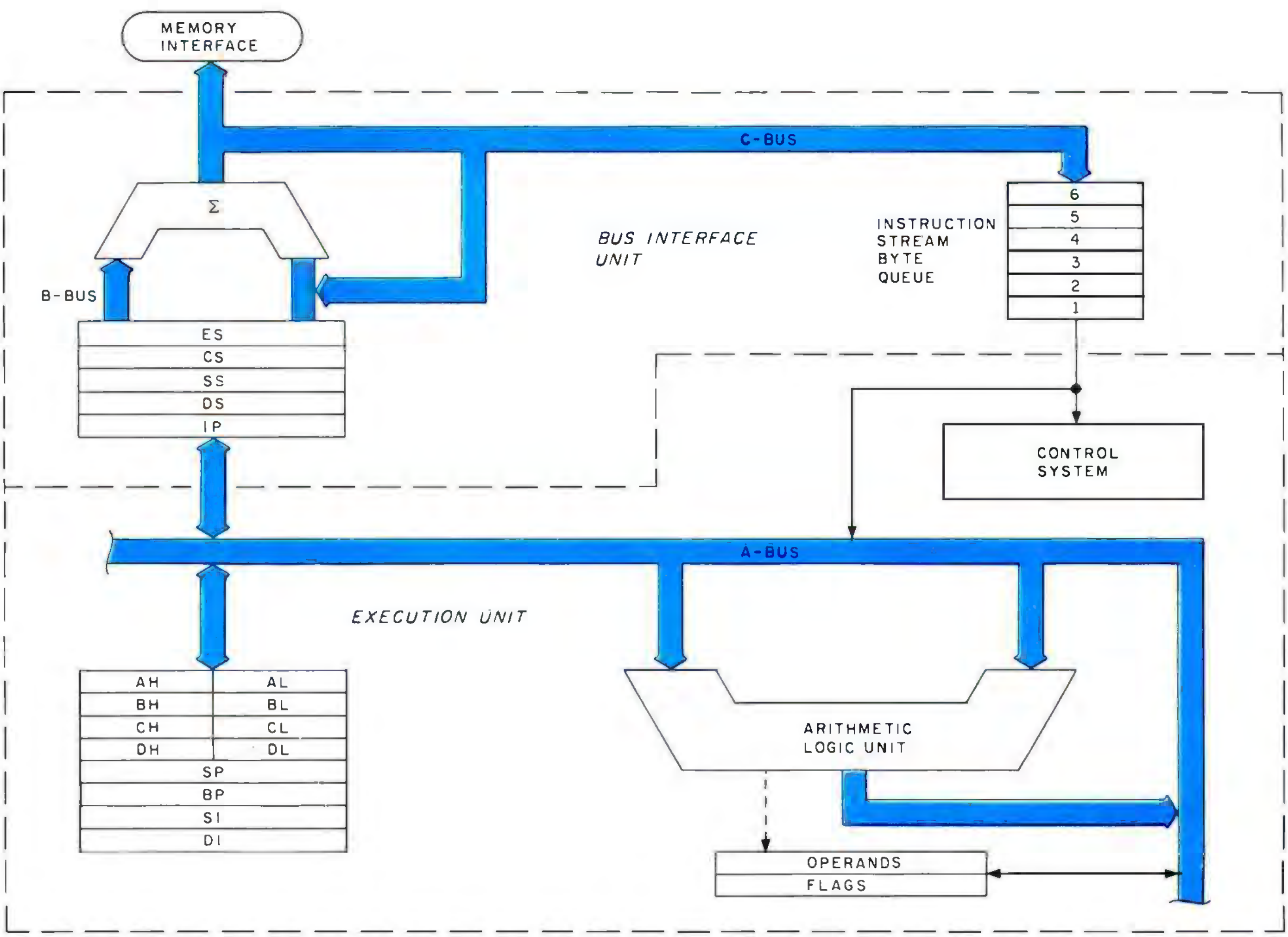


Figure 2: *Functional block diagram of internal data paths of the 8086. Figure courtesy Intel Corp.*

Table 1: *Summary of specifications for the SDK-86 board.*

Central Processor

Processor: 8086
Clock Frequency: 2.5 MHz or 5 MHz (jumper selectable)
Instruction Cycle Time: 800 ns (5 MHz)

Memory Type

Read-Only Memory: 8 K bytes
Programmable Memory: 2 K bytes (expandable to 4 K bytes)
(2 bytes equal one 16-bit word)

Memory Addressing

Read-Only Memory: FE000 thru FFFFF
Programmable Memory: 0 thru 7FF (0-FFF with 4 K bytes)

Input/Output (I/O)

Parallel: 48 lines (two 8255As)
Serial: RS232 or current loop (8251A)
Data Transfer: Rate selectable from 110 to 4800 bps
Display: On-board, 8-digit, light-emitting diode (LED) readout

Interface Signals

Processor Bus: All signals transistor-transistor logic (TTL) compatible
Parallel I/O: All signals TTL compatible
Serial I/O: 20 mA current loop or RS232

Interrupts

External: Maskable and nonmaskable; Interrupt vector 2 reserved for nonmaskable interrupt (NMI)
Internal: Interrupt vectors 1 (single-step) and 3 (breakpoint) reserved by monitor

Direct Memory Access

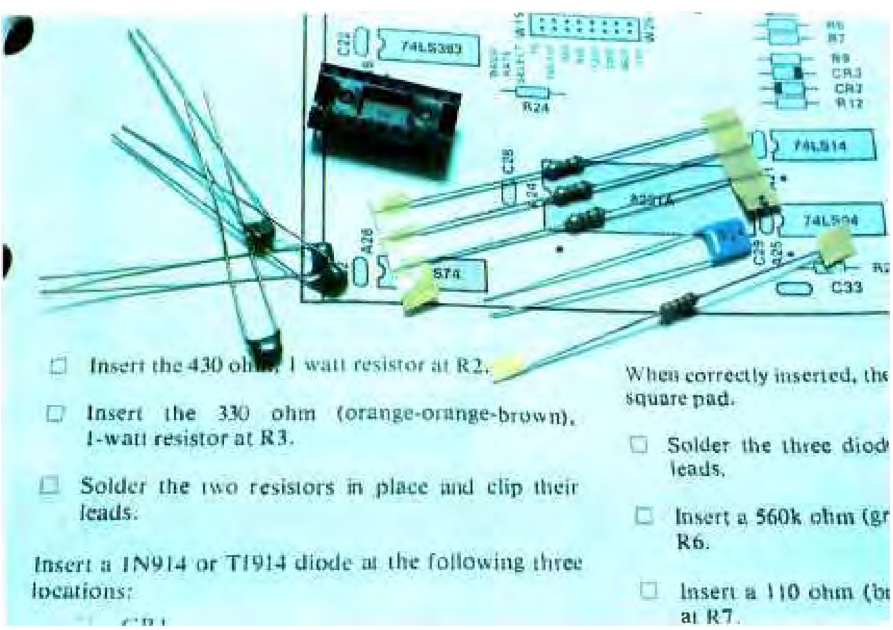
Hold Request: Jumper selectable, TTL compatible input

Software

System Monitors: Preprogrammed 2316 or 2716 read-only memories
Addresses: FE000 thru FFFFF
Monitor I/O: Keypad and Serial (teletypewriter or video display)

Power Requirements

V_{CC}: +5 V (±5%), 3.5 A
V_{TTY}: −12 V (±10%), 0.3 A (required if teletypewriter (TTY) or video display terminal connected to serial interface port)



The Intel SDK-86

Perhaps this brief introduction has sparked your curiosity and you wish to know more about the 8086. Of course, the best method of learning is to use one. Since at this writing the 8086 is still so new that it is not incorporated into any general-use personal computer, we are left to our own resources and construction abilities. Fortunately Intel realizes that the success of any new product depends on evaluation by as many potential users as possible. For this reason the System Design Kit (SDK) series of products were conceived.

The SDK-86, shown prior to assembly in photo 1, is a single-board, 8086-based computer. Intel's pricing policies make the purchase of the SDK-86 kit far more attractive than a single 8086 chip. It results, in the name of advertising, in one of the better computer offerings on the market. At $780 the SDK-86 fits within most budgets. It is a complete computer including processor, programmable memory, read-only memory, I/O (input/output), and display. Table 1 is a more explicit listing of specifications and figure 3 is a detailed block diagram.

The SDK-86 is very easy to assemble. As shown in photo 2, it comes packaged so that all components are easily recognizable, even for a novice. Documentation includes an Assembly Manual, User's Manual, User's Guide, and Monitor listings (see photo 3). The assembly procedures are written at such a level that even a person having limited technical knowledge may assemble the kit. The assembly manual progresses from basic solder techniques and component identification to step-by-step assembly and checkout. The only microcomputer assembly literature I have read which was as easily understandable as this comes from the Heathkit people.

All major components are socketed, but to be on the safe side it is a wise idea to purchase additional integrated-circuit sockets. This will allow all integrated circuits to be removed in case troubleshooting is necessary. The fully constructed com-

Photo 2: *Typical page from the construction manual. Each instruction step is clearly explained and each component is accurately identified.*

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puter is shown in photo 4. Checkout, after determining that there are no obvious errors, is simply a matter of applying power and pressing the system reset button.

When the SDK-86 is reset, the 8086 executes the instruction at hexadecimal location FFFF0. The instruction at this location is an intersegment direct jump to the beginning of the monitor program that resides in read-only memory, hexadecimal locations FF000 to FFFFF. The monitor is comprised of two programs resident in programmable read-only memory; one for use with the on-board keypad, and the other a serial monitor that supports a video display or teletypewriter connected to the Electronics Industries Association (EIA) serial interface connector. This latter communication mode is preferable if the SDK-86 is to be used efficiently for software development. Even though the system is constructed to vector to the keyboard monitor on power up, simply interchanging the two sets of programmable read-only memory will allow the unit to start up immediately in the serial mode.

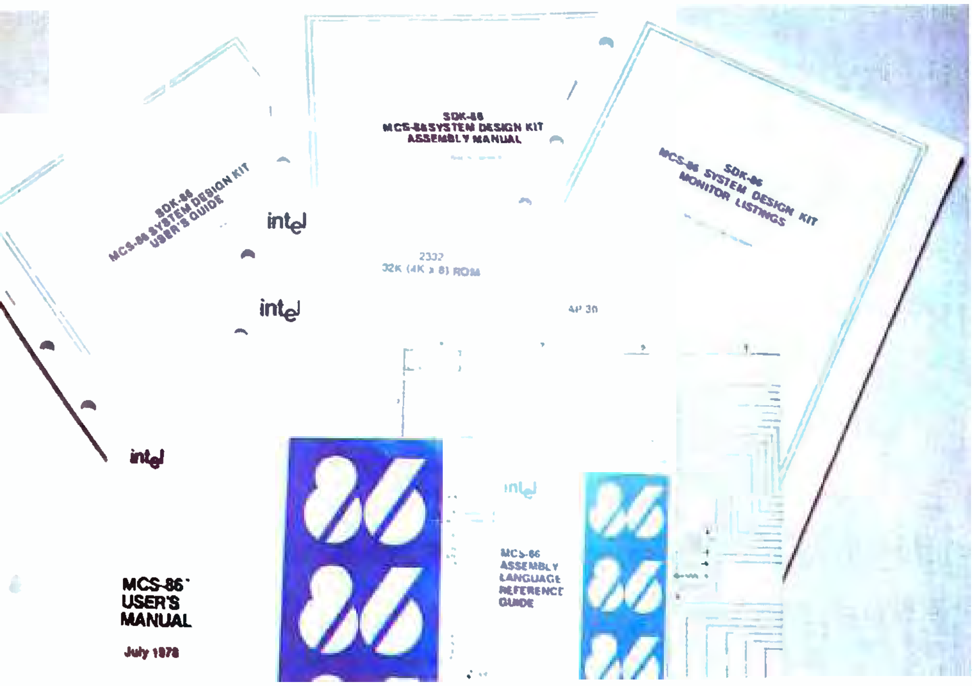

Photo 3: *The SDK-86 board comes complete with well-written documentation manuals for assembly and use.*

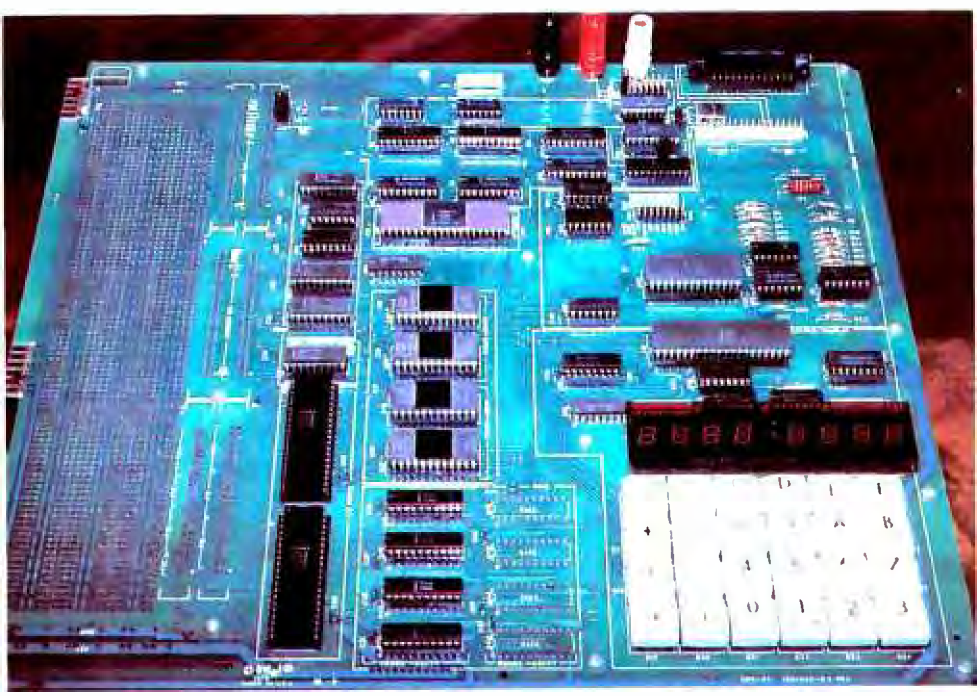

Photo 4: *Assembled SDK-86 board. Note the prototyping area on the left-hand side.*

The SDK-86 Monitor

Both monitors share similar command capability. The keyboard monitor is optimized for the 8-digit, light-emitting-diode (LED) display while the serial monitor is obviously for a video display or teletypewriter. The only dissimilarity is that the latter has the additional ability to read or write to a paper-tape punch, or with the addition of a Frequency-Shift-Keying (FSK) modulator/demodulator, cassette storage. Table 2 lists the serial monitor I/O commands.

Of particular importance are the single-step and go commands. Single step allows a program to be executed one instruction at a time, while the go command allows the user to specify a breakpoint which returns control to the monitor while preserving the machine's status. This allows a program to be run in segments facilitating checkout.

While the monitor does provide some powerful routines, the PL/M listings provided in the documentation do not directly give the addresses of the individual routines. Enough effort is required to extract this information, that rewriting particular routines in user memory is a worthwhile consideration.

Text continued on page 24

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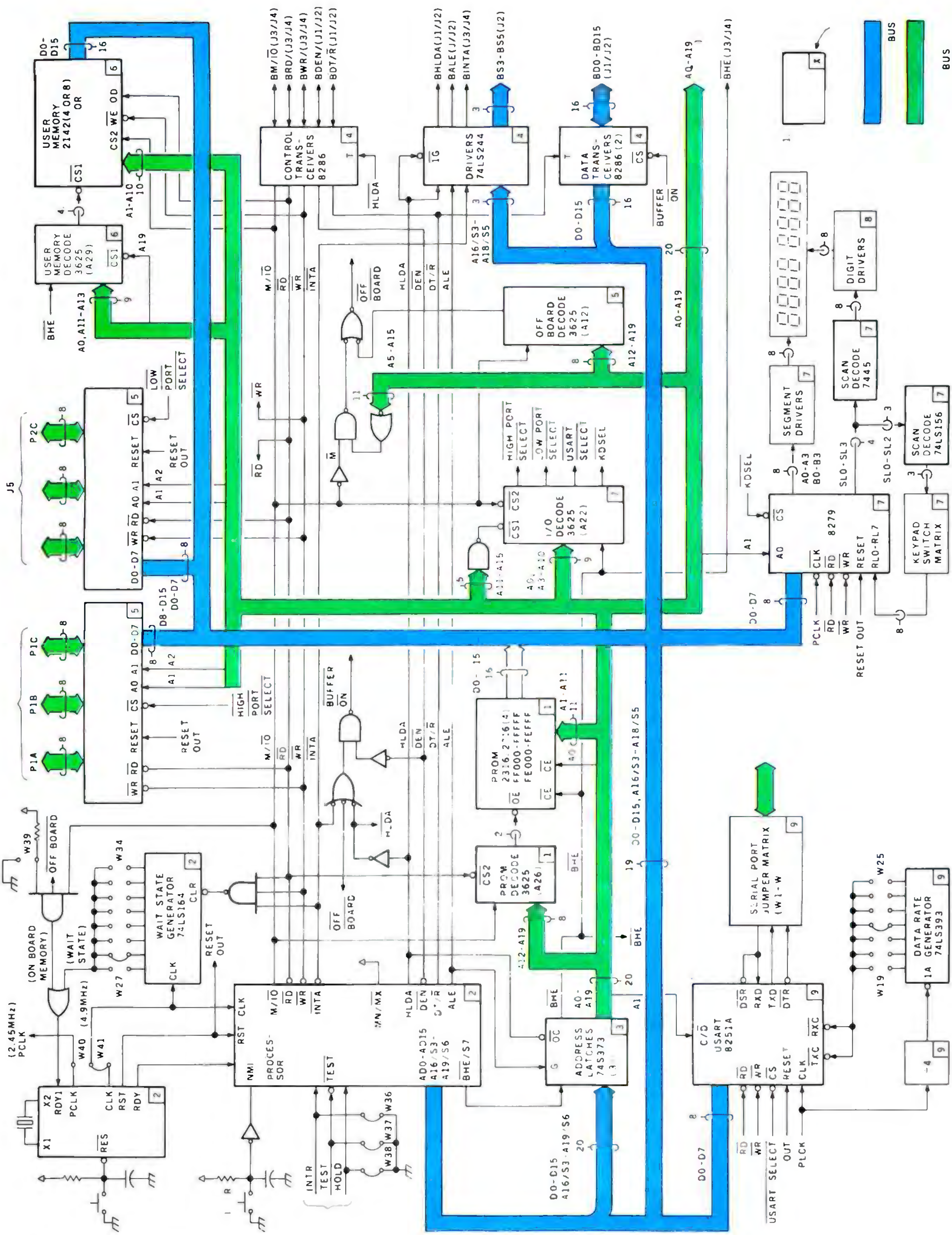

Figure 3: *A detailed block diagram of the SDK-86 evaluation board. Figure courtesy Intel Corp.*

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In Conclusion

If you have an interest in 16-bit microprocessors, perhaps the best place to start is with the SDK-86. The 8086 is a quantum leap forward for microprocessors and the SDK-86 is a cost-effective method of evaluation, complete with all the hardware of a basic computer system. It must be cautioned that a first-time user, unaccustomed even to 8-bit microprocessors, may find the learning process somewhat complicated. The SDK-86, while packaged and assembled in a Heathkit fashion, is an industrial training device and not aimed specifically at the personal computing market. Beyond the minimal checkout procedures and brief description of the monitor commands, there are no sample programs which can be immediately entered and executed. This unit must be thought of as a rather sophisticated trainer. The mechanism is provided in the form of the board, but the actual course of education is completely in the hands of the user. ■

Table 2: *The commands which are available for use with the serial monitor.*

Command	Monitor Command Summary FUNCTION/SYNTAX
S (Substitute Memory)	Displays/modifies memory locations S[W] < addr > ,[[< new contents >],]* < cr >
X (Examine/Modify Register)	Displays/modifies 8086 registers X[< reg >][[< new contents >],]* < cr >
D (Display Memory)	Moves block of memory data D[W] < start addr > [, < end addr >] < cr >
M (Move)	Moves block of memory data M < start addr > , < end addr > , < destination addr > < cr >
I (Port Input)	Accepts and displays data at input port I[W] < port addr > ,[,]* < cr >
O (Port Output)	Outputs data to output port O[W] < port addr > , < data > [, < data >]* < cr >
G (Go)	Transfers 8086 control from monitor to user program G[< start addr >][, < breakpoint addr >] < cr >
N (Single Step)	Executes single user program instruction N[< start addr >],[[< start addr >],]* < cr >
R (Read Hexadecimal File)	Reads hexadecimal object file from tape into memory R[< bias number >] < cr >
W (Write Hexadecimal File)	Outputs block of memory data to paper tape punch W[X] < start addr > , < end addr > [, < exec addr >] < cr >

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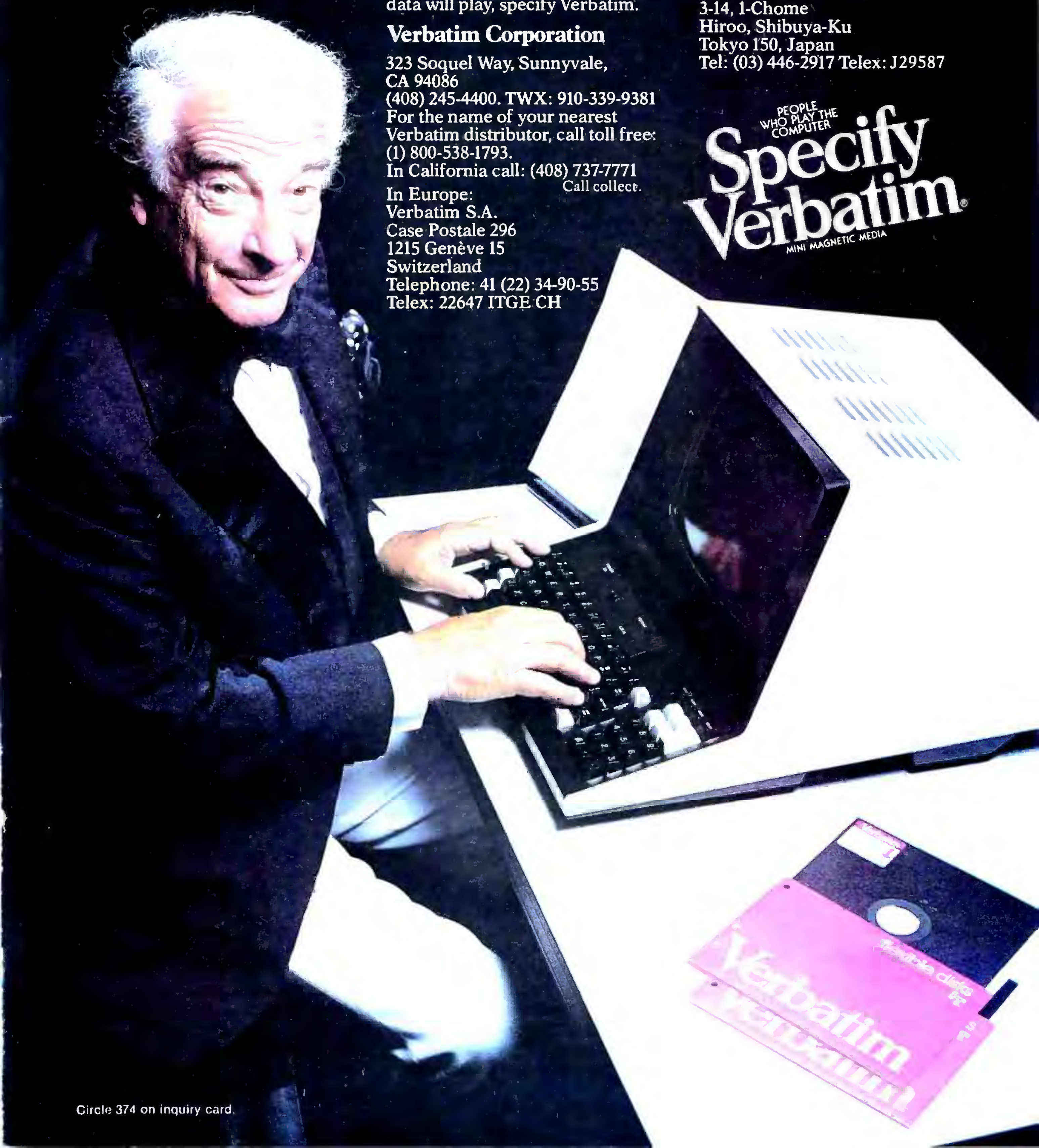

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