
Microcomputers in Alberta Schools

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The study I completed for Alberta Education was conducted to provide a status report describing the nature and extent to which microcomputers have been introduced into Alberta schools. Data for the study were collected by mail survey of every school in Alberta.

The results showed that nearly 12 percent of Alberta schools now have one or more microcomputers. The majority of the units are Commodore PETs (45 percent), APPLE IIs (31 percent), and Radio Shack TRS-80s (19 percent). They appear to be uniformly distributed across all grade levels. The most frequently reported uses of the microcomputer involve the teaching of computer literacy and computer-assisted instruction. The majority of microcomputer users in the schools expressed the need for additional equipment, software, and training.

While a relatively small number of schools reported that they had no interest in introducing microcomputers into their schools, the majority of schools that do not now have a microcomputer are anticipating getting one or more in the future. However, a large proportion of this group felt that they did not know enough about microcomputers to anticipate what their needs might be. The remainder tended to report a strong need for information about both equipment and programs as well as a strong need for additional training. Many felt the need for leadership, direction, and funding from the Alberta Department of Education.