IBM PS/2 Model 30

In April of 1987, IBM introduced the "Office Station - Model 30". For U.S. $2595, you could have one on your desktop. The model 30 has become one of the best known and most easily recognized of IBM machines. It was originally based on the Intel 8086 16-bit processor. The Clock speed was 8 MHz compared to 4.77 MHz on the original IBM PC. Standard Memory size was 640 Kb. It shipped with MS BASIC-80 and Microsoft IBM PC DOS version 3.3. It included a 3.5-inch floppy drive and a Hard disk of either 20 or 30 Mb. It came with a Mouse.

In September of 1988, IBM updated the machine. Called the PS/2 model 30-286, it possessed the Intel 80286 16 bit processor which ran at 10 MHz. Installed Memory was 512 Kb and it could support a maximum of 4 Mb. You had a choice of Hard disk sizes: 20, 30 or 45 Mb. It had a VGA graphics card. The supplied OS was IBM PC DOS 3.3/4.0 or IBM OS/2…

OS/2?

The model 30-286 was the first IBM computer capable of running OS/2. In December 1987 IBM decided to try and win back the PC operating system business with the launch of its very own operating system (although still co-authored by Microsoft). Although it showed great promise and contained significant stability and multitasking enhancements, Microsoft all but abandoned the technology in favour of pursing Windows development. IBM adamantly pumped money and research into OS/2 for a number of years, hoping the general public would opt to "buy IBM" as they did with the original PC. However, the anticipated migration of people never came. OS/2 soon found itself an underdog. Today, OS/2 is still around in some banking machines and point of sale devices, but IBM has not issued a major release of the operating system since 1996.

Robert Grosse
U o f S Computer Museum