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Education on screen

ATARI computers are finding their way into more and more classrooms around the country.

With over 4000 commercial software programs available for the Atari ST — as well as its ease of use and built-in midi interface — there is no doubt it suits the education market.

The Atari ST offers twice the disk storage, and five times the processing power, of many existing school computers.

Atari STs and PCs are installed at Guildford Grammar School, where Year 11 and 12 students use them to carry out the requirements of the applied computing syllabus.

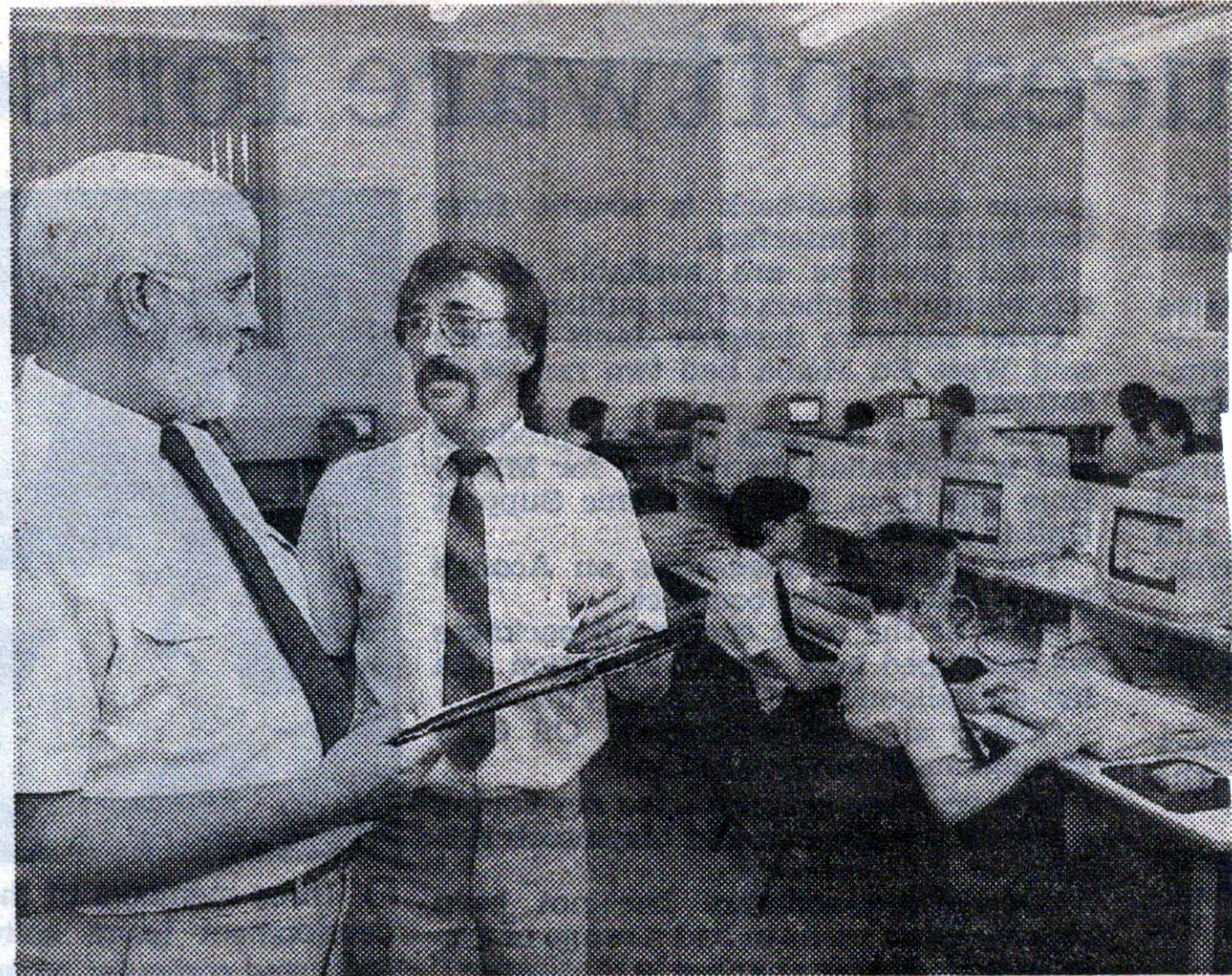
Personal productivity packages such as word processing, spreadsheets and database management are covered as part of the course and students are free to select a fourth package of their choice.

Anything from graphics to desktop publishing has been nominated, according to interests.

Students are also given free choice for an elective topic in Year 12.

Subjects available include robotics, music synthesis and desktop publishing, which means that considerable use is made of the school's Atari 1040STs.

These machines lend themselves to such ap-



□ George Davies, left, head of computer studies at Guildford Grammar School, discussing the Atari installation with Phil Reeves, from Paragon Computers.

Atari computer sets the pace

plications and are well supported with good software.

Communications is an important feature of the applied computing syllabus and associated with this, students are running their own bulletin board.

They provide an effective service to other students and the school community running ICDs BBS Express software on a 1040ST equipped with a second floppy disk drive.

General

Guildford has a laboratory equipped with 28 Atari 1040STs which are extensively used by Year 9 and 10 students for general computer studies classes aimed at teaching students basic computer awareness, keyboard skills and confidence when faced with using a computer.

The versatility of the Atari 1040STs also makes them suitable for leisure activities and master-in-charge of computing, George Davies, said students frequently give up their lunchtimes and after school hours in order to evaluate the latest computer games.

The built-in MIDI interface also makes the 1040STs popular with the school's budding musicians, and software such as Music Studio 88, EZ Score Plus has them lining up to produce and play their own compositions.

In order to expand this particular use of the Atari STs even further, music staff are currently evaluating Take Control's Music Publisher software.

Using this they can produce full orchestral scores using the Atari SLM804 laser printer presently linked to the computer teacher's Atari Mega ST2.

"There is no way we would have been able to put so much computing power on so many desks if we hadn't decided to adopt Atari equipment," Mr Davies said.

Atari PCs are also playing an important role in veterinary education at the veterinary school at Murdoch University.

The school uses Atari 286-based PC4 and 386-based PC5s in its physiology practical classes as digital oscilloscopes to demonstrate the electrical properties of nerve and muscle.

Also run on the Atari PCs are simulation packages which accurately model biological systems such as the cardiovascular system.

Application

Physiology technologist, Steve Callahan, said the Atari PCs were particularly well suited to this type of application.

He said this was because controllers for the disk drives, printer and video monitor were built-into the motherboard leaving expansion slots free for items such as analog-to-digital boards which convert electrical signals into computer readings.