

Timeline: ( <a href="#">Show Images</a> )	
1970	Datapoint 2200
1971	Kenbak-1
1972	
1973	Micral Scelbi-8H
1974	Mark-8
1975	<a href="#">MITS Altair 8800</a> SwTPC 6800 Sphere Compucolor
	<a href="#">IMSAI 8080</a> <a href="#">IBM 5100</a>
1976	<a href="#">MOS KIM-1</a> <a href="#">Sol-20</a> Hewlett-Packard 9825A PolyMorphic Cromemco Z-1 Apple I <a href="#">Rockwell AIM 65</a>
1977	ELF, SuperELF VideoBrain Family Computer Apple II Wameco QM-1A Vector Graphic Vector-1 <a href="#">RCA COSMAC VIP</a> Commodore PET <a href="#">Radio Shack TRS-80</a> Atari VCS (2600) NorthStar Horizon Heathkit H8 Heathkit H11
1978	<a href="#">IBM 5110</a> Exidy Sorcerer Ohio Scientific Superboard II <a href="#">Synertek SYM-1</a> APF Imagination Machine Cromemco System 3
1979	<a href="#">Interact Model One</a> <a href="#">TRS-80 model II</a> Bell & Howell SwTPC S/09 Heathkit H89 Atari 400 Atari 800 TI-99/4 Sharp MZ 80K
1980	<a href="#">HP-85</a> MicroAce Acorn Atom <a href="#">IBM 5120</a> <a href="#">TRS-80 Color Computer</a> <a href="#">TRS-80 model III</a> <a href="#">TRS-80 Pocket Computer</a> NNC 80W <a href="#">Sinclair ZX80</a>
1981	<a href="#">Dynabyte 5100</a> TFC 3450 By Fujitsu <a href="#">Commodore VIC-20</a> <a href="#">Sinclair ZX81</a> Apple III <a href="#">Osborne I</a> Micro-Professor TI-99/4A <a href="#">IBM System/23</a> <a href="#">IBM PC</a> <a href="#">LNW-80</a> <a href="#">Epson HX 20</a>

## Osborne 1

<b>Introduced:</b>	April 1981
<b>Price:</b>	US \$1,795
<b>Weight:</b>	24.5 pounds
<b>CPU:</b>	Zilog Z80 @ 4.0 MHz
<b>RAM:</b>	64K RAM
<b>Display:</b>	built-in 5" monitor 53 X 24 text
<b>Ports:</b>	parallel / IEEE-488 modem / serial port
<b>Storage:</b>	dual 5-1/4 inch, 91K drives
<b>OS:</b>	CP/M



[Roma Offerta Coupon](#) [www.GROUPON.it/Roma](http://www.GROUPON.it/Roma)

Ogni giorno sconti esagerati Già oltre 319.000.000€ risparmiati.

[Defend your Privacy](#) [www.eurocrypt.pt](http://www.eurocrypt.pt)

Secure Crypto Mobile , 3G, pgp Emails and Computer encryption

[ThermoTek, Inc.](#) [www.thermotekusa.com](http://www.thermotekusa.com)

Solid state recirculating chillers Thermal Management Solutions



Ads by Google



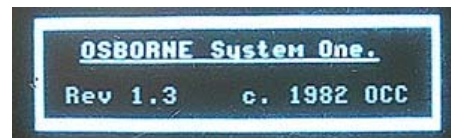
Released in 1981 by the Osborne Computer Corporation, the Osborne 1 is considered to be the first true portable computer - it closes-up for protection, and has a carrying handle. It even has an optional battery pack, so it doesn't have to be plugged into the 110VAC outlet for power.

While quite revolutionary, the Osborne does have its limitations. For example, the screen is only 5" (diagonal) in size, and can't display more than 52 characters per line of text. To compensate, you can actually scroll the screen display back and forth with the cursor keys to show lines of text up to 128 characters wide.

The Osborne was designed with transportation in mind - it had to be rugged and able to survive being moved about. That's one reason that the screen is so small - a larger and heavier screen would be more susceptible to damage.

The two pockets beneath the floppy drives work great for floppy disk storage, although the Osborne modem also fits perfectly in the the left pocket and plugs into the front-mounted "modem" port.

Designed as a true portable computer system - it can be considered airline carry-on luggage, and it will fit under the passenger seat of any commercial airliner.



Here is the Osborne without the case - now you know the real reason the screen is so small. There's not much room left with those two full-height floppy drives.



While the Osborne was a good deal at \$1795, it also came bundled with about \$1500 of free software:

- CP/M System
- CP/M Utility
- SuperCalc spreadsheet application
- WordStar word processing application with MailMerge
- Microsoft MBASIC programming language
- Digital Research CBASIC programming language

The Osborne was a huge overnight success, with sales reaching 10,000 units a month. In September 1981, Osborne Computer Company had its first US\$1 million sales month.

[Notebook Computers](#) Quickly find and compare options for notebook computers here. [www.Business.com](http://www.Business.com)

[Move Programs to a new PC](#) Moves programs, files and settings to a new PC with PCmover® [www.laplink.com/pcmover](http://www.laplink.com/pcmover)

[Server Support Help ?](#) Free telephone support - 1st Call ! Engineer ready to leave Now [www.HeXel.net](http://www.HeXel.net)



Ads by Google

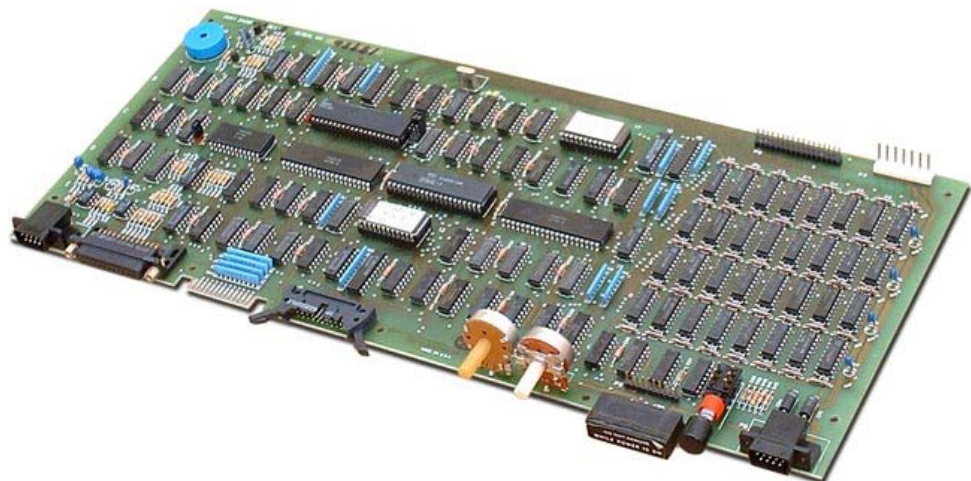
Available options include the Osborne DATACOM modem.

- The Osborne modem and COMM-PAC software gives you access to more than 200 electronic bulletin boards across the country (well, in 1982, that is).
- Data transfer rate is 300 baud.
- The modem fits in the diskette pocket below floppy drive A.
- It fits in both the original "tan case" and the newer "blue case" Osborne (see below), but the diskette pocket in the "blue case" is smaller, so the eight alignment tabs must be 'carefully snapped off'.



Also available is the Double-Density Disk Drive Option. This is an additional circuit board which must be installed inside the system.

- Doubles the amount of data storage per diskette.
- Recognizes these formats:
  - Osborne 1 single density - 92K per diskette
  - Osborne 1 double density - 182K per diskette
  - Xerox 820 single density - 82K per diskette
  - Cromemco single density - 80K per diskette
  - IBM Personal Computer (CP/M-86 format) - 156K per diskette
  - DEC VT-180 - 171K per diskette





Seen above is the second release of the Osborne portable. It has a sturdier case and a slightly different look - double-density floppy-drives are optional.

Intentional or not, the "new" Osborne has a very military-like appearance, with its square face, dark blue color, and its many knobs and compartments.

In 1982, the Osborne Computer Company announced a successor, the Executive model OCC-2 (seen here to the right), with a larger screen and a cooling fan.

Shortly thereafter, they announced the next system, the [Vixen](#), a portable running the CP/M operating system.

Unfortunately, potential customers stopped buying the Osborne 1, waiting for the Executive and the Vixen, which wasn't even ready to ship yet. Additionally, the new [Kaypro II](#) was now available with a larger screen for less money. Osborne sales plummeted and Osborne quickly ran out of money and filed for bankruptcy in September of 1983.



It probably wasn't the company's fault, since by this time most of the serious computer users were gravitating towards the new [IBM PC](#), which had already been available since 1981.

Anything that wasn't IBM compatible was bound to fail. In 1983, the [Compaq Portable](#) came out - a portable computer similar to the Osborne, except that it was IBM compatible and ran MS-DOS. It was a great success.

[Free computer training](#) Get smart computer training. Register now! [www.comaroundfree.com](http://www.comaroundfree.com)

[Draper Projector Screens](#) → Home Theatre, Portable, Electric Call 800-329-6506 For Live Help! [www.thefinalclick.com](http://www.thefinalclick.com)

[Special Offer Ultra Value](#) PhoenixRC 3.0,RealFlight G5,AeroFly XTR v5.03,FMS,VRC Car Simulator... [www.HeliBuy.com](http://www.HeliBuy.com)



Ads by Google

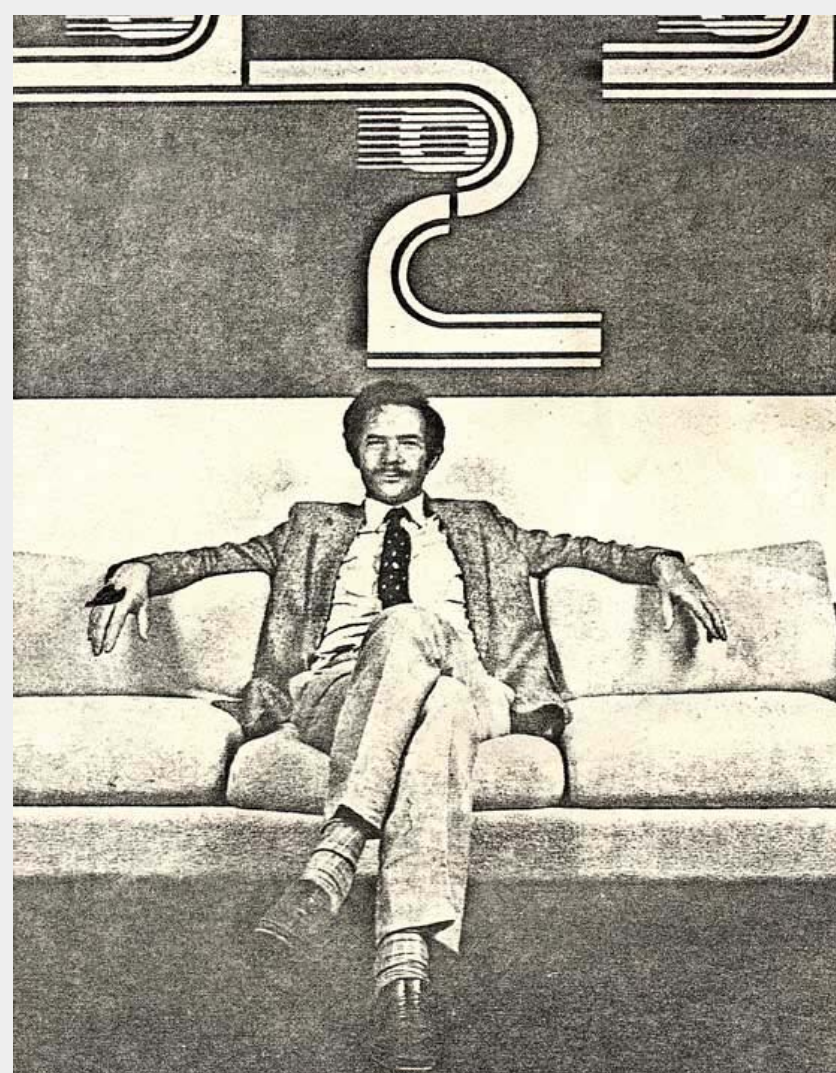
#### Related Links

- [Osborne Computer Corporation](#) from [Classic Computer Magazine Archive](#)
- [From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

#### History of the Osborne Computer Corporation

- **1971:** In November, Intel released the 4004, the first microprocessor chip. Documentation manuals were written by Adam Osborne who later founded the Osborne Computer Company.
- **1980: March** - At the West Coast Computer Faire, Adam Osborne approaches Les Felsenstein with the idea of starting a computer company.
- **1981: January** - Osborne Computer Corporation is incorporated
- **1981: April** - Adam Osborne, of Osborne Computer Corporation, introduces the Osborne 1 Personal Business Computer at the West Coast Computer Faire
- **1981: September** - Osborne Computer Company has its first US\$1 million sales month.
- **1982: August** - Microsoft releases Multiplan for the Apple II and the Osborne I.
- **1982: In the first 8 months since its introduction, 11,000 Osborne 1 computers ship.**
- **1983: March** - Osborne Computer introduces The Osborne Executive and the Executive II portable computers.
- **1983: September** - Osborne Computer Corp. files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection

Source: [Chronology of Events in the History of Microcomputers](#)



Adam Osborne

Return to the [Obsolete Technology Homepage](#)

oldcomputers.net

