providing a focal point for refereed technical articles of European origin. In addition, the Siggraph technical contributions are largely concentrated on its conference proceedings and on the very valuable and thorough annual bibliography on computer graphics.

By contrast with other journals in this area, a strong theme in CGF is the standardization of computer graphics. Progress reports, articles on the interpretation and use of standards, and a survey of implementations of the computer graphics programming Standard have been published. Also, an algorithms section has been announced and if successful will encourage the exchange of software using the Standard. □

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CAL tech

D.J. Malcolm-Lawes

CAL (Computer Applications in the Laboratory).

Editors Lawrence P. Forsley, David W. Grant, Rudolf E. Kaiser and Anthony J. Rackstraw.

Alfred Heuthig Verlag, PO Box 102869, D-6900 Heidelberg 1, West Germany. * 6/yr. £30, \$50.

AMIDST the welter of magazines feeding the public appetite for computing at home, we are now seeing the appearance of publications which attempt to provide a forum for the exchange of information on the scientific uses of microcomputers. One such journal, *Laboratory Microcomputer*, was reviewed in *Nature* last year (305, 495; 1983). Another is *Computer Applications in the Laboratory*, launched in March 1983, which apparently wishes to be known as CAL.

As an avid reader of popular computer magazines and a user of laboratory microcomputers, I was moderately excited at my first contact with CAL, and felt that here perhaps was a journal designed for people like me. Sadly this excitement has faded as more issues have appeared.

The publication is well turned out and has many of the features of a popular computer magazine: a glossy colour cover, plenty of photographs, large advertisements, and an editorial and a pattern of sections in each issue. Essentially the magazine is divided into four — news, features, series and “scientific originals”. The news items are most commonly one-page articles/advertisements reporting a new computer or program or a conference — FORTH advocates and Perkin-Elmer

have dominated so far. Features vary from short reviews of books and programs (e.g. BASIC compilers for Applesoft BASIC), to literature searching, to word processing (although both of the word-processing articles have been on the Apple Writer). The series in the first year have included “Personal computers in the laboratory”, “Interfacing”, “Learning FORTH” and “6502 made easy”. In each case division of the text into different issues was unfortunate because the individual episodes so far have occupied only a small amount of space, and in some instances have contained very little worthwhile information.

The criticisms to be levelled at these three sections are that the hard information content is too low and that selection of topics is too restricted (applications other than chromatography and computers other than the Apple would be of interest). Further, the excessive use of half-page cartoons conveys the impression of a vain attempt to hide a lack of editorial material.

The original work (including short communications) reported in the final section comes from a wider range of contributors and is consequently much more varied. Articles have covered applications of several popular microcomputers, and even the DEC Minc mini. Most of them so far have been on software, covering topics such as the resolution of HPLC peaks, measurement of lung function in babies and children, and electrothermal atomic absorption spectroscopic analysis. The last issue available for review (1/84; volume numbers are not used) contained one scientific original (4 pages) and one short com-

munication (3 pages). That is seven pages out of a total of 60. Not all issues are that low on papers, but even so the serious content is disappointingly small.

There is indeed a place for a publication such as this, half journal and half magazine. But if CAL is to satisfy its readers, and not just its advertisers, the editors will have to include more meat and less froth. □

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Need for greater vision?

P.W. Hawkes

Image and Vision Computing.

General editor Keith Baker.

Butterworth. 4/yr.

£82, \$164.

BRANCHES of science are commonly referred to as fields but the application of computing to imaging and vision is more like a wide sea, spreading over robotics, medicine, military reconnaissance, astronomy, microscopy and a host of other subjects. Thus far it is a shallow sea, however, for despite all the theoretical work there are far more people paddling than swimming. Inevitably, progress is being made on related practical problems in different domains of application. It is in the hope of countering the duplication of results in specialist serials, by collecting together papers of potential interest in several disciplines, that *Image and Vision Computing* (IVC) has been launched by Butterworth.

So far, its success is limited. There are indeed practical papers of general interest but there are others that would have been more widely read in a specialist journal. In particular there are numerous theoretical contributions for which natural homes already exist — the *IEEE Transactions on Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence*, *Computer Vision, Graphics and Image Processing* and *Pattern Recognition* spring to mind. Furthermore, there are only five or six articles per issue, so few that workers in this field will have to look at the other, more-specialized publications anyway. So the case for this new interdisciplinary journal is not very strong.

In addition to original articles, each issue includes a list of related publications in other journals; this list is very short (a dozen or so per issue) but includes long abstracts. It is followed by one or two book reviews (the May 1984 issue contains a review of a book published in 1982), a news feature entitled “Insight”, a page or two of “Product News” and a calendar of forthcoming meetings. The latter is useful and easy to consult, though it is not obvious what Applications for Management and Productivity will be discussed at CAMP '84 in Berlin!

It seems to me that there is a serious danger that IVC will attract material difficult to place elsewhere. These first issues do contain some extremely interesting articles—but there will have to be far more of them if the journal is to occupy the place to which its editor aspires. □

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