



"QL and Mac are 25"
25th anniversary 2009

Sinclair QL
"the Mac that never was..."

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22.10.2009 / KU / R00

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. The vision
3. How it started, developed, got launched
4. How it survived after it has been axed
5. Q&A

Introduction

1981

Two old friends made a handshake

sinclair

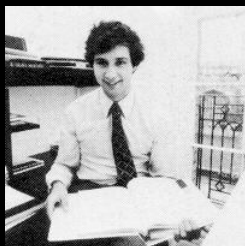


1982

As often it began in a parc in Palo Alto...



but this time not only at XEROX's parc

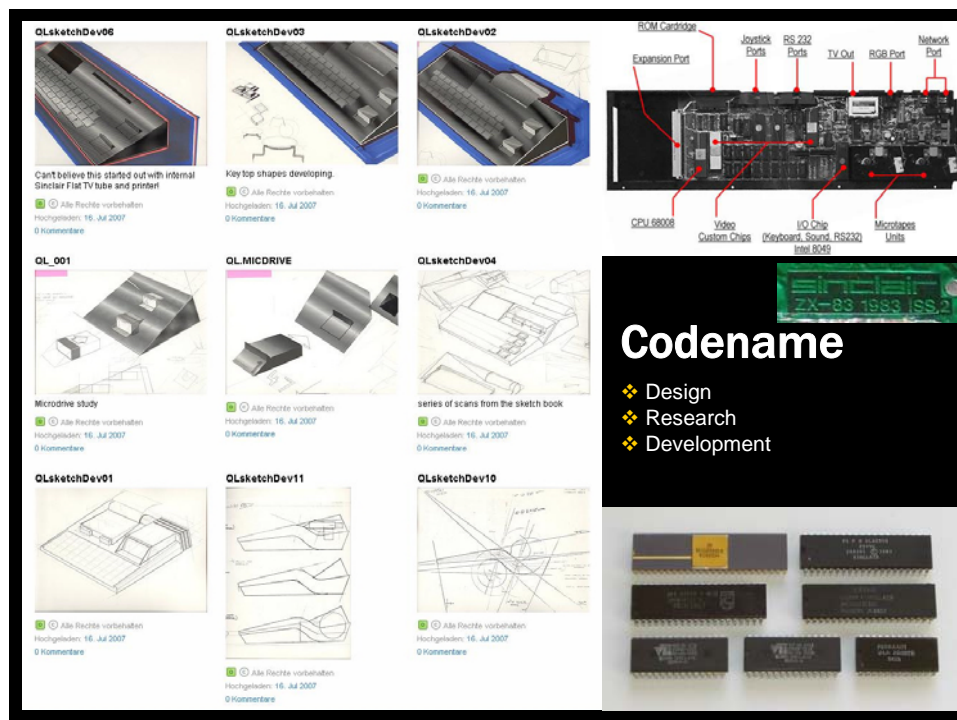


David Karlin:

- ❖ Worked for Fairchild Camera & Instrument Corp in Palo Alto until July 1982 as research engineer developing DSP chips.
- ❖ Was working on DEC VAX VMS multitasking OS.
- ❖ Was impressed by the XEROX Star workstation with GUI he saw at XEROX PARC while visiting.
- ❖ Wanted to create a micro that could do the same or more.
- ❖ Wanted to return back home to England.
- ❖ Joined Sinclair Research in Cambridge in August 1982, became the head of QL hardware development.

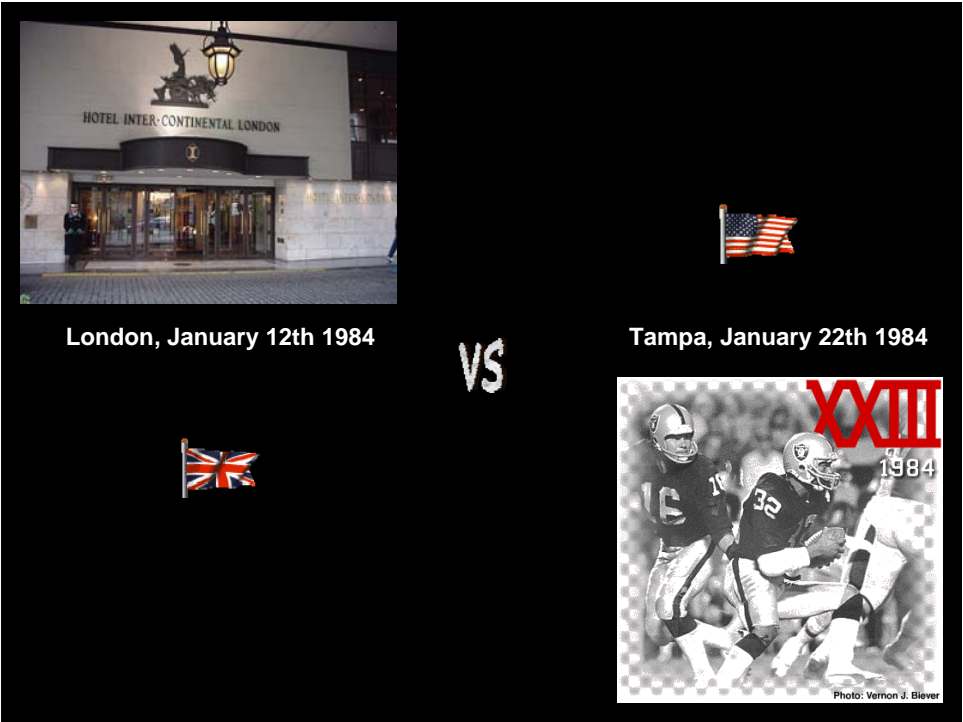


1983



1984







698£ / 898\$ (CPU and CRT)

In common:


- ❖ Influenced by Design at XEROX PARC
- ❖ Intended to revolution the microcomputer market
- ❖ 32bit-CPU MC6800x/8Mhz
- ❖ 128KB DRAM
- ❖ OS in ROM
- ❖ 512xYYY bit mapped screen resolution
- ❖ Keyboard without numeric pad
- ❖ Marketed with powerful Business Software bundled

Differences:

- ❖ Mac has a monochrome icon based graphical user interface using windows, operated by a mouse
- ❖ QL has a coloured command line interpreter based user interface using windows, operated without a mouse (even later available as an add-on)
- ❖ Mac has Finder, a single user single task OS
- ❖ QL has QDOS, a single user pre-emptive multitasking/multithreading OS
- ❖ Mac has Sony's brand new 3.5" floppy disc built in
- ❖ QL has Sinclair's (not IBM's) Microdrives built in and the brand new 3.5" floppy disc as an option (available 1985)
- ❖ Commercially Mac became and stayed world number 2, QL went into the dust but community wise it survived...

2'495\$

QL derivate



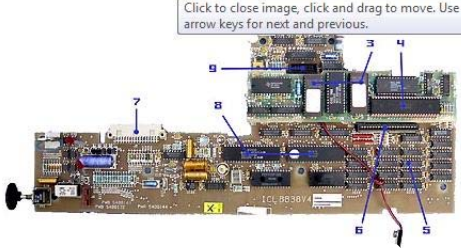
OPD - One Per Desk



Inside the OPD

Powered by Highslide JS

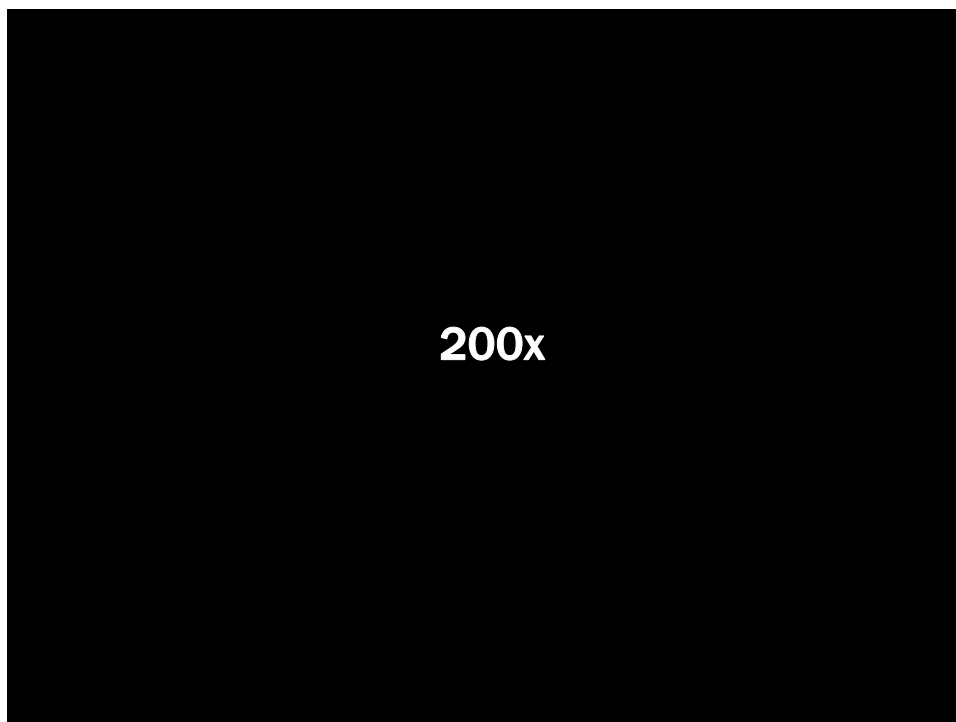
Click to close image, click and drag to move. Use arrow keys for next and previous.



> OPD MOTHERBOARD

ICL used the Sinclair QL's mother board and transformed it deeply to make it compatible with the specific features of the OPD. The Sinclair Basic ROM were replaced by the operating system of the OPD. The BASIC has thus to be loaded from a disk or MicroDrive tape.

- (1) Monitor and power supply connector
- (2) Parallel printer connector
- (3) ROM holding the OPD operating system
- (4) Motorola 68008 8/16 bit microprocessor running at 7,5 Mhz.
- (5) 128 Kb RAM.
- (6) Keyboard connector
- (7) Telephony Module Connector
- (8) Input/Output Sinclair chipsets
- (9) Microdrives connector

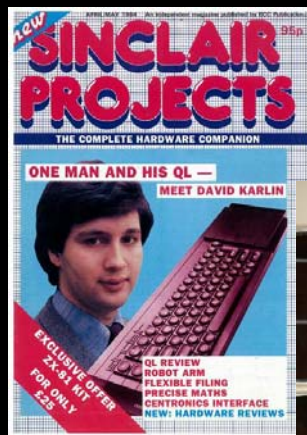


What happened to all those QL inventors?



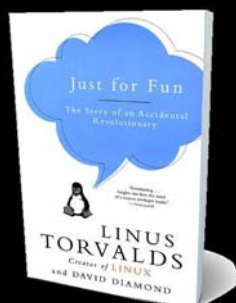
plus Martin Brennan, David Southward, Jan Jones, John Mathieson and others

They are still around, an example...



David Karlin, the father of the QL - then and nowadays.

Most prominent QL user?



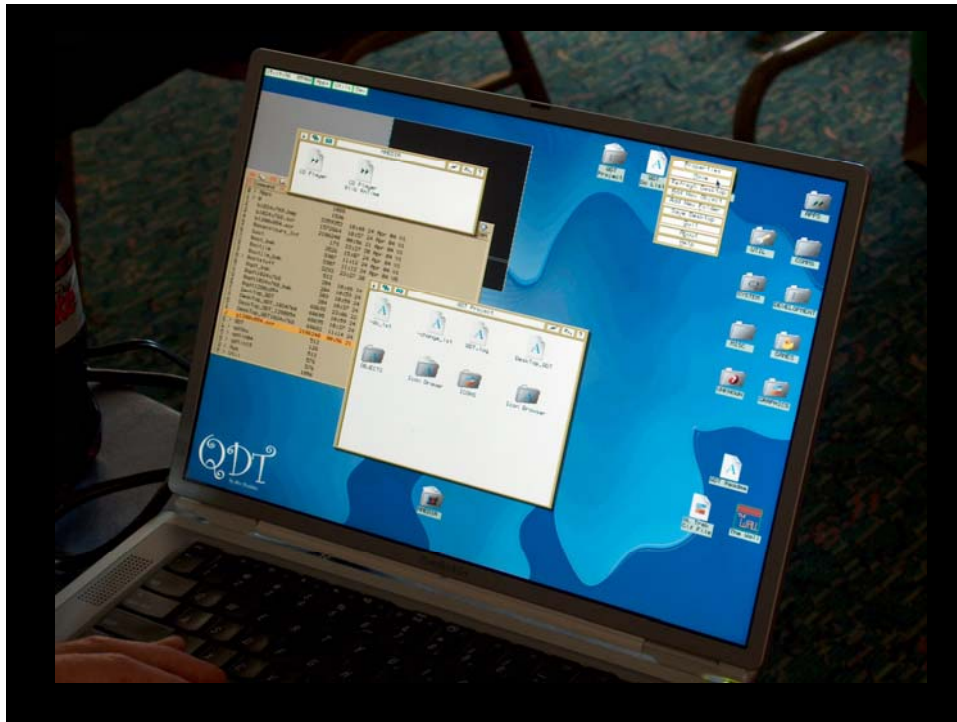
Linus tried very hard on the QL but in the end all he got was a funny penguin! Check his book "JUST FOR FUN".



The QL community still exists...



The Mac that never was...



2009

QL innovations in retrospective...

QL Innovations in retrospective

1. First 32bit micro for both home and office use (Motorola MC68K CPU).
2. First PC with preemptive multitasking operating system with linear addressing, Windows and Mac OS offered those important features only years to decades later. The QL could run hundreds of jobs in parallel.
3. First PC with bundled Office suite (PSION XCHANGE offering word processing, spreadsheet, business graphics and database).
4. First PC with a highly integrated two chip North-/Southbridge, IBM and Apple still used dozens of standard chips.
5. Innovative and timeless industrial design (case, motherboard and keyboard), Sony's Playstation 2 or some later Apple designs look very similar.
6. Innovative SuperBASIC Programming Language for Rapid Application Development (RAD), years later Microsoft's Visual Basic closed the gap.
7. Even only around 150'000 QL's were sold, one user became very important to the industry. Linus Torvalds used and programmed a QL before he created what became Linux.
[Usenet message thread March 1992](#)

The industry still tries to launch systems based on very close concepts!

London, January 12th 1984



In common:

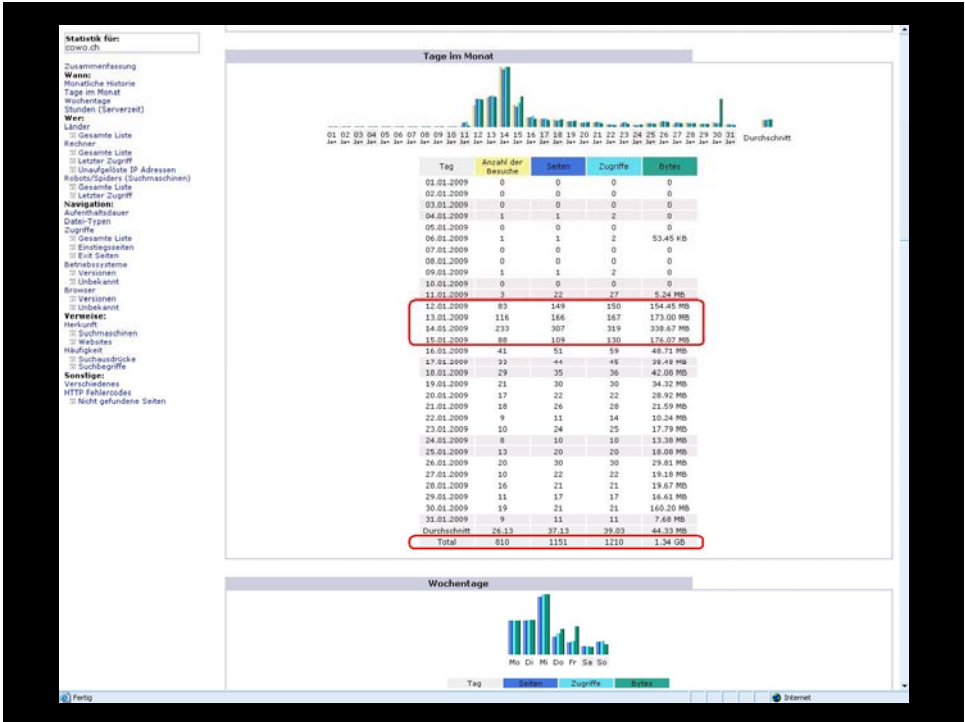
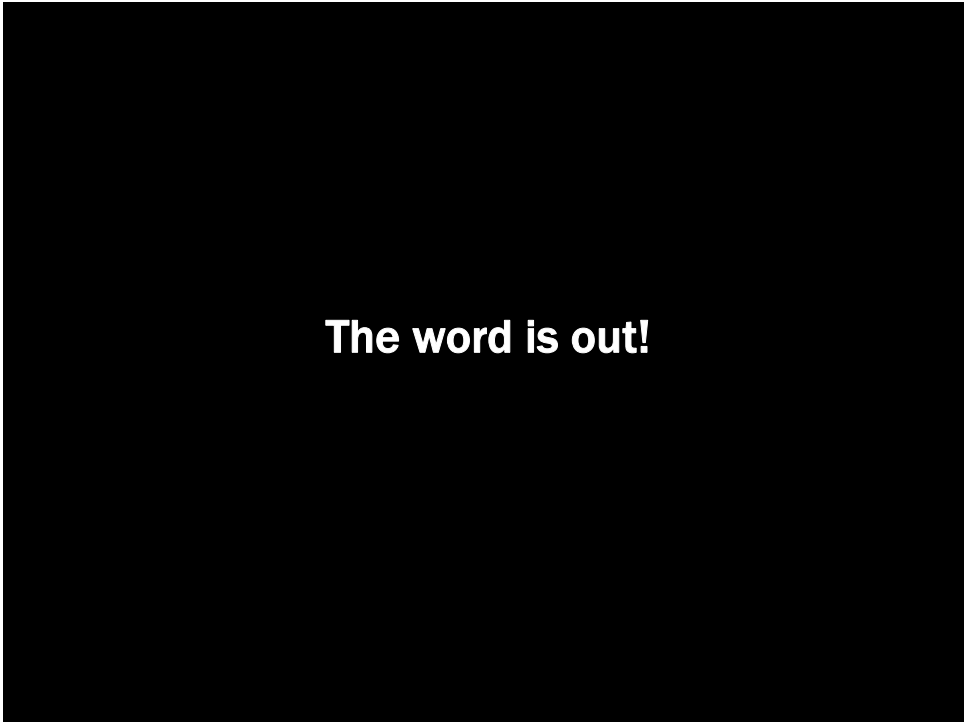
- ❖ First presented in January by proud CEO
- ❖ Retail availability projected for September of same year
- ❖ Similar physical design (appearance, keyboard, connectors, footprint, etc.)
- ❖ Powerful but economical CPU
- ❖ Good amount of RAM for purpose
- ❖ OS on Silicon Chips
- ❖ Keyboard without numeric pad
- ❖ Multiple Video Signals, can be connected to TV

Differences:

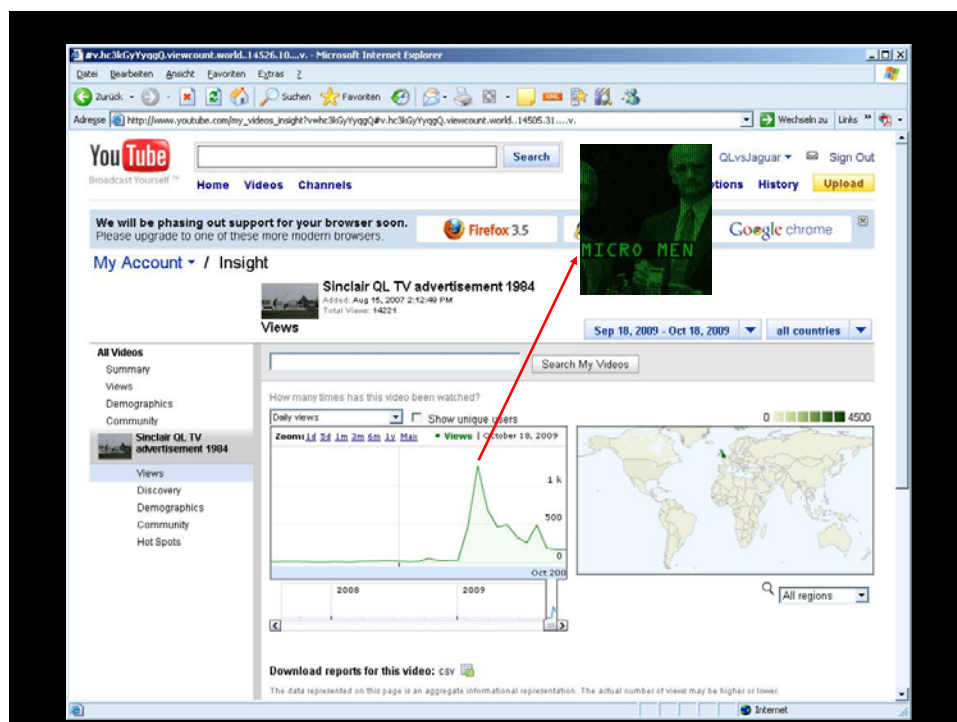
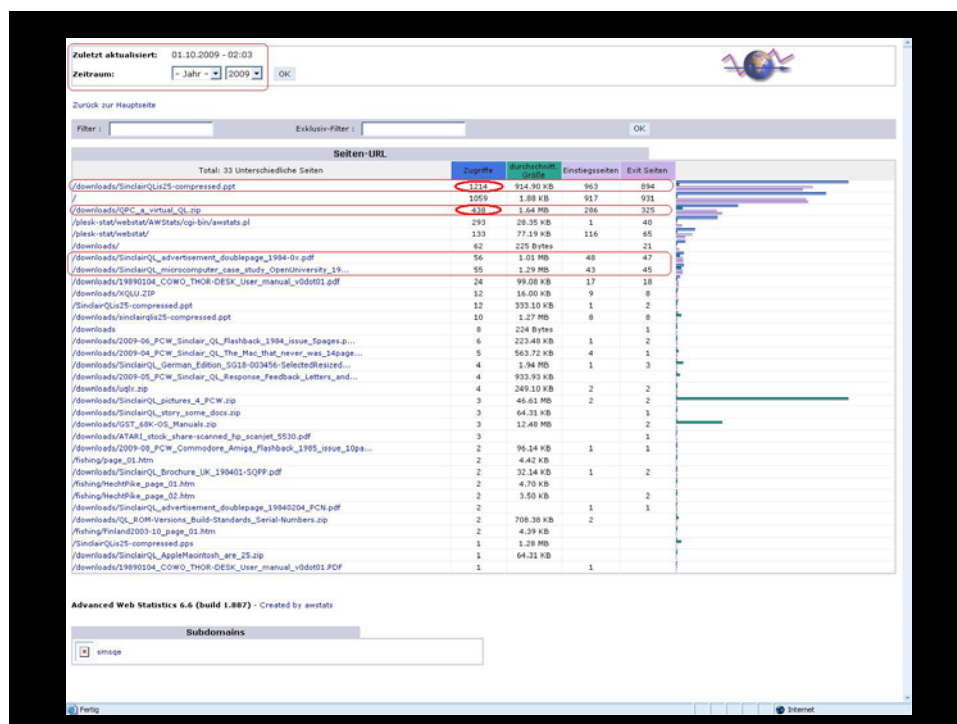
- ❖ QL was intended for professional usage, so called SOHO
- ❖ EEE is intended for home usage
- ❖ QL was originally outlined with built in CRT flat-screen but early in product development this was given up
- ❖ EEE has a 5 inch TFT touch-screen built in
- ❖ QL had a promised delivery time of 28 days from launch date, in fact first customers had to wait 4 to 6 months to get their machines
- ❖ EEE has a 3 to 9 months delivery time from launch date



Las Vegas, January 6th 2009



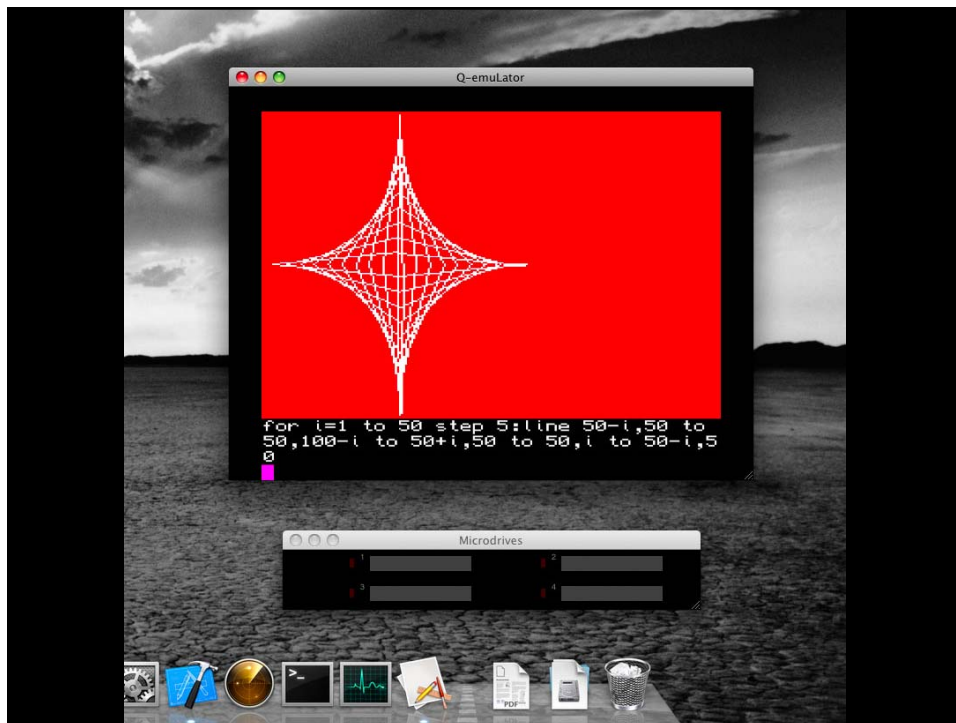
Sinclair QL & Apple Macintosh 25th anniversary 2009



"QL & Mac are 25" international event
Oct 31st/Nov 1st 2009
Verkehrshaus, Lucerne, Switzerland

2010





QL Community Resources

- ❖ Google "Sinclair QL"
<http://www.google.ch/search?hl=de&ie=UTF-8&q=Sinclair+QL&meta=>
- ❖ QDOS-Successor SMSQ/E from Tony Tebby
<http://www.scp-paulet-lenerz.com/smsqe/>
- ❖ QPC a virtual QL from Marcel Kilgus
<http://www.kilgus.net/index.html>
- ❖ QDT the new QL Desk-Top from Jim Hunkins
<http://www.idh-stech.com/QDT/QDT.html>
- ❖ The last remaining and available QL hardware platform
<http://www.q40.de/>
- ❖ Dilwyn Jones QL web-site, the most maintained QL site those days
<http://www.dilwyn.uk6.net/index.html>
- ❖ Urs König's web site, a good entry point into the community
<http://www.glvjsjaguar.homepage.bluewin.ch/>
- ❖ Chapter "The Quantum Leap - to where" out of a 1986 book
http://www.nvg.ntnu.no/sinclair/computers/ql/ql_sst.htm
- ❖ Some original Sinclair QL design works of Rick Dickinson
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/9574086@N02/sets/72157600854938578/>
- ❖ Sinclair Research Ltd. web-site
<http://www.sinclair-research.co.uk/about-srl.php>
- ❖ QUANTA - The QL Users and Tinkerers Association
<http://www.quanta.org.uk/>

QL Collectables I'm searching for

- ❖ Video footage on the Sinclair QL (tape or digitalized)
- ❖ Digital(ized) pictures of Sinclair/QL appearance in IT-shows such as Personal Computer World show, London, Which Computer ? show, Birmingham or ZX Microfair, London (1984 to 1988)
- ❖ GST's 68K/OS for the Sinclair QL (ROM-Image or AddOn-Card)
- ❖ Sinclair QL FB ROM
- ❖ Sinclair QL PM ROM
- ❖ A Sinclair QL Professional Computer, S/N pre D04-001371
- ❖ A Sinclair QL Professional Computer, S/N post D16-122418, a D17 would be very nice
- ❖ A Sinclair QL Professional Computer US-Edition, S/N post S13-005854
- ❖ A Sinclair QL Professional Computer German-Edition, S/N post SG18-010800
- ❖ Other Sinclair QL regional editions (Spanish, French, Italian, Danish, Turkish, Greek, German, Dutch, Portuguese, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Arabic)
- ❖ Anything QL related...

Please get in contact with me, thank you very much!

Contact, mailto: SinclairQL25@gmail.com

Visit: <http://www.qlvsjaguar.homepage.bluewin.ch/>

Happy 25th anniversary and *QL forever!*