

THE ELECTRONIC ASTROLOGER

It never ceases to amaze, but not really surprise us that so many people we meet in the course of plying our profession (. . . no correspondence will be entered into regarding this definition) either wholeheartedly embrace, or at least begrudgingly admit, a belief in the cosmological influence of the stars. Or astrology to the proletariat.

Now, to put aside judgemental considerations for the moment, and to examine this sentient sentimentality in a cold, analytical light, one can see a certain *raison d'être* buried in the pious platitudes promulgated by the picayune practitioners of this prehistoric pictography. What we mean to say is, if you're born between certain dates you'll have certain psychological characteristics common to others born during the same annual period. Or so the theory goes.

You've all read the astrological charts in the popular press at some time or another (go on, admit it). You know what they say in general terms — Gemenis have split personalities, Leos dominate their peers etc, etc. Well, after some considerable research (three hours and a cask of Renmark Shiraz) and a wide-ranging survey (asking around the 20 other people in the office) we've come up with a specialised astrological profile for electronics types. Are you ready for it? Too bad, here it is anyway.



Aries (Mar. 21-Apr. 20)

The RAM. Aries types have phenomenal memory, ranging from 6Kbytes (at 6 am) to 10Mbytes (after the tenth glass). Funny though, they can never remember anything the next morning. They enjoy convoluted technical jokes and *risque* songs. Their hair tends to be woolly and unkempt and may be found to contain spare resistors from last December's project. Aries types mistake printed circuit lacquer for deodorant and exhibit ferric chloride stains on their underwear. They howl at the full moon.

Taurus (Apr. 21-May 21)

Taurans make good word processor operators; but never make the mistake of believing anything they say. They are often associated with complex dilemmas (c.f. 'horns of') but always deny being the cause of software bugs. Taurans are heavy-handed with the soldering iron and show distinct disliking for red LEDs. Never buy any equipment recommended by a Tauran. They'll never buy such things for themselves.

Gemini (May 22-June 21)

Geminis exhibit behaviour not unlike dual op-amps. Unless you get the bias right, each half behaves entirely differently. They like amplifiers with balanced, differential inputs but despise dual power supplies. They are ambidextrous and can solder equally badly with the iron in either hand. They bet each way on electronic pinball games.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)

Cancer personalities eat ferric chloride for breakfast and drill pc boards with their canines. They have halitosis and make jokes about cold joints. They twist wires together instead of soldering them or using connectors. Their Scottish ancestry makes them do it for reasons of frugality.

Leo (July 24-Aug. 23)

Leos like to edit magazines (*New Scientist* survey, 1978). Leos like to play with microprocessor-controlled model trains and drive heavily oxidised Holdens of indeterminate vintage and colour. They are renowned for their sense of humour and keep a tight rein on their emotions — which is why you rarely see their hands.

Virgo (Aug. 24-Sept. 23)

Virgo types like mathematical puzzles and aspire to owning a HP-15C calculator but could never learn Reverse Polish notation. Virgos keep a length of knotted string in their pocket for calculating the change from

goods priced at \$XX.95. Virgos don't understand *risque* jokes and wear thongs in the shower.

Libra (Sept. 24-Oct. 23)

Librans are studious types but never get degrees as they are afraid to take examinations. Librans are incapable of memorising the resistor colour code and always put electrolytic capacitors in back to front. When asked to aid in making a decision they give a carefully considered, balanced judgement that leaves you more confused than when you started. Most Librans are deaf in one ear, but you never know which.

Scorpion (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)

Scorpios sniff thermal paste and hot solder resin. They can calculate the input admittance of any solid-state device more swiftly than an IBM PC but are given to flatulence on public transport.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 22)

Sagittarians like recording the sound of steam engines and quartz clocks. They write articles which are published in magazines edited by Leos and they read them aloud in taxis. They dress up as Santa Claus at Easter and distribute battery-operated LED flashers which are subsequently confiscated by the Church Mothers' Club.

Capricorn (Dec. 23-Jan. 20)

Capricorn types complain of the cold and keep their soldering irons permanently on. They rave over Japanese electronic gear, food and women, but are seen to frequently leave the room at cocktail parties. Capricorns like to save money by buying all the bargains offered by electronics stores but have never been on a holiday in their lives.

Aquarius (Jan. 21-Feb. 19)

Aquarians make homebrew beer employing a microprocessor fermentation controller of their own design but prefer to drink Guinness. They have unstable personalities and fall over a lot. Their amplifiers invariably oscillate and their oscillators invariably have parasites. TV sets and VDUs refuse to work in their presence.

Pisces (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)

Pisceans eat caviar and have rank BO. Printed circuit boards oxidise in their presence, but etching solutions speed up five-fold. Resistors change their colour codes and electrolytics spontaneously reverse polarity in the vicinity of Pisceans, but traffic lights always change from red to green for them. Pisceans floss their teeth with hookup wire and wear conductive foam socks to bed.