Why this is relevant?

Because it represents the final evolution of IBM's original PC architecture. Introduced in 1987, it paired the aging but widely compatible Intel 8086 with IBM's brand-new PS/2 platform, demonstrating just how far the first generation of x86 computing could be pushed. By shipping VGA as a standard feature, the Model 30 helped establish the graphics baseline that would define PC software for decades—all while remaining fully compatible with the vast library of DOS applications written for earlier IBM PCs.

Computer Specs

- Intel 8086 at 8 MHz
- 640 KB of conventional RAM
- 12" CRT Monochrome monitor
- 100MB Emulated HDD via PicoMEM
- 1.44 MB Emulated Floppy Drive via PicoMEM - Drive A
- Integrated:
  - Parallel printer port, serial port (DB9), VGA, two PS/2.
- Expansion Cards:
  - 19,200 baud Modem
  - 10mbps Ethernet Card
  - PicoMEM with Adlib sound card.
- Form Factor: Desktop

Who is behind this exhibit?

Meet your Curator

My name is Luis Alcaraz. I'm a Mexican full-stack software engineer living in the Midwest. I enjoy building simple, beautiful apps that solve complex problems. I'm also passionate about 1980s personal computers—my favorite (so far) is the Commodore VIC-20, though I also love writing assembly for the Intel 8086.

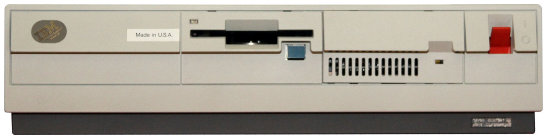
Follow us and keep reviving memories

You can find my updated resume at https://lalcaraz.com or follow me at my latest project: Hey Bibit! hey-bibit.lalcaraz.com where I'm sharing some videos I'm making for my kid so if needed, he can fix my old computers if I'm not around anymore. We also have an active BBS that can be accessed dialing 317-720-1338 or via telnet as bibits.klusteroo.com on port 6502.

https://exposhowcase.lalcaraz.com

IBM PS/2 Model 30

A unique blend of nostalgia and transition-era innovation, the IBM PS/2 Model 30 represents the final full-size desktop built around the Intel 8086. Introduced in 1987—between the dominance of the AT-class 286 and the rise of early 386 systems—it stands as a deliberately late and unconventional product. By pairing an aging but proven CPU with forward-looking features like VGA graphics and the PS/2 design language, the Model 30 captures a rare moment when IBM was simultaneously closing the chapter on the original PC architecture while quietly adapting to a rapidly changing, clone-driven market.



We want you to experience “remote work” like it is 1987.

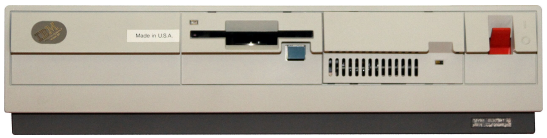
A known and satisfying click.

Powering on the IBM PS/2 Model 30 begins with a ritual many users still remember. The large red rocker switch doesn’t glide or tap—it clicks with authority, a physical confirmation that this is a serious machine coming to life. That sound alone signals intent, not decoration.

The ritual continues above the chassis, where the matching IBM monitor is powered on separately with its own firm switch. Screen first dark, then alive, it completes the sequence—machine and display brought online by hand, one deliberate action at a time.

Everything is a call away.

In the late 1980s, connectivity meant dialing out. With a modem attached, the PS/2 Model 30 became a gateway to bulletin board systems, remote offices, and shared knowledge—one phone call at a time. From downloading software to checking messages after hours, the sound of a handshake was the sound of reaching beyond the desk.



A Great View

Introduced VGA graphics, giving 640×480 resolution with 256 colors to an 8086 system.

Storage & Design

Featured dual 3.5″ floppy bays, optional hard drive support, and the iconic red rocker switch, all in a compact PS/2-style chassis.

Checking your ‘socials’.

Launch the terminal software from the DOS prompt by typing “socials” and pressing enter. From the preloaded list of BBS servers, select one to connect. Log in using the username heybibit and password heybibit, then follow the on-screen prompts to read messages, post updates, and explore the community—just like checking your socials, 1983 style.

Get some work done, send a fax.

Launch Tandy DeskMate by typing “desk” and pressing enter at the DOS prompt to explore its suite of productivity tools. Write documents, manage contacts, or experiment with the built-in fax features. It’s a hands-on way to see how early software blended work and communication in one compact package. There’s a fax machine at extension _____, so give it a try.

Relax with a game, or three.

After work, unwind with classic games. Load Prince of Persia by typing “prince” and pressing enter at the DOS prompt or try King's Quest I by typing “kings” instead - both iconic early PC gaming. A modern game called “Attack of the PETSCII robots” is also available by typing “robots”.

Wrap-up and touch grass.

When you’re finished, shut the system down the way it was designed to be treated. Exit your software, return to DOS, and power off the computer using the same red rocker switch—one firm click to silence the machine. Finally, power down the monitor using its own switch on the front or side of the unit.

Somehow stuck? Restart.

Flip the power switch off and count to 10 “mississippily” before flipping it on again. Or press CTRL-ALT-DEL at the same time. You can also dial _____ to talk with a Service Support Representative at any time.

Connectivity

Supported modems for BBS and remote work, and could be equipped with Ethernet for modern networks.

CPU & Speed

Powered by an Intel 8086 running at 8 MHz, the Model 30 was IBM’s final full-size 8086 desktop.