

## IBM\_System/36

The IBM System/36 is a midrange minicomputer that was introduced in 1983 and discontinued in 2000. It is a direct ancestor to the current popular AS/400 computers. It was targeted at business customers, and was quite good at things like database management, accounting, and general business automation tasks.

It is powered by two 8-bit processors, the *CSP* or Control Storage Processor, and the *MSP* or Main Storage Processor. These are clocked at 4MHz and 1MHz, respectively. The system communicates with peripherals via IBM's *Twinax* cabling, which is a type of network bus. Terminals, printers, and other peripherals connected to Twinax ports on the system unit, and the operating system (called *SSP*, for System Support Program) could automatically identify and configure any connected peripherals at IPL (boot) time. This is very advanced functionality for the early 1980s.

My IBM System/36 model 5360.

The front of the system is clean and relatively featureless. Note that the control panel has a cover that hides most of the lights and control switches, contributing to a clean, non-intimidating appearance. Remember, this mid-range minicomputer was intended for office use by relatively nontechnical people in an era during which most people hadn't seen a computer.

One very unusual feature of the System/36 model 5360 is the floppy disk changer. It holds two cartridges, called *magazines*, each of which holds ten eight-inch floppy disks. A robotic mechanism selects disks and inserts them into the disk drive under program control.

This particular System/36 was acquired in the summer of 2008. The story of its retrieval, including pictures, can be found [here](#).

## Photos

Front View	Control Panel	Floppy Disk Changer	Front Door Open
Logic Gate	Card Cage Open	Rear View	Right Rear Door Open
Left Rear Door Open	Drive Gate	Hard Disk Drive	