



200 N. Milwaukee Ave. Vernon Hills, IL 60061

phone 847.465.6000 fax 847.465.6800

Traded: Nasdaq: CDWC

CDW Computer Centers, Inc.	Fleishman-Hillard (Chicago)
Harry J. Harezak, Jr. <i>Chief Financial Officer</i>	Sharon J. Erikson <i>General Inquiries</i>
(847) 419-6226	(312) 751-8878

JANUARY 22, 1998

CDW COMPUTER CENTERS, INC. REPORTS RECORD RESULTS

Fourth Quarter Highlights:

- Eighteenth consecutive quarter of sequential sales growth as a public company
- 34% growth in net sales
- Operating income increases 30%
- Number of customers serviced advances 25%

Financial & Operating Data <small>(Reflects 3-for-2 stock split paid July 15, 1996)</small>	Three Months Ended		% Change	Twelve Months Ended		% Change
	12/31/97	12/31/96		12/31/97	12/31/96	
Net Sales (000's)	\$350,706	\$262,173	34%	\$1,276,929	\$927,895	38%
Income from Operations (000's)	\$ 22,091	\$ 16,967	30%	\$ 80,490	\$ 53,603	50%
Net Income (000's)	\$ 13,941	\$ 10,693	30%	\$ 51,001	\$ 34,400	48%
Basic Earnings per Share	\$ 0.65	\$ 0.50	30%	\$ 2.37	\$ 1.60	48%
Diluted Earnings per Share	\$ 0.64	\$ 0.49	31%	\$ 2.35	\$ 1.58	49%
Pro forma – Excluding Exit Charge						
Income from Operations (000's)				\$ 81,290	\$ 56,803	43%
Net Income (000's)				\$ 51,483	\$ 36,352	42%
Basic Earnings per Share				\$ 2.39	\$ 1.69	41%
Diluted Earnings per Share				\$ 2.37	\$ 1.67	42%
Operating Data						
Number of Orders Shipped	504,092	374,326	35%	1,814,388	1,318,316	38%
Average Order Size	\$ 696	\$ 700	(1)%	\$ 704	\$ 704	0%
Customers Serviced (000's)	218	174	25%	575	462	24%

"Our record fourth quarter results provide a strong finish to a great year. Through the unrelenting efforts of our coworkers, CDW gained market share in 1997 while continuing our track record of profitable growth. As we begin 1998, we are focused on improving the execution of our operating model to attract new customers and enhance service to our existing customers."

---Michael P. Krasny, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

-MORE-

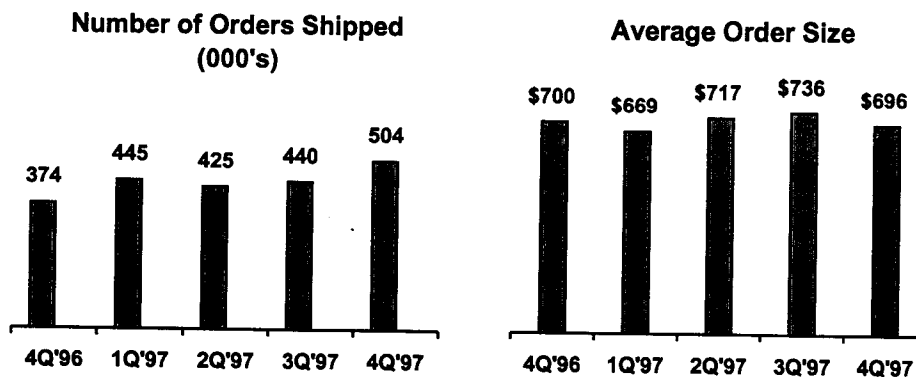
Vernon Hills, Illinois, January 22, 1998 — CDW Computer Centers, Inc. (Nasdaq: CDWC) today announced record sales and earnings for the fourth quarter and year ended December 31, 1997.

Net sales for the fourth quarter increased 34% to \$350.7 million from \$262.2 million in the same period of 1996. Net income for the quarter rose 30% to \$13.9 million from \$10.7 million in the fourth quarter of 1996. Diluted earnings per share for the quarter increased 31% to \$0.64 in the fourth quarter of 1997 from \$0.49 in the same period of 1996.

Net sales for the year ended December 31, 1997 increased 38% to \$1.277 billion from \$927.9 million in the year ended 1996. Net income for the year ended December 31, 1997 rose 48% to \$51.0 million from \$34.4 million reported in 1996. Diluted earnings per share increased 49% to \$2.35 from \$1.58 in 1996.

Net income in the year ended December 31, 1996 was reduced by a non-recurring charge to pre-tax earnings of \$3.2 million. This included a \$4.0 million charge for the estimated costs of exiting the Company's now-vacant Buffalo Grove facility, offset by a related \$800,000 reduction in the executive incentive bonus pool. Excluding the impact of the exit charge and its related impact on the executive incentive bonus pool in both years, pro forma net income and diluted earnings per share both increased 42% to \$51.5 million and \$2.37 per share, respectively, from \$36.4 million and \$1.67 per share in 1996. All diluted earnings per share amounts reflect the 3-for-2 stock split effected in the form of a stock dividend, which was paid on July 15, 1996.

"In the fourth quarter of 1997, our sales grew across all product categories as customers responded to our marketing initiatives and the efforts of our growing team of sales account managers," said Michael P. Krasny, chairman and chief executive officer. "The impact of increases in the number of customers serviced and number of orders shipped, combined with maintaining average order size compared to the prior year, all contributed to the growth in net sales," said Krasny.



Printers, desktop computers, memory, video and data storage devices were the fastest growing product categories, based on the percentage increase in dollar sales over the fourth quarter of 1996. Notebook computers were the largest product category at 23% of net sales in the fourth quarter. Unit volumes of notebook and desktop computers were strong with growth rates of 45% and 48%, respectively, over the fourth quarter of 1996.

"Our notebook and desktop computer sales are driven by products from top tier computer manufacturers such as Compaq, Hewlett-Packard, IBM and Toshiba. Declining price points and improved performance have

increased the universe of customers upgrading their existing systems, while expanding their Internet and network systems capabilities," said Gregory C. Zeman, CDW's president.

Gross profit margin was 13.2% of net sales in the fourth quarter of both 1997 and 1996. The Company's gross profit as a percentage of net sales may vary on a quarterly basis based upon vendor support programs, product mix, pricing strategies, market conditions and other factors. As a result, there is no certainty that the Company will be able to sustain the gross profit margin levels achieved in recent quarters.

Selling and administrative expense as a percentage of net sales increased to 6.9% of net sales in the fourth quarter of 1997 versus 6.7% in the same quarter of 1996, primarily due to an increase in net advertising expense as a percentage of net sales.

Annualized inventory turnover was approximately 19 and 21 times, respectively, for the three and twelve months ended December 31, 1997. Working capital as of December 31, 1997 was \$167.4 million, including approximately \$79.4 million in cash, cash equivalents and marketable securities.

The Company recently agreed to purchase approximately 18 acres of vacant land contiguous to its Vernon Hills facility for \$4.3 million, subject to certain conditions of closing. "We will have approximately 45 total acres, of which approximately 32 are vacant and available for future expansion. The total expansion capacity provides the ability to operate from a single location, which has been a critical factor in our ability to become the lowest cost operator in the industry," said Krasny.

The statements in this release concerning the Company's future prospects are forward-looking statements that involve certain risks and uncertainties. Such risks and uncertainties include the continued acceptance of the Company's distribution channel by vendors and customers, the timely availability and acceptance of new products, and continuation of key vendor relationships and support programs.

CDW Computer Centers, Inc. (Nasdaq:CDWC) is a leading direct marketer of brand name microcomputer products, primarily to business, government, educational, institutional and home office users in the United States. CDW sells a broad range of brand name microcomputer products, including hardware and peripherals, software, networking products and accessories through knowledgeable telemarketing account managers. Sales of products that utilize, or are compatible with, the Microsoft Windows 95/Windows/Windows NT/MS-DOS operating platforms account for substantially all of the Company's net sales. Customers can place orders and obtain product information by calling a CDW account manager at 1-800-800-4CDW, or by visiting CDW on the Internet at <http://www.cdw.com>.

For more information about CDW:
Visit CDW on the Internet at <http://www.cdw.com>
Contact CDW Investor Relations via the Internet at shserv@admin.cdw.com
Or by telephone at 847-419-8234.



-TABLES FOLLOW-

-MORE-

CDW COMPUTER CENTERS, INC. AND SUBSIDIARY
CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF INCOME
(in thousands, except per share data)
(unaudited)

	Three Months		Year	
	Ended December 31,		Ended December 31,	
	1997	1996	1997	1996
Net sales	\$ 350,706	\$ 262,173	\$ 1,276,929	\$ 927,895
Cost of sales	304,481	227,540	1,106,124	805,413
Gross profit	46,225	34,633	170,805	122,482
Selling and administrative expenses	24,134	17,666	90,315	64,879
Exit charge	-	-	-	4,000
Income from operations	22,091	16,967	80,490	53,603
Interest income	1,076	896	4,259	3,469
Other expense	(67)	(42)	(241)	(188)
Income before income taxes	23,100	17,821	84,508	56,884
Income tax provision	9,159	7,128	33,507	22,484
Net income	<u>\$ 13,941</u>	<u>\$ 10,693</u>	<u>\$ 51,001</u>	<u>\$ 34,400</u>
Earnings per share *				
Basic	<u>\$ 0.65</u>	<u>\$ 0.50</u>	<u>\$ 2.37</u>	<u>\$ 1.60</u>
Diluted	<u>\$ 0.64</u>	<u>\$ 0.49</u>	<u>\$ 2.35</u>	<u>\$ 1.58</u>
Weighted average common shares outstanding *				
Basic	21,525	21,525	21,525	21,525
Diluted	21,701	21,850	21,704	21,785

*All amounts reflect a three-for-two stock split effected in the form
of a stock dividend paid on July 15, 1996.

CDW COMPUTER CENTERS, INC. AND SUBSIDIARY
CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS
(in thousands)
(unaudited)

	<u>December 31,</u> 1997	<u>December 31,</u> 1996
ASSETS		
Current assets :		
Cash, cash equivalents and marketable securities	\$ 79,425	\$ 74,952
Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts of \$1,950 and \$1,100, respectively	87,524	57,396
Miscellaneous receivables	3,960	3,931
Merchandise inventory	61,941	41,462
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	759	823
Deferred income taxes	<u>3,587</u>	<u>2,258</u>
Total current assets	237,196	180,822
Property and equipment, net	26,253	3,636
Construction-in-progress	451	8,659
Deferred income taxes and other assets	<u>5,741</u>	<u>5,713</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 269,641</u>	<u>\$ 198,830</u>
LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY		
Current liabilities :		
Accounts payable	\$ 44,451	\$ 36,642
Accrued expenses and other current liabilities	21,933	16,579
Accrued exit costs	<u>3,391</u>	<u>3,987</u>
Total current liabilities	69,775	57,208
Shareholders' equity	<u>199,866</u>	<u>141,622</u>
Total liabilities and shareholders' equity	<u>\$ 269,641</u>	<u>\$ 198,830</u>

###