TRUE FOR AUCH DUS

PEGGED HOPES

eeking to build a etter mouse, IBM comes up with mini-joystick.

W YORK - Ted Selker's work ing a better computer mouse new life to IBM's moribund lapcomputer business.

ker and fellow IBM scientist Jo-Rutiedge created Trackpoint II, ed cursor control button on the ard of IBM's Thinkpads. The intion, brought to the market a seo, was radical for IBM, which een viewed as falling behind in C technology.

mpetitors' laptops chiefly rely on balls — stationary rolling balls sed in or attached to computers move the carsor that directs uter commands. The Trackpoint ctions like a mini-joystick.

rackpoint has been a very good rentiator for them and it's been portant part of the overall sucof the Thinkpad line," said Jef-Henning, PC analyst for BIS egic Decisions in Norwell, Mass. he peg is also on the keyboard of Bla desktop model and may become an option for others.

But the decision to incorporate Trackpoint II didn't come easily. The researchers put some pressure on IBM by touting it in a news release, which prompted some customers to ask when it would be available.

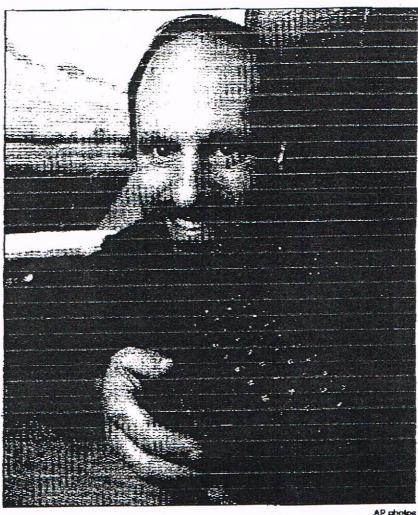
"One of the things we really needed was for the product managers to believe this was going to make a splash," Selker said.

"A lot of what it took to get it into a product was documenting carefully that it did make an improvement for people and that it could be made cheaply."

The project took six years, with most of the time spent finding the right balance between finger pressure and cursor speed.....

The researchers created a dead zone in which the cursor doesn't move if the button is accidentally bumped, two slow speeds, a fast speed the eye can follow and a turbo speed the eye can't.

"Everyone wanted to drive a Fer-Tari," Selker said.



IBM researcher Ted Selker, above, holds a notebook computer with the Trackpoint II cursor control button on the keyboard. The device, below, functions like a joystick.

