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Telidon — a triumph in two-way television technology

Canadian researchers have developed a system of two-way television that has been described as the most superior technology of its type in the world. Telidon, which may become a reality in Canadian homes in the 1980s, has the potential to create a multi-million industry in new communications equipment and information services to the public.

The system allows access by telephone to information stored in data banks, which is then displayed in writing or graphics on a modified television screen in the home.

Developed by the Communications Research Centre, a branch of the Department of Communications (DOC), Telidon could transmit information by coaxial cable, phone or optical fibre. Direct contact between users would also be possible.

The interest in interactive services, particularly in those that use television, is growing by leaps and bounds as Britain, France, West Germany, the United States and Japan race towards marketing the new product.

Limitations of other systems

While there are several videotex systems elsewhere, Britain's is the most elaborate. There are, however, significant differences between the British and Canadian systems. On the British systems, the page or image appears line by line, left to right, because they tie the horizontal row of character display on the TV to the transmission bit-rate capacity of the TV horizontal scan-line interval; i.e., transmission media and display structure are locked together.

Antiope, the French system, is similar to the British Ceefax and Oracle systems, with one major difference: the French one uses packet data transmission and the picture display is independent of the data transmission approach.

Canadian independence

The Canadian technology, however, which has taken an approach totally different from any of the other systems, has a

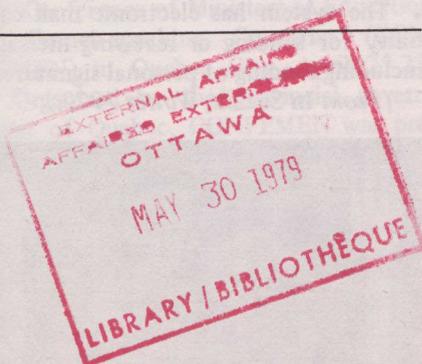
number of important advantages. When work on Telidon began at the Communications Research Centre, several years ago, Herb Bown manager of DOC's image communications labs, said: "We were determined as engineers not to make the videotex terminal dependent in any way on the communications media or on the receiving display hardware.

"We wanted this independence because we know there are different rates of change for the terminal, transmission and data-base-management technologies. For example, existing communications are constantly being improved with fibre

- Telidon may change the way we shop, the way we do business and the way we are educated. Electronic newspapers could be displayed on a modified TV set at the touch of a button.
- Telidon also enables one to type a message, draw a picture and send it directly to a friend's terminal, without contact with the central data bank. Two people will be able to work on a text or graphic even though they are hundreds of kilometres apart.
- The Canadian technology claims to be more advanced than its competitors in other countries, it is more flexible and it won't become outmoded because of future changes in transmission methods or display terminals.

optics, satellite and other broadband services as well as improvements in the telephone networks and we know the resolution of TV itself may well be improved or it may even be replaced by a totally new display technology. The additional electronics we're putting into a TV to allow it to display this new alphanumeric, graphic and tonal image material will also change rapidly with advances in micro-processors and memory systems and large-scale integration.

"It is important we adopt a methodology and an over-all systems approach



Thirteen years ago yesterday...
came the announcement that, with provincial co-operation, the Federal Government-sponsored medicare program would begin on July 1, 1967.

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