

Unique telephone system gets Lumbers' numbers

By MELANIE CHAPMAN

If you have paid a visit to the Lumber's Life Sciences Building, you will have noticed a unique style of telephone unlike any other on the campus. This advanced digital telephone system, officially known as the ROLM CBX II, was introduced in order to replace the existing system which is rapidly becoming obsolete.

Dr. Allan Cobb, Director of Computing Services at York, and a member of the tele-

communications task force working on ROLM, assisted in evaluating the various telephone systems available and ultimately in choosing ROLM. In a recent interview Dr. Cobb stated that the existing telephones are obsolete because they provide no access to modern voice features and data systems such as the new system does. For example, using the ROLM system in offices, employees will be able to carry out conference calls right at their desk rather than doing so through Bell Canada.

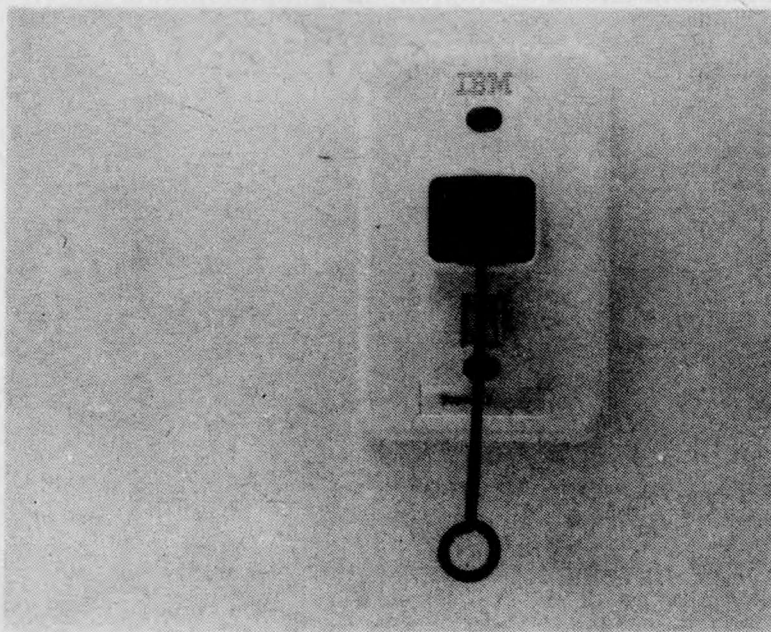
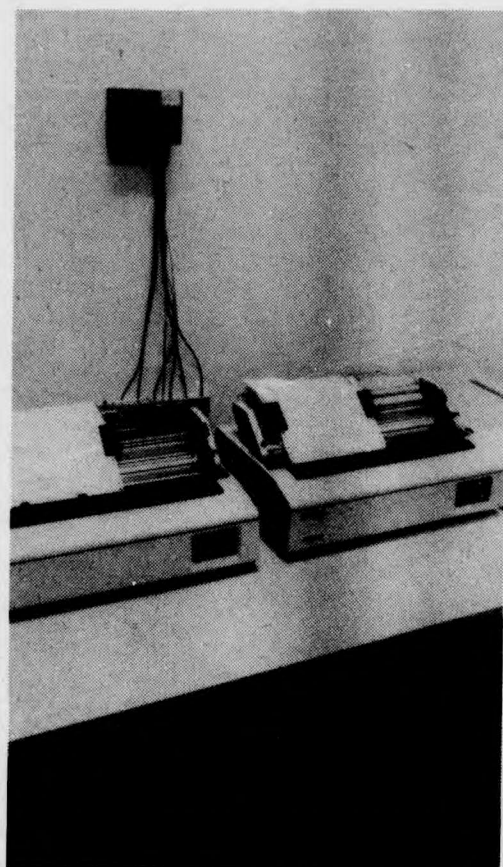
The existing system is also more costly to

maintain than ROLM even though the estimated cost of purchasing ROLM is in the area of four million dollars. One may wonder how this is justified when constant complaints of underfunding and overcrowding are heard across the campus. However, as Dr. Cobb affirms, ROLM will be financed internally, based on the current budget for York telephones and will be paid off in eight years even saving money during this time.

According to Dr. Cobb, coaxial cables are currently being laid in the tunnels, preparing for installation of ROLM across the York campus in May of 1986 and at Glendon in June. It will initially be placed alongside present systems in April in order that a period of training may take place. All efforts will be made to match the ROLM system to existing ones as well.

Mr. Alan Smith, a member of the university's Telecommunication's Committee, was also involved in the process of requesting and analyzing the ROLM CBX II. Similar to Dr. Cobb, he feels that this new system will greatly benefit York. In addition to reduced costs and better communications for the university itself, he notes various benefits for the students and faculty. For example, provisions are being made for cable television to be installed in the residences along with new floor phones. These phones will be connected to the campus computers as will those of the faculty.

Both men consider the system to be innovative and revolutionary because it will remain up to date for (10) to (15) years with only periodical upgrading required. This is in comparison to most other systems which remain current for only five years or so. ROLM also has more of the features needed in the future than to the others considered. As Alan Smith points out "it is software driven and can be enhanced without major hardware systems." Thus it is cheaper and more convenient. Overall, it appears to be the best solution to replacing the outdated system presently in use. It will both expand and improve voice, data and video services at York, just another step in taking us further into the high-tech world of the 80s.



Elements of communications technology:

whatever happened to the forgotten carrier pigeon and the smoke signal?

GARY BLAKELEY

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