



Interview With Mr. Bown



Telidon was developed at the Communications Research Centre of the Department of Communications under the direction of Herb Bown. Right, in excerpts from an interview, Mr. Bown describes how it came about.

I've been at the Centre since 1966. From 1966 to 1969 I was working on the satellite program, Alouette II and ISIS A. In 1969 we started a new program in interactive visual communication. The word *Telidon* didn't exist at the time. I can't look back and fix a moment and say that was when we began to build **Telidon**. What we did was set out to define a set of codings for interactive visual communications having two very important characteristics that the Europeans who were already in the field had overlooked. We wanted a set of independent codes that could be delivered over the telephone, over coaxial cable, over satellite channels and by over-the-air broadcasts and that could be received and displayed whether the receiving terminal happened to use a television scan technology or a storage tube or whatever. We wanted a data base that would never have to be changed with changing technologies because data base development is where the most expense will occur. The system announced in August 1978 was only part of the broader system. The first part is information retrieval. The second permits two-way communications between **Telidon** terminals.

We wanted a system that would create a common visual space between individuals the way a telephone creates a common audio space. We wanted to create a common blackboard so that one person could draw a picture on the screen which would appear immediately on the other person's screen, and both people could make changes on it.

Those were the basics. The other things that are going to happen are simply improvements—refinements in the delivery network, having voices accompany the pictures, and things like that.