

Due to the highly changeable nature of the market, these figures are not absolute. Software only, retailers, and some software publishing firms have been added to complete the total picture of the "big players."

## 6.2 Clone Only Stores:

These are computer dealers who specialize in distributing no "brand name" computers. It is worth noting that the largest seller of IBM PC products in the USA is the category "other" (ie the clone manufacturers). While these chains are hard to find and difficult to deal with, they may match the needs of small software producers who have a clone type software product that can be bundled with these clones to help them move the hardware.

## 6.3 Super Stores:

Historically, the average computer store has been quite small. Increasingly the larger chains have been adding large (10-20 k) square feet to their stores, to allow them to carry more products to better respond to customer needs. With the wider selection, these "Super Stores" will put a lot of pressure on the independents and thus some of the smaller stores may be forced to close. The upside of this trend is more shelf space for lower volume software products—the category most Canadian products fall into. However, most of the Super Stores are run by the major chains so this does change the difficulty of getting the product into the major distributors.

## 6.4 Software Only Stores: (815)

The number of software only stores has grown from 50 in 1985, to over 815 in 1988. This rapid growth rate reflects the larger portion of total system costs that software occupies. These software stores are now a major force in the total computer market. They do carry more titles than hardware vendors and therefore offer more opportunities for Canadian vendors. The Egghead catalogue alone has about 5000 titles. However, they are still hard nosed business people and will want to see a full business plan. Software only stores are growing at an average of 19%, but represent only 7% of the 12,759 outlets that sell software.

Like the major distributors, an application to have your product carried by these stores will require a business plan with lots of dollars attached, and the same retailing issues (shelf space, volume, coop advertising, etc) will have to be faced before you enter the market.