captured 40 per cent of the domestic market and 5 per cent of the international market, this would represent revenue of $21 billion and 140 000 jobs.

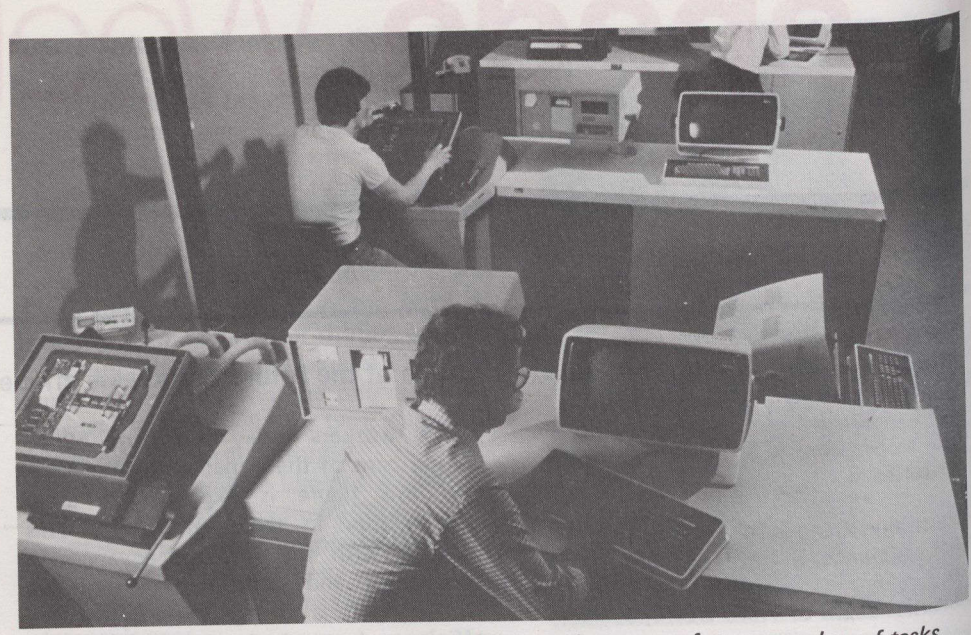
Four major field trials are planned in the current phase of the OCS program. Most of these have been proposed by groups of companies that have agreed to combine their expertise in different aspects of office technology. Bell Northern Research (BNR) has offered to act as lead company for the Bell group in conducting a field trial in the Department of National Revenue — Customs and Excise.

Another proposal would have Systemhouse Limited as the lead company in a field trial involving the Department of National Defence. Discussions are still underway with these companies, as well as with companies that will be involved in the two remaining trials in locations yet to be designated.

BNR, with participation from Northern Telecom and Bell Canada, is planning to experiment with a totally integrated office system which would test functions such as text messaging, file handling, text processing, tele-conferring decision support tools, and public data base access. The trial would use the Datapac packet switching telephone network, the iNET intelligent gateway, the Telidon Vista videotex system, the Envoy 100 public message service, the SL-1 switching system, and the Displayphone executive work station, all developed and marketed by the Bell organization.

The BNR field trial within Customs and Excise will be conducted in three phases. Phase 1 will last up to 12 months and involves a study of the needs of executive, management and clerical workers in the department, and the design of a pilot system. The pilot trial would begin in phase 2 and might consist of as many as 100 work stations at several locations across Canada. The third phase would begin if the pilot trial were a success. This would be the operational phase, with as many as 2 000 terminals installed in Customs and Excise offices across Canada. The first two stages of the field trial may cost more than $3 million, while the operational phase could cost about $15 million.

Rapid transmission of messages.



Multifunctional work stations will allow office workers to perform a number of tasks.

Systemhouse Limited, a Canadian software and systems company with branches in a number of other countries, proposes to serve as primary contractor in the Department of National Defence trial. Systemhouse has proposed the development of new software to integrate office work stations with local access networks, data processing facilities and private and public communications systems. Systemhouse has proposed that the system be created with equipment, software and consulting services from a number of leading Canadian suppliers, including AES Data Limited, Mitel, Canstar, Norpak, and others. This project would also cost about $3 million in the trial phases.

Effectiveness of systems

The field trials will also allow the government to measure the effectiveness of new technologies in improving the quality and efficiency of its services to the public. The trials will be implemented by participating departments in consultation with affected workers and their unions.

In announcing the OCS program, the Minister of Communications Francis Fox said "With the rapid pace of change in office technology, it is equally important that this program address a number of contentious social and economic issues." To this end, the social and behavioural impacts sub-committee of the Canadian Videotex Consultative Committee (CVCC) will be reorganized as a national committee with a mandate to study the implications of information technology in the human context.

Dr. Anne Cameron of the University of New Brunswick will continue to chair the social impacts sub-committee in its expanded role. An interdepartmental working group has also been established within government to support the activities of the national human context committee.

Often called the office of the future program, the OCS program deals with the rapidly merging technologies of microelectronics, high-speed communications, and information management systems that are transforming the modern office. In the office of the future, intelligent, multifunctional work stations linked by telephone, coaxial cable, or optical fibre networks will provide access to voice, video, data, and graphics services. Each work station will allow the office worker to perform a wide range of tasks, including word processing; tele-conferring; storage, retrieval and sorting of information in local and remote data bases; electronic messaging and mail box services; and the processing and programming of data, text, voice, and video materials.

(Excerpts from an article by Guy Verreault in Canada Commerce, *July/August 1982.)*