The key issue in networking is the matching of a myriad of computer products and technologies. A relative novelty to Malaysia, Computer Protocol (M) Sdn. Bhd., an Australian subsidiary, has achieved success with its vendor-independent networking philosophy. Its major selling point is its ability to provide facilities that permit the interconnection of any choice of data processing resources including host computers, terminal equipment and proprietary network architectures. Other companies with similar expertise could find their services in good demand.

3.2 Applications Software

Applications software represents software developed for specific tasks. The market as estimated by industry sources at C$15 million in 1987.

The industry structure is complex. Besides the computer hardware vendors who supply software together or as options with their computers, dealers and value-added resellers have emerged to compete in the supply of applications software. In addition, there are also training institutions, service bureaus and accounting firms who are obtaining a share of this market. Companies like Ashton Tate and Microsoft who market services from their regional headquarters based in Singapore are also players in this market and provide administration and related services in support of their local distributers.

In Malaysia the dominance of the major hardware vendors in the software applications market is understandable in view of their resources, marketing prowess and the fact that hardware selection has always taken precedence over software evaluation. While the major hardware vendors are invariably invited to tender for computerisation programs of significance in Malaysia, it is generally impossible for vendors to cater the entire range of applications. As with hardware sales, the leading hardware vendors have found it mutually beneficial to arrange for value-added-resellers with particular expertise or more compatible products to complement their own licensed or in-house range of applications software.

Applications software for purposes of this study is grouped under two main categories; horizontal type applications software that cut across industries and vertical type applications software that are more industry specific.