

Electronic "magazines" can be retrieved by the user from a continuous stream of text and graphic information transmitted on the vertical blanking interval of regular broadcast transmission of television programming. This vertical blanking interval is the period between scannings of the camera image and represents a limited capacity for information service transmission. Where economically feasible, the information transmission capability can be significantly increased with full channel transmission.

BROADCAST SERVICES

Traditionally, radio and television programming has been provided on public broadcast networks to wide audiences. New technology developments such as low-power television will provide special programming to meet inexpensively the needs of smaller audiences. Digital video and low-cost computer memory will expand the teletext services which will be available to both mass and mass and special interest audiences. Teletext and videotex decoders are already available as built-in components of the home television.

CABLE SERVICES

The first generation of cable networks provided one-way transmission of television programming through coaxial cable to the home. New multichannel cable systems now provide an expanded range of programming and non-programming services including pay-TV, full channel teletext and distribution of games. Significant developments are underway in two-way cable systems which would provide full interactive videotex, electronic mail and voice and data communication. The broad bandwidth of cable allows the transmission of more complex graphics and images to enhance the information content and services which can be distributed from the headend production facilities of cable operators such as Rogers and Skyline Cablevision.

IMPACT OF NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

The technology now exists to provide Teletext and Videotex information and services to the mass home and business market through the traditional voice, data and entertainment communication networks. The television and the microcomputer will become information "appliances" which will link the user with vast networks of information banks and a diversity of entertainment, advertising, communication and financial services. The constraints to the mass market acceptance are two-fold: the reduction in the cost of special hardware (or software) decoders and the availability of useful information content and services which can be of sufficient value to attract consumers willing to pay for its access and use. Without quality content, the technology has no context.