

Computers

IMPORTANCE OF THE SECTOR

In 1990, the computer hardware market in France totalled 85 billion FF, an increase of 9% over 1989. The market is expected to grow to 115 billion FF in 1994.

The total number of computers in use in France during 1990 could be divided into four categories according to size:

- mainframe computers costing more than 7 million FF each: 2,548 units;
- medium-size computers, valued between 1,6 and 7 million FF each: 6,230 units;
- small computers, priced from 250,000 FF to 1,6 million FF each: 11,560 units;
- very small computers, priced between 130,000 and 250,000 FF each: 94,432 units.

A breakdown of the French market by type of hardware shows the following:

- mainframes: IBM, Fujitsu and NEC represent over 65% of the market;
- mini-systems: IBM and DEC share 33% of the market;
- micro-computers: IBM holds 25% of the market, Apple 11% and Compaq 5%.

As most companies are now equipped with hardware, software expenditures exceeded those for hardware in 1990.

The breakdown of the French market by sales is as follows:

Company	Annual Sales	Employees
(Billions FF)		
IBM-France	43,7	21 419
Bull	34,5	45 476
Digital (DEC)	7,1	4 600
Hewlett Packard	5,7	3 600
Unisys	3,4	2 330

Source: SFIB (Syndicat National des Fabricants d'Ensembles d'Informatique, de Bureautique et de leurs Applications Télématicques)

IBM acquired 5.7% of Bull in February 1992, in exchange for providing state of the art technology and for purchasing French products. The intention of this agreement is to help Bull overcome its severe financial problems by ensuring it access both to RISC technology and to new markets. IBM is committed to buying portable micro-computers from Zenith, a Bull subsidiary, and to subcontract from that company for four years.