

NAPLPS - AN ENCODING SCROOGE

The excitement surrounding NAPLPS is due in part to the remarkable way it encodes colour graphic information. The designers of the protocol, recognizing that local memory and processing power has now become cheaper, thanks to the chip and the microcomputer, turned their attention to a deficiency inherent in other videotex and graphic coding systems: they all were voracious consumers of storage and transmission capacities. As a result, transmission and storage costs tended to make them unsuitable for many applications. The NAPLPS protocol, by contrast, uses what are known as Picture Description Instructions (PDIs), a notably Spartan encoding method. A line, for example, requires only three instructions: the beginning and end co-ordinates and a command to join. The savings, both in transmission and storage requirements, over protocols which require every pixel to be identified are astounding.

