Section 1 : Introduction to the Computer Market in Thailand

Computerization in Thailand started in 1963 with the
introduction of the first two computers into the country. An
IBM 1401 was installed at the National Statistical Office
for census work and an IBM 1620 at Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok for educational purposes.

Ten years after the first installations, there were still
only a small number of computer installations in Thailand
even though the Royal Thai Government realizing the
desirability of coordinating computerization activities, had
in 1973 created a National Computer Committee to supervise
the procurement and use of computers in the public sector.
Also established by this time (circa 1971) as a private
sector initiative was the Computer Association of Thailand
whose central objectives are to promote the efficiency of
computerization and to disseminate awareness of computers to
the general public.

At the end of 1973, there were a total of 39 installations
of which 21 were in the private sector by companies such as
Esso, Siam Cement, Borneo Co (Thailand), and Bangkok Bank.

During the first decade of computerization in Thailand,
installations in Thailand were mainframes - big in both size
and price.

In 1972, the IBM S/3 mini-computer was introduced to
Thailand with the first two installations at Caltex Oil
(Thailand) Ltd and Kodak (Thailand) Ltd. As in many other
countries, the Thai business sector was not generally aware
of the potential of the mini-computer until towards the end
of the 1970s when it became recognized as the "office
computer" with its size and flexibility rendering it
suitable for business use, particularly in the medium size
company.

Also extremely relevant to its increasing use was that the
price of mini-computer hardware was much lower than that of
large-scale computers and by 1983 mini-computers were well
accepted as necessary office tools by large and medium size
companies in Thailand.

Micro-computers were first imported into the country in 1980
for market tests although a number of them were brought in
as "personal belongings". A year or so after, there were
several makes of micro-computer available in the Thai market
but many potential buyers were rather confused about brand
and model choice and their varying suitabilities. This
confusion was caused by lack of knowledge about micro-
computers; high and often misplaced buyer expectations; and
very frequently, misleading information from non-
professional and unqualified salesmen employed by several
micro-computer dealers.