

"Canada is also a good place to do business. Banking, communications and transportation services are as good here as anywhere in the world."

Georges Peapples
President
General Motors of Canada

"We find that there is a lot of innovation in Canada and it is very economical to do research here."

Michael Cowpland
Chairman and CEO
Corel Corporation

The system will have the high band-width required for emerging technologies such as video-conferencing and interactive full-colour transmission.

Other recent additions to the communications infrastructure include a cluster of computer networks. They include FreeNet – a free-of-charge community network now operating in three Canadian cities, with 18 more planned for the future.

Other networks include OCRInet which links universities, research institutions and broad-band service developers in the national capital area.

Also under construction is an educational network called SchoolNet. When complete, it will connect Canada's 16,000 schools with each other, and with databases and other information sources throughout the world.

THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

Canada's internationally-renowned information technology (IT) industry comprises some 13,500 firms employing 278,000 people.

The sector encompasses telecommunications equipment and services, computers, software and services, instrumentation, microelectronics, consumer electronics and office equipment.

Firms include the global giant Northern Telecom and its R&D affiliate, Bell-Northern Research, and other major contenders such as Bell Canada, Mitel, Newbridge Networks and SHL Systemhouse. As well, several multinationals have established major bases in Canada, including Digital, IBM and Xerox.

One of the fastest-growing sectors in the economy, the information technology industry has grown at a rate of 7.4 per cent per year and in 1992 its revenues accounted for 5.8 per cent of the nation's GDP.

Canadian information technology (IT) companies are responsible for approximately three per cent of worldwide production. During the 1990s the value of IT exports increased from \$9.2 billion to \$9.9 billion. Destination markets included the U.S., the E.C., the Pacific Rim and Latin America.