



Does too compute

by Gilbert Bouchard

The convention centre glowed with coloured video terminals, and hummed, buzzed, and zipped with the swirl of a zillion computer chips at the first annual Edmonton computer and office automation show passed last week.

The show consisted of 85 exhibitors hawking computer hardware, software, and computer related gizmos, as well as typewriters, shredders, wires, ribbons and other office items.

According to Betty Gray, the show's coordinator, this was Edmonton's first major computer show. Calgary, for example, has had a similar show for the last five years, "People from Edmonton have gone to Calgary for conventions but it hasn't worked out the other way around in the past. Commented Gray, "now Edmonton's fast growing computer market has provided a big enough market for this kind of show."

One of the exhibitors, Kevin McGrath of Allied Wire and Cable Ltd, said "eventually everything will be centred about computers, everybody will have to own one."

In fact, computers are the second industrial revolution, much like the telephone or the automobile, whose popularity was not predicted. Computers are the rage of the future.

"Computers are becoming more and more prevalent in our schools. One of the reasons is that courses are being taught like summer camps. Kids go in with no idea what computers are like and leave with a fair bit of knowledge, much of it coming from video games," said Woods Gordon Company representative Lauren Boren.

Boren went on to say that up to 90 per cent of all businesses within five years will be computerized.

"No matter where you go computers are there, and computers are there to stay."

Of course no revolution is flawless and the computer revolution is no exception.

Compatibility is a problem. It is often difficult to determine what hardware goes with what brand of technology.

The vast myriad of computer

firms use a dozen different kinds of hardware displayed at the show. This is a reminder for the cautious consumer to be wary about the computer.

One should make sure that the hardware will work together properly when combined.

Another problem is unnecessary computer usage. The simplest example is small business, with smaller amounts of data. It is sometimes faster to process data by hand, hence, many small businesses are better off without computer hardware at all.

The third problem is that Canada is being left out of the computer revolution. We've already lost the race for hardware production and now we might lose out on the race for software. One evident thing about the exposition was that changes in computers are not very visible. Perhaps the exception is the gas plasma terminal replacing the CRT terminals (believed to be hazardous to the health) is the most visible advance.

The only other highly visible progress has been in relation to the speed, efficiency, and cost.

U of A drug research

New drugs battle anxiety

by Gilbert Bouchard

The Department of Psychology is undertaking a series of drug trials and is seeking volunteers to study the effects of three drugs, two new antiolytics (anti-anxiety drugs) and one new sleeping medication.

As Susan Therrien, a research assistant in the Department of Psychology working on the tests stated, "we only have the volunteer's best interests at heart. If they're not suitable for the drug trial, we'll find some other more suitable treatment. The same goes for the end of the trial. We will continue therapy at the end of the experiment. We don't push pills, if you don't need the medications we'll stop the trial, health care is our primary concern."

The trials are funded through the Department of Psychology, different drug companies, and includes Xanax (by the Upjohn Company), Zopiclone (by the Rhone-Poulenc company) and Buspirone (by Bristol Myers). One of the trials, Xanax, an antiolytic, is

near completion and is being studied in comparison with Valium, and only four more volunteers are needed. Both Zopiclone and Buspirone need 30-40 volunteers apiece, but the Zopiclone trial, a sleeping medication for people on antidepressants who aren't sleeping, will be getting volunteers through referrals. While the Buspirone trials where a new antiolytic is being compared to Valium, in a controlled experiment using Buspirone, Valium and a placebo needs 30 volunteers who are exhibiting symptoms of anxiety, either chronic or recurrent, and want a short term treatment.

The trials are under the supervision of a Dr. Hawarth, a psychologist at the university who's been interested in drug trials for several years and who acts as the physician for all the patients involved in a drug trial. "We usually get our referrals through walk-in clinics at the Aberhart hospital or various doctors and hospitals throughout the city. Or people can also just

contact me through the psychology department, then I'll do a complete mental assessment and see if they are suitable for the trials and then I also monitor them during the trials, distribute the medicines and coordinate their physicals, laboratory sessions, physicals, etc. and maintain their therapy. We can't just treat you with a drug, you have to treat the problem," Terrien said.

"One of the problems is that people don't know where to go, one of the services open to people who don't have a referral to see a psychiatrist can simply go to the walk-in clinic at the Aberhart hospital at eight in the morning, and then they'll be given forms to fill out and after they'll see a therapist who'll do an assessment. After this, the patient and the assessment are presented to the resident psychiatrist during his rounds and from then the treatment plan is decided, which can mean follow-up visits on a regular basis, medication, family counselling, referral to a more suitable source, the possibilities are endless, but they're out there."

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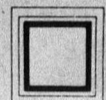
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