

COMPANY OVERVIEW

The University of Guelph is the major teaching and research centre in Canada for agriculture and veterinary medicine. The University is assessing the information needs of its audiences of farmers, agribusiness personnel and veterinarians and is exploring the effectiveness of NAPLPS videotex as a means of meeting those needs. Universitel is also developing applications to reach other specialized user groups, including high school teachers and students, the general public, university students and industry personnel.

EXPERIENCE

The University of Guelph, in partnership with Grassroots, Infomart, is developing a database to serve Ontario agriculture. In early 1983, Universitel and Infomart conducted a six-month field trial with 40 farmers in the Guelph and Chatham agricultural areas plus the following firms: Deloitte, Haskins and Sells Associates, First Line Seeds Ltd., CIBA-GEIGY Canada Ltd., Chipman Inc., Pioneer Hi-Bred Ltd., Shur-Gain Division of Canada Packers, and Cyanamid Canada Ltd.

The University has developed videotex programs to accompany its exhibit program, to aid in undergraduate instruction, and to complement its liaison programs for both high school students and counselling programs for on-campus students. A campus-wide

videotex information network is now being implemented.

Universitel has worked closely with equipment and software suppliers in testing and evaluating equipment. This effort has resulted in improvements in hardware and software to meet the needs of production units and users in the field. Companies involved include Electrohome, Norpak, Formic, IBM (Canada), Microstar, Tayson and Homestead Computers.

Universitel customers and other information providers include Ontario Waste Management Corporation, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, York University, United Co-operatives of Ontario and several suppliers of medical and veterinary products.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Capitalizing on its traditional areas of expertise, the University of Guelph is developing videotex content in agriculture and veterinary medicine, exploring instructional applications, and developing training programs related to videotex. Areas include:

- Consultation and services in product development, hardware selection, software development, content development, telecommunications networking, project organization (management), database management, development of self-authoring programs, system design and engineering, field project management, equipment and system installation, programming

for microcomputers or main frame computers, software installation, maintenance and marketing.

- Specialized Training Seminars on page creation, maintenance, programming and software development, marketing, production management, content development and database management.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS/ TARGET MARKETS

Universitel is continuing to develop an agricultural NAPLPS database in collaboration with faculty of the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph University.

VET-TEL, a service for practicing veterinarians, is being planned in collaboration with faculty and staff of the Ontario Veterinary College for implementation in 1984.

A *Course Authoring System for Education (CASE)* using NAPLPS for content presentation is being developed for instructional applications. Initial work has been done for courses in computer literacy, zoology and veterinary medicine.

Other future directions include expanding the Universitel telecommunication network in rural Ontario, developing interactive content applications, and developing techniques to download software from the host database to a microcomputer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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