

Information is THE resource of the newly emerging Information Society. The ability to gather, process, transfer and distribute information at a speed and on a scale never before possible has altered the way we do business, enjoy our leisure, gain knowledge of the world around us and communicate our ideas and experiences with others.

There are two major forces pushing us into what is often called the Information Explosion. Firstly, our society has become increasingly more complex and interrelated. Our ability to deal with this complexity and its associated rapid economic, political and social change is in large measure dependent on our access to information from many diverse sources. Knowing what information is required, being able to locate, extract, compare, combine and use it, when we need it, and in the form we require, allows us to be able to respond and adapt to this complexity. Secondly, the dramatic developments in microchip technology have accelerated this information Explosion. A microcomputer with a telecommunication link to a telephone, cable and/or satellite network provides its user with immediate access to new sources of information.

Supplying the needed information and distributing it in a timely, flexible, simple and cost-effective manner which exploits both computer and telecommunications technology has created new information industries such as the videotex industry. This guide has been developed to allow potential providers of information to gain an understanding of the changing nature of the traditional information industry, the emerging business opportunities, the issues faced by Information Providers and the markets that are developing for the distribution of their information products and services.