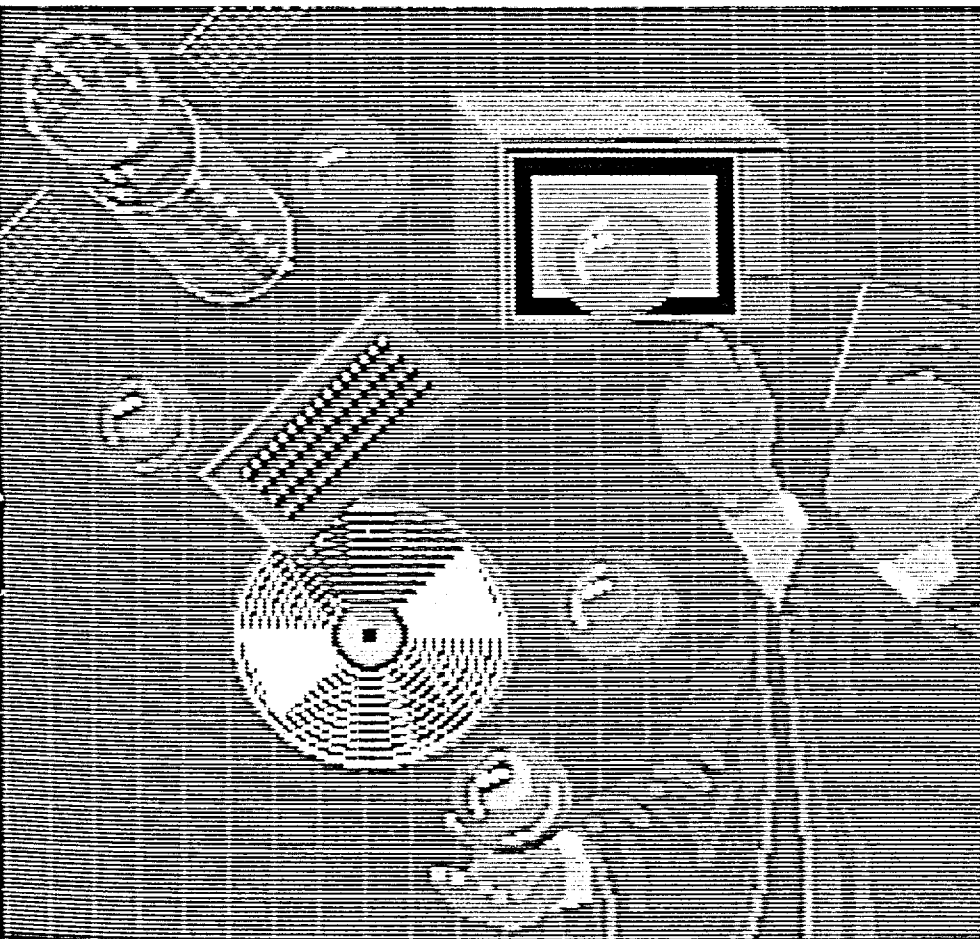


In 1978 researchers at the government of Canada's Department of Communications announced the development of a sophisticated new electronic information technology called Telidon — the most advanced system of its kind in the world.

Telidon is an information technology that combines the storage and processing capabilities of computers, the pictorial capabilities of television and the universal communications access of telephones. Through a modified TV monitor, Telidon users receive up-to-the-minute information, displayed in clear text and lively graphics, from a network of data banks. It can also be used for a wide variety of interactive functions such as teleshopping, telebanking and reservation services.

The Canadian system differs radically from European systems in its capability to create high-resolution graphics. Telidon uses the natural language of drawing, building up an image from its basic geometric elements — points, lines, rectangles, arcs and polygons. Page creation is thus very simple and requires little instruction.

Thanks to satellites and computers and the newer features of high technology such as video discs, Telidon applications in educational broadcasting are unlimited.



There are now three basic forms of Telidon technology:

a) Telidon videotex is an interactive system in which the viewer, by means of a telephone line or two-way cable, calls up information for display on a modified television set. Information can be retrieved from a wide range of databases. By means of simple controls, the viewer can browse through menus and select the information he or she would like displayed.

b) Telidon teletext is the broadcast mode which permits viewers to receive text and graphics on a television set equipped with a Telidon decoder. The decoder enables the user to choose from several hundred Telidon pages of information which are broadcast in continuous cycles repeated every few seconds. The Telidon "pages" are transmitted in the unused lines of regular television signals (the vertical blanking interval). Teletext has been described as a "broadcast magazine" containing pages of continuously updated news, information and advertising.

c) Telidon audio-visual systems are used as effective low-cost audio-visual presentations. The systems use terminals which can store about 100 Telidon pages of animated graphics and text and display them in a sequence. The display, which can be synchronized with a sound track, can be updated almost instantly.

Applications

Since Telidon's introduction in 1978, some 40 field trials and services have been implemented in Canada, the US as well as several other countries, resulting in international acceptance and recognition of Telidon as a superior technology for videotex and teletext services.

There are now at least 100 companies in Canada involved in Telidon equipment or services and about 20 colleges and universities using and researching Telidon technology. Current Telidon projects include:

- Cantel, the government of Canada's Telidon information bank that provides information about federal programs and services as well as facts and statistics on Canadian lifestyles. It is described as the largest publicly available government database in the world.
- BN Infovision, a Telidon-based news service developed for cable television by Broadcast News Ltd., a national news agency. Produced in both English and French, Canada's two official languages, Infovision is an open channel teletext system delivering a 30-minute information package.