

### Telidon: TV that responds

About two years ago, Canadian researchers developed a two-way TV or videotex system called Telidon.

Telidon promises not only to transform the idea of the home computer from a high-tech hobby into an everyday reality, but to make feasible such services and activities as teleshopping, electronic publishing, participatory television, telebanking, electronic mail and electronic newspapers — all of which would be available over a person's home TV. Canadians may soon be able to retrieve textual and graphic information from data banks all over the world without leaving their home.

The information-retrieval capabilities of Telidon also make it useful to business and institutional users. Telidon could permit some Canadians to become electronic publishers from their own homes. The unique computer-graphic capabilities of the system may also transform certain businesses. For example, two architects a continent apart may be able to share the same electronic blackboard — their own TV monitors — and correct each other's drawing with a light pen or "joy stick".

Telidon was developed by the research arm of the

Canadian government's Department of Communications and moved from the laboratory to the field in 1978. The Canadian government put up \$9 million for its further development — a sum which has been matched by companies in the private sector. In a growing number of trials, the system's technical capabilities, its compatibility with a variety of new and existing telecommunications technologies, and its relevance to a variety of industrial and institutional users, are being tested.

Telidon differs in several important respects from systems developed in Europe. Telidon has four main components: (1) a slightly modified TV set (display monitor) equipped with a micro-computer; (2) some associated electronics and a key pad; (3) a telecommunications network and (4) a central computer. The nature and configuration of some of these components can be varied to meet the user's specific needs.

*Field trials are now underway in several Canadian communities which will permit Telidon subscribers to call up information on a full array of consumer services.*

