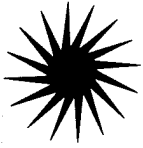


Press Information



REDIFFUSION
Computers

A Member of the Rediffusion Group of Companies

M. J. ALDRICH

P R E S S C U T T I N G S

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Inform

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New IIS President

Number 67

Michael Aldrich, who takes over as President of IIS at this month's AGM, is a leading expert in information technology. At 42, he is Chief Executive of Rediffusion Computers, a major UK information technology company, specializing in office and communication systems. He is also Chief Executive of Rediffusion Business Electronics, a high technology audio/video communications systems and software company.

Our new President is a member of the Prime Minister's Information Technology Advisory Panel (ITAP) and is a co-author of its recent report *Making a Business of Information* (HMSO), which at the time of writing is awaiting official Government response.

He graduated from university in 1962 and has spent his entire career in the computer industry. He has been responsible for activities ranging from product design to marketing. He was the author of the initial paper on cable TV systems. He was also the inventor of the Teleputer multi-technology microcomputer which combines television, video and personal computing, and he developed Signcheck, the world's first practical static signature verification system.

Michael Aldrich has been a dedicated proponent of cable television and was among those influential in inspiring Government support for its use. He was a co-author of the report *Cable Systems* (HMSO, 1982), which led to the appointment of the Hunt Committee and its subsequent Report. Further publications of his include *Videotex – Key to the Wired City* (Quiller Press, 1982), as well as over a hundred papers and articles. He also lectures frequently on information technology.

Michael lives with his wife and four children in Sussex. His company is Crawley based and he is a Governor of Crawley College of Technology, a Council member of Brighton Polytechnic, and a member of the Industrial Advisory Board of Sussex University. He is a professional member of the British Computer Society and a member of the British Institute of Management.

Katherine Gray



Extract from
Crawley News
24.1084

Mike is well informed

REDIFFUSION Computers boss Mike Aldrich has been chosen to serve as the new president of the Institute of Information Scientists.

The professional organisation represents more than 2,000 graduates, working in the area of information technology and employed by the Government or in companies.

Mr Aldrich is well qualified for the post for as a leading expert in information technology, he is a member of the Prime Minister's advisory panel on the subject.

He is also the co-author of a recent report, *Making A Business Of Information* and has over 100 articles and papers on information technology to his credit.

The 42-year-old chief executive and Managing Director of the Manor Royal firm is a keen supporter of cable television and was one of the Government's advisors on supporting its use.

As president of the institute, he will help to encourage the exchange of ideas



Mike Aldrich

on information technology and to improve professional training for those working in the field.

Extract from
Crawley Observer
24.10.84



Computer boss is new president

HEAD of Crawley-based Rediffusion Computers, Mr Mike Aldrich, has been chosen as president of the Institute of Information Scientists for 1984-85.

Mr Aldrich (pictured above) is the firm's chief executive and an information technology expert.

The 42-year-old father of four from Colgate helps advise the Government on the subject as a member of the Information Advisory Technology Panel.

He often teaches information technology and supports the idea of cable TV. He advocated cable TV to the Government as well as helping to write a report on cable systems.

Mr Aldrich has other feathers in his cap — he is a professional member of the British Computer Society, a governor of Crawley College, a council member of Brighton Polytechnic, and a member of the Industrial Advisory Board at Sussex University.

Extract from
The Times, London

Computer selling tactics attacked

By Bill Johnstone, Technology Correspondent

Misleading advertisements, dishonest dealers and a bewildering choice of computers and software give the purchaser only a 50 per cent chance of selecting a microcomputer which will work without problems.

Those are the conclusions of a report on the computer industry prepared for the October issue of the magazine *Which Computer?*

It says: "Misleading advertising over-emphasizes the ease and the friendliness of very complicated machines and reveals only a fraction of the real cost of computerization... Software or hardware is likely to arrive months - even years - late... There is a good chance that the machine sold to you will not do the job for which you have purchased it."

The report is a guide to the business computing market rather than to home computers, although there is a large overlap as the home users are attracted to more sophisticated machines.

It says that there is a confusing choice because there are 696 different varieties of hardware and more than 4,000 general business software programs sold in Britain. There are also 2,000 computer consult-

ants, 1,900 of whom have financial ties with software and hardware companies.

This is scathing criticism of computer dealers in the report. It says: "There are 2,000 computer dealers, many of whom are unscrupulous, dishonest, technically ignorant or financially unstable."

The result, the survey claims, is an array of shops, many of which are only interested in selling the customer any micro-computer.

The 28-page report concludes that users need education to prevent them from spending thousands of pounds on software which they eventually abandon.

● Microcomputer software prices could be halved and put pressure on micro and computer games shops, when computer programs are delivered to home users across telephone lines. "Telesoftware" is poised to have a big impact on the cost of distribution, Rediffusion Computers claims.

The retail software pound is split in the following way: 30-40p for the retailer, 15-20p for the distributor, 35-45p for the publisher and 5-20p for the author.

Extract from
Scotsman, Edinburgh.

RETAIL stores, which have recently set up rows of shelves offering programs for personal computers, could soon be ousted from the business as more owners link their micro-

computers to the telephone system.

This forecast was made last week during an electronics and radio engineers' conference by Mr Mike Aldrich, chief executive of Rediffusion Computers, who also predicted that the cost of buying software for home computers could fall by 50 to 60 per cent through electronic delivery via the telephone system.

He based his argument on the high percentage of the cost of software which is shared between the retail outlet and the distribution company. He said that the shops selling the programs at present took a mark-up of between 30 and 40 per cent of the purchase price, while distributors received a further 15 to 20 per cent.

The company publishing software received between 35 and 40 per cent, with only 5 to 20 per cent going to the author who created the program in the first place. "The growing sales of communications equipment with home micros is the writing on the wall for the software retailer," Mr Aldrich concluded.

He said that there were some technical barriers to making software readily available across the telephone line, including the need to create common standards for transmission and finding ways of beating piracy of copyright material. But he added that existing technology was capable of removing all of the barriers.

Extract from
Engineer, London.

Extract from
The Times, London

OCT 1984

SOFTWARE Price cutting

THE delivery of computer software over telephone lines is about to have a major effect on software distribution, according to Mike Aldrich, chief executive of Rediffusion Computers.

Speaking at an Institute of Electronic and Radio Engineers' conference, he said the delivery of software by this method could cut prices by 50%. With retail software, mainly games software from high street shops, retailer and distributor costs can range between 45-60% of the total costs.

Telesoftware tales

■ The electronic delivery of computer software down the phone line could cause prices of some software to fall as much as 50 or 60 per cent, according to Mike Aldrich, chief executive of Rediffusion Computers. He predicts that high street micro and computer games shops will be the first to suffer as the growing sales of communications equipment to go with home micros makes the idea of telesoftware more attractive. One barrier to the growth of such services is the need for low-cost encryption devices or signal converters to ensure that only those entitled to receive a particular telesoftware program would receive it.

Extract from
Management To-day, London.

Extract from
Computer News
25.10.84

President chosen

Mike Aldrich, chief executive of Rediffusion Computers, has been chosen as president of the Institute of Information scientists for 1984-5. Aldrich, also an author and lecturer, is a member of the prime minister's information technology advisory panel.

INTERNATIONAL PRESS-CUTTING BUREAU
Lancaster House,
70 Newington Causeway, London, S.E.1

Extract from
Hull Daily Mail.

Computer info under spotlight 4526

COMPUTER expert Professor Martin Healey was the guest of the Humberside branch of the British Institute of Management at Hull University Staff House last night.

Mr Healey is professor of microprocessor engineering at University College, Cardiff, and a director of Future Technology Systems Ltd.

He is also a well known author, lecturer and consultant in the computer field.

Humberside BIM has taken information technology with particular reference to office automation as its theme for this year's programme of visiting speakers.

Next month, a speaker from computer makers IBM will be their guest, and in December, Mr Mike Aldrich, managing director of Rediffusion Computers Ltd, and advisor to the Prime Minister and the CBI on infotech, will be the speaker.

FACTS ON VIEWDATA

Interactive videotex has been more successful in industry than at home

Viewdata (or interactive videotex) is familiar to most people in the form of British Telecom's Prestel service. It is an interactive text-based system in which a television set is linked to a computer, usually by telephone line. The technique was conceived and launched as a public service in the UK, but from the beginning it was oversold and undersupported.

As a domestic service, Prestel is still only marginally successful. In the more private world of commerce, however, it is becoming well established. A series of developments—especially the Gateway facility which allows private systems to operate in the same network as Prestel itself—have greatly enlarged its usefulness. At the same time, the vast increase in the use of terminals, personal computers and workstations, and the low cost and ease with which viewdata facilities can be added, have enormously extended the potential user base.

The low cost at which the facility can be added to a workstation should not blind the potential user to the fact that setting up a private viewdata system is a hugely expensive business, involving additional hardware, complex software and the organization of suitable databases. But for the major company, with a large base of users distributed over a number of sites, viewdata is becoming an important technique. It has the advantage that, once it has been made available, it can be implemented cheaply at all levels, from the simplest terminal to the most complex workstation. It conveys most of the benefits of electronic mail, including limited access to the company base together with access to a wide range of external services.

Wherever viewdata is available, it will be incorporated into all management workstations. It is particularly useful, however, to the most senior management, operating in a supervisory or monitoring role. (One minor advantage is simply cosmetic: the equipment can be styled to suit the decor of the boardroom, and even

fitted into a Chippendale cabinet if need be—which could help to make workstation techniques acceptable at top level. More often, it will take the form of a simple display and keyboard. As a management aid, viewdata will provide easy access to the mass of computer data, presented in a standardized form; and because the facility is part of the total computer and communications system, such information should be up-to-date. Viewdata will also allow for interaction with workstations at a lower level, and enable progress to be queried and revised. Access to external databases is inherent in the system, and will help ensure that deci-

sions are based not only on local information but also on what is happening in the world outside.

According to Mike Aldrich, managing director of Rediffusion Computers, it is the essence of private viewdata that the friendly man-machine interface of Prestel should be retained, but that the database structure and network capabilities should be much enhanced. The result can be an enormously potent communications system. The database is commonly accessed using words rather than numbers (key-word search), and it is possible to access records using many different keys (multi-key access).

-- OCT 1984

TELESOFTWARE WILL HIT RETAILERS HARD

THE writing is on the wall for High Street micro shops according to Mike Aldrich, chief executive of Rediffusion Computers.

Aldrich says tele-software – the electronic delivery of computer software over telecommunications networks – is poised to have a major competitive impact on existing software distribution, with High Street micro and computer games shops likely to suffer most.

He told an Institute of Electronic and Radio Engineers' conference that tele-delivery of software could see prices fall "between 50 and 60 per cent".

"The growing sales of communications equipment with home micros is the writing on the wall for the software retailer", Aldrich said.

Currently, the retail software pie is split 30-40

– Rediffusion Computers chief

per cent for the retailer, 15-20 per cent for the distributor, 35-45 per cent for the publisher and 5-20 per cent for the author, says Aldrich.

Retail distribution costs were therefore critical in relation to what the customer paid.

Control

"Assuming that the real costs of telecommunications will fall over the next two decades and that the cost of physical delivery will increase in line with inflation, then electronic delivery will expand rapidly and the network systems operators will eventually control software distribution in the UK", Aldrich claims.

But there are barriers that need to be overcome

before telesoftware can become "a mass market reality".

For instance, a transmission system process had to be found.

Most experiments to date had used variations on teletext, videotext and proprietary computer communications protocols never intended for telesoftware, according to Aldrich.

Consequently, there were "irritating and frustrating limitations". Broad-ranging code-set, error-protected transmissions and flexible operating facilities were needed.

ISO standards for open systems interconnection were good guidelines, but it was important that no single network operator or computer manufacturer captured the telesoft-

ware standard.

Another barrier was human interface. If it is to become generally accepted Aldrich suggests telesoftware must have a common interface regardless of the hardware or software involved.

A growing number of home and business computers are being sold with telecommunications facilities, and network operators want traffic and users to boost their revenue. They had "significant resources to invest in seeding the market", he said.

Computer manufacturers generally have a continuing problem of distributing system software to users, he claimed, and will see electronic delivery as a cheaper, faster and more secure

channel than the current practice of sending magnetic tapes and floppies through the post.

In essence, however, economics will decide the timing. Telesoftware will have a mass market "when software transportation and packaging costs exceed telecommunication costs", according to Aldrich.

Extract from
Computer News, London.

'Software 'telesales' will hit retailers' profits

High street micro shops are going to take the brunt of the new electronic methods of delivering software, says Rediffusion's Mike Aldrich.

He believes that 'telesoftware', sent over communications networks, could cut the price of packages in half, eroding high street retailers' margins. "The writing is on the wall for the software retailer with the growing sales of communications equipment," said Aldrich.

• Better news for firms involved in software sales comes from France, the fastest growing market in Europe at the micro end.

Sales of packaged software rose by 177% last year to around £100m. The French market will be second only to the UK market by 1988, having relegated Germany to third position, with 13% of the business packages available in France written for the IBM PC.

- 8 OCT 1984

SOFTWARE

6128 Software prices could fall by 50%-60% as a result of Telesoftware and its impact on existing methods of software distribution, according to Mike Aldrich, CEO, Rediffusion Computers.

Extract from
Brighton Evening Argus, E. Sussex.

- 6 OCT 1984

4 COMPUTER WEEKLY October 4, 1984

Telesoftware threatens computer shops

by John Kavanagh

COMPUTER shops could be out of business and software prices cut by half with the growth of telesoftware and the delivery of programs over communications lines.

So said Rediffusion Computers managing director Mike Aldrich in a speech at an Institute of Electronic and Radio Engineers conference last week.

"The growing sales of communications equipment with home micros is the writing on the wall for the software retailer," Aldrich said.

He said between 30 and 40p of each pound spent on microcomputer software went to the retailer and between 15 and 20p went to the distributor. The publisher got between 35 and 45p and the author 5p to 20p.

"The retail and distribution costs are therefore critical to what the customer pays," he said.

"Assuming that the real costs of telecommunications will fall over the next two decades and that the cost of physical delivery - buying the floppy disc, plug-in module or cassette in the shop or by mail order - will increase in line with inflation, electronic delivery will expand rapidly and network systems operators will eventually control software distribution."

Aldrich said network operators wanted more traffic and users and they had "significant resources to



ALDRICH . . . "Writing on the wall for software retailer."

invest in seeding the market".

However, Aldrich said, there were barriers to be overcome. Most experiments so far had used viewdata and teletext services and computer manufacturers' proprietary protocols. None of these was intended for telesoftware and had "irritating and frustrating limitations".

International standards should be adopted and no network operator or computer firm should be allowed to capture the market.

Similarly, there should be a standard method of communication between the customer and the telesoftware process, regardless of the computer and software involved.

Low-cost encryption devices were needed to counteract telesoftware's "unique capabilities for mass piracy of copyright".

All these barriers were technical and could be removed with existing knowledge, Aldrich pointed out.

There remained the commercial barrier: "Telesoftware is embryonic and is at the stage where technological push is more to the fore than market pull."

Aldrich's claims were challenged by computer retailers. Brian Allmey, managing director of Interface Network, which supplies business systems, said: "There will be a market for telesoftware - but it will not be the only one. As software becomes more sophisticated, personal contact, training and back-up are becoming more and more important. It's very difficult for the average business person simply to flick through a manual and then use a system."

Ladies and . . .

. . . ZZZ

□ I AM glad that after my wireless lunch I was spared, a few hours later, a well-intentioned dinner in Crawley.

The evening at Crawley College of Technology started well, I am told, with a sumptuous meal, prepared and served by the students.

But after pudding, politics took over and the audience of around 100 were hard put to stay awake during seven speeches on how speakers saw the future of Crawley.

Perhaps inevitably, Crawley's Labour Mayor, Peter Milton, saw the future bleakly in terms of the evils of rate-capping, centralised dictatorship, perils of profit and so on and so on . . . ZZZ.

Then Ian Ritchie, of British Caledonian, saw it all in terms of B-Cal's fight against privatisation, breaking of monopolies and so on . . . ZZ.

Best contribution, I am told, came from Mike Aldrich, managing director of Rediffusion Computers, who actually talked about people.

Extract from
Crawley & District Observer, Sussex.

984

Peter — by a neck

4526

AFTER-DINNER speakers at a function at Crawley College of Technology on Thursday made up a formidable team. The list was as impressive as the meal, faultlessly prepared and served by students of the college catering department.

The occasion: an informal, but hopefully far-reaching gathering of leaders and representatives of the local community. The captains of industry. The decision-makers. The people who are involved in the future growth and prosperity of Crawley.

Stuart Milner, the college principal, who was the catalyst for this unique and (for £8 a head) sumptuous event, had lined up Lord March, whose Planning for Economic Prosperity initiative has made its mark in the Chichester region; Nicholas Soames, MP the

county planning chairman; the boss of Rediffusion Computers; the director of Gatwick Airport; B-Cal's external affairs director.

Plus Crawley's very own Peter Milton, wearing not only the mayoral chain but also a surgical collar.

He'd fallen off a pair of steps that morning ("one of the few days when I attend work").

Apologising for his appearance with "I have been nowhere near a picket line," His Worship told us that, although the damage was superficial, he had a pounding headache and he asked us to keep the cheering and clapping low.

He was applauded. But there were no cheers. And there was definitely no cheer about Peter Milton's address.

He knew as a mayor he shouldn't be political, he said, and he hoped he hadn't offended anyone, but sometimes, someone had to say something and he thought this evening was an ideal opportunity.

Bleak, that was the mayor's forecast for Crawley. He didn't want to be pessimistic, but he thought it was tragic that human kindness and compassion had been replaced by sullenness, disinterest and apathy by millions of people — including the people of Crawley.

□ □ □ □

He concluded his wide-ranging attack on the interfering, insensitive Government with the exhortation: "We have a great country, a great town — don't let us fritter it away on political ideology"

Quite a contribution to the symposium! Certainly there was no ducking the "who decides?" issue. And political Peter's pep talk wasn't the only challenge to go with the mint chocolates.

A great town or a drab town? Rediffusion's Mike Aldrich labelled it the latter. But no doubt the mayor was glad to find an ally for his view that there's not much for youngsters to do in town in the evenings if they do not want to go pubbing.

Where the embryo Crawley think tank goes from here remains to be seen. It should go far!

Extract from
Crawley & District Observer, Sussex.

10 OCT 1984

Computer outlook . . .

4526

ELECTRONIC delivery of computer software over telecommunications networks, or "Telesoftware", is poised to have a major competitive impact on existing methods of software distribution, with the High Street micro or computer games shop likely to suffer most, according to computer executive Mike Aldrich.

In an address to an Institute of Electronic and Radio Engineers' conference Mr Aldrich, chief executive of Crawley-based Rediffusion Computers, said that tele-delivery of software could see prices fall between 50 and 60 per cent.

"The growing sales of communications equipment with home micros is the writing on the wall for the software retailer."

Aldrich said.

"Assuming that the real costs of telecommunications will fall over the next two decades, and that the cost of physical delivery — buying the floppy disk, plug-in module, cartridge or cassette in the shop, or by mail order — will increase, in line with inflation, then electronic delivery will expand rapidly and the network systems operators will eventually control software distribution in the UK," Aldrich concluded.

In essence, however, economics would decide the timing. Telesoftware would have a mass market when "software transportation and packaging costs exceed telecommunications costs."