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PRESS CUTTINGS

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COMPANY PROFILE



If you had asked the experts to define the least likely survivor in information technology over the last decade or so, a profile something like ROCC's might have emerged. A UK company? A smallish UK company? A smallish UK company expert in and manufacturing in that much-assaulted minicomputer sector of the market? A company specialising in office automation, that always pending but never progressing market for the information technology suppliers? A videotex specialist to boot? The experts would have sucked their teeth and invested in some more Apricot shares.

But ROCC survives and thrives. It now employs almost 500 people. It has over 1800 installations worldwide, and annual sales of around £15m. Longstanding MD, Mike Aldrich, is a highly respected figure in UK information technology, and shows his dedication to videotex by chairing the Videotex Industry Association. The Executive Directors have 40 years company service overall and own 94% of the company between the four of them. That clearly has a lot to do with continuing success of a tightly-controlled company.

That company has its origins back in the Fifties when Rediffusion ran Redifon to build computer systems for flight simulation. Specialisation in data entry products followed in the early Seventies, and Redifon Computers appeared as a separate company in 1976. The R-range appeared in 1978, and in 1980, videotex first appeared in the Redifon catalogue. Indeed, private videotex appeared

for the first time *anywhere* along with the R1800 range of that period. The company had arrived in videotex — indeed helped shape its future — and has remained a major force ever since. But not as Redifon, nor even as Rediffusion.

When British Electric Traction took over in 1983, many parts of the original group were sold off. The executive directors in Rediffusion Computers did a deal with Charterhouse Development Fund of ROCC Corporation. ROCC Computers appeared, took over the business and operations, and has continued its steady growth ever since.

Last year saw the launch of several new and important products.

The 2800 range of 16-bit computers appeared. The 2825 and 2835 are the data entry and file processing workhorses. The APS is a smaller 16-port system.

The 3800 range also appeared with a brand new architecture and 32-bit processing, the ROCC offering for advanced users, and in particular advanced Unix users. ROCC is fully committed to that ever more popular veteran amongst the standard operating systems. It is also fully committed to office automation systems, being again something of a pioneer in the UK market.

The very first software release is RIO, ROCC's integrated Office. There are, at long last, signs that the departmental office system is taking its rightful place as one of the really important computer applications. And



THE ROCC GENERATION

A pioneer consolidates its place in videotex

Unix is predictably a popular operating system base with giants like ICL and Olivetti increasingly active in that market. And that leaves ROCC in a strong position with its own distinctive software, and plenty of office systems experience including one of the DTI prestigious Office Automation pilots a year or two ago.

How does videotex fit into the pattern?

The 2980 videotex system is the flagship product, with 96 ports capable of supporting around 1000 terminals. This still new system is maintaining ROCC's longstanding success in videotex. The sight of key clients willing to support a supplier at exhibitions is always a pointer to customer satisfaction. Nissan, Ford, South Eastern Electricity Board, Bradford Metropolitan Council with its teleshopping project, London Borough of Hounslow, UAPT with credit checking... ROCC had no problem demonstrating a wide range of implementations at the Videotex User Show earlier this year.

Mike Aldrich claimed that overall UK videotex sales were heading for £60m plus per annum when he opened that Show, in his VIA chairman hat. His own company takes a healthy slice of that market. 'Videotex is information technology. It is not data processing' he said, putting the emphasis on using the technology to unlock all those DP files, concealing rather than providing information for staff and management.

But you need to be well-versed in both DP and videotex to take that approach. ROCC is well-versed in both.