



ROCC
PRESS INFORMATION

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SHOW REVIEW

VIDEOTEX IN RETROSPECT

The videotex industry treated us to two shows recently. Videotex International at Wembley and Videotex User Show at the Barbican. We look back at the companies and the products making the news.

The Videotex User 87 Conference and Exhibition at the Barbican in January built on its success of the previous year as easily the main event in the UK Videotex Industry calendar.

Attendance was up 10%, and this year's visitors seemed to demonstrate a greater knowledge and understanding of videotex and its potential business applications and, therefore, a greater commitment to implementation.

Although the number of exhibitors was slightly down on last year, most of the major industry players returned, confident that their particular square feet of floor space would be one of their better investments of 1987.

The general buoyancy was endorsed by John Butcher, MP and DTI representative, as he opened the show remarking that in the last twelve months the videotex industry had seen some "outstanding progress in a stable, consolidating sector". Mike Aldrich of ROCC Computers, with his VIA hat on, confirmed that videotex was, "alive and well and ringing up sales for Britain".

The consolidation within the industry over the past twelve months was reflected at the show as it proved to be the venue for some major product developments and announcements.

Unisys, now the world's second largest computer manufacturer, was conspicuous by its presence with the other major manufacturers remaining regrettably stand-offish towards the show. But then again Unisys can now boast two major videotex host systems for its 'A' and 1100 series mainframes, the former due to the efforts of Langton Videotex and its well respected P111 software.

BT on the other hand, was conspicuous by its absence this year but still managed to gain some exposure — not always very positive — through its collaboration with **Viewtext** on photovideotex, to produce the first private videotex system that incorporates full colour photos. The system is based on Computex Plus — the existing videotex package from Viewtext — combined with some sophisticated image processing software.

Initially designed for use on the ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), photovideotex has now been developed, through collaboration, for use on the PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network).

These developments have been noted by estate agents, photo libraries and retail companies, as the potential early users of photovideotex. But the costs involved in setting up the new system together with the problems of low transmission speeds for picture creation suggests that photovideotex may still be two years ahead of its time, but with a respected host software system supplier involved, prospects are much more promising.

Of other major videotex software companies exhibiting, most had interesting new features to shout, talk or whisper about with a variety of recent applications to verify their claims.