



# PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

M. J. ALDRICH

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

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# Training fee idea spreads

UK computer manufacturer Rocc is drawing up employment contracts which will require staff to repay training costs if they leave within two years.

Rocc's move emerged last week just as computing services group EDS had a setback in its two-year court battle with a former employee to make this type of contract stick.

The Rocc plan has been welcomed by staff, claims chief executive Mike Aldrich.

"It's not been a turn off, in

fact it's quite the opposite," he says. "New people have said, 'If you're prepared to spend £30,000 on training me it shows you're committed to my career development.'

"This reaction has surprised me enormously."

Aldrich is concerned about the shortages of skilled staff.

"We spend £30,000 on the training of each new graduate over the first two years," he says. "It's only in the third year that they start making a reasonable contribution.

"We're now looking at what

the minimum employment period should be: probably two to four years. It wouldn't be possible to get back all the training investment if the person left in that time but there should be a payback agreement."

Rocc is working on the legal details and expects to introduce the new contracts in the spring.

Meanwhile former EDS employee Philip Hubble has won leave from the Court of Appeal to appeal against last year's court ruling in the company's favour.

In January 1987 a judge ruled that it was reasonable for EDS to demand that employees leaving within three years of an intensive training course should repay up to £4,500.

The Hubble case will now go to court in February 1990 - three-and-a-half years after EDS started legal action. Hubble's persistence is a reflection of the view of the MSF union, which is supporting him, that this is a test case.

Six other cases are pending from former EDS employees.

■ **John Kavanagh**

*Leader Comment, page 13.*



ALDRICH... Surprised by staff reaction.

INTERNATIONAL PRESS-CUTTING BUREAU  
224-236 Walworth Road,  
London SE17 1JE

Extract from  
Computer Weekly, London

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Extract from  
Computer Weekly, London

## A rare breed

So, the age of the £35,000 a year programmer is upon us. Of course, money like this is available only to the favoured few who possess skills in short supply. No one is offering the Cobol programmer in Barnsley this kind of loot. Only the airlines competing for a pool of people with the know-how needed to get their reservation systems off the ground are prepared to pay such inflated salaries.

While £35,000 pay cheques are still a rarity, the problem of attracting and retaining the right staff is not. The US services company EDS has tried to handcuff its employees with contracts that prevent trainees from moving on until EDS has had some benefit from its investment.

The idea seems to be catching on. Rocc has now followed suit and claims that employees welcome the deal because it shows Rocc's commitment to training.

Rocc argues that when it is prepared to put down £30,000 to educate people in the mysteries of IT then they should at least stay around long enough to contribute something in return.

It seems a reasonable point of view, but there are dangers in tying employees down with the law.

First of all knowledge is not a commodity that can be bought and sold like so many lines of Cobol code.

Second, who is to decide how long someone should serve in return for training? At least when people were indentured there were time limits laid down by industry training bodies.

Finally, these modern day indentures threaten to bind employees to wages determined by their employers. Roll on the £40,000 programmer.

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

Extract from  
Software World, London.

DEC 1988

### ROCC'S FLEET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Two ROCC 2840 multiuser computer systems have been installed at the Winchester headquarters of Hampshire County Council to run a dedicated fleet management system for the council's Transport Management Organisation, responsible for a fleet of three thousand vehicles; the Hampshire Constabulary and the Hampshire Fire Brigade.

ROCC's Fleet Management System is suited to the local authority market as it is designed to bring directly to transport personnel at Hampshire CC all the up-to-the-minute information they need to manage their vehicle fleets efficiently, while meeting the requirements of the mainframe costing information system.

The system has been customised to meet the needs of the council, police and fire brigade covering every aspect of transport and plant operation from fuel consumption, vehicle bookings facilities and the newly defined interdepartmental cost allocations to the provision of administrative and financial details and full maintenance and repair histories using the Institute of Road Transport Engineers' Vehicle Maintenance Reporting Standard (VMRS) coding structure.

ROCC Computers Limited, Kelvin Way,  
Crawley, West Sussex RH10 2LY, UK.  
(0293) 31211

Circle 144

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224-236 Walworth Road,  
London SE17 1JE

Extract from  
Electronics Times, London

- 8 DEC 1988

Valid has won an order from ROCC for a complete cae system worth more than £70 000. The order includes design capture, verification and pcb design tools on the Sun 3 series.

EXTRACT FROM: CRAWLEY OBSERVER  
November 16 1988

# Parents update new technology



A £10,000 programme aimed at improving technological equipment and library and study facilities at St Wilfrid's School reached the end of its first phase recently.

Money for the programme has been raised largely by parents and school governors, and at a recent open day held to mark the school's achievement, headmaster Peter Bradshaw received the next financial instalment which will allow the scheme to continue.

Brian Fry, chairman of St Wilfrid's Association, presented Mr Bradshaw with a cheque for £2,807.

During the open day managing director of ROCC Computers, Mike Aldrich, was at St Wilfrid's to see the new equipment.

Mr Aldrich is a parent of a former school pupil

● Above left: Chairman of St Wilfrid's Association, Brian Fry right-presents headmaster Peter Bradshaw with a cheque for £2,807 to finance the next stage in the school's improvement programme.

● Below left: Mike Aldrich, managing director of ROCC Computers, looks on as 16-year-old St Wilfrid's student Chris Pond tries out some of the new technical equipment.

- - OCT 1988

# Small companies fill gaps in the market

## SkillAdvance, 4GL and Unix training house

**W**ith the ever publicised lack of trained staff in the industry, a plethora of small training houses has sprouted recently. Where have they come from, what are they really offering and is it enough? We spoke recently to David Michelson, co-founder of SkillAdvance to find out.

SkillAdvance was set up earlier this year as a 4GL and Unix training house and consultancy by three men, David Michelson, Ivor Murray and Jeremy Russell. Michelson, now sales and marketing director, spent the first seven years of his working life selling make-up bags for the family business an incongruous start. Once his interest in computers had been generated, he set up a microcomputer dealership, selling systems based around the Rair Black Box. Following an "amicable" buy-out, Michelson spotted a gap in the training marketplace, that he felt was not being met by established companies.

He approached Jeremy Russell, currently Chairman of the Informix User Group, who ended his five year stint with Star Computers (bringing Ivor Murray an Accell and Unix expert) to set up SkillAdvance. Michelson said, "It was created to provide a centre of excellence specialising in training and consultancy in the fastest growing, most productive and innovative areas of growth within the computer software area — 4GLs and Unix."

Currently training is approximately 60 per cent of business. According to Michelson, SkillAdvance currently offers three types of training in the Unix and 4GL fields. First, its own in-house training courses covering Accell, Informix, SQL and Unix. The company is also developing a course for Progress and is working closely with RDS on System Builder. These courses are also available on-site for a minimum of three students.

In addition SkillAdvance also presents courses on behalf of other companies including Olivetti, Focalpoint, the training arm of Tetra, Logitek and Rocc Computers. One disadvantage of this is that SkillAdvance is not mentioned in any course literature, hence although it enjoys the business it doesn't do much for the companies image. However, following a recent deal with ICL, SkillAdvance will present Informix courses with one significant difference, ICL is marketing this to its users as a joint ICL/SkillAdvance venture.

In its own way this could present the company with a slight problem, while noting the fact that the company name and logo will enjoy greater exposure, it

is possible that the two names may become synonymous, thus Skill Advance may lose the independent nature that Michelson maintains is key to the company's success. Michelson appears unconcerned and believed that the industry is still small enough for the situation not to arise. However, he confessed that in talking to other companies, such as Trinitek, he is hoping to achieve a similar agreement.

Getting down to course content, Michelson stressed that the company has a policy of never having a class larger than six. This is direct contrast to "our main rivals Sphinx and Kernal," which, he believes, hold classes of 10 or 12 people. As all SkillAdvance's courses involve a degree of hands-on, Michelson believes that six is the maximum number in any class if students are to gain maximum benefit.

So where is the training market heading? According to Michelson, SkillAdvance aims to "Maintain its position at the forefront of the industry as independent commentators." On a day-to-day level, he hopes to be training 50-60 people in-house per month as well as increasing the number of customer presentations, currently the number is more like 30 per month.

One of the most interesting points to arise was that the demand for skills has come from the industry, with little interest from end users. Yet the industry has been slow to recognise training needs with little commitment to in-house training, which is where companies like Skill Advance have stepped in.

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31 NOV 1988

## Forging ahead

Sussex company ROCC has developed a computer system to detect forged signatures which could reduce cheque and credit card fraud.

The system describes the pattern of the signature in a number code which can be printed alongside the signature on the cheque or credit card. When the cheque or credit card is presented the card is passed through a machine which compares the signature with the number code. Within three seconds the machine accepts or rejects card.

The system, which ROCC says is 95 per cent foolproof, is to be marketed in the US by Cheque Alert which intends to sell it to supermarkets, banks and credit card companies.

Extract from  
Management Accounting, London.

-- NOV 1988

## Low-cost signature verification

ROCC Pattern Recognition has produced a simple and relatively inexpensive system which can differentiate consistently and accurately between true and false signatures. According to ROCC's chief executive Michael Aldrich, 'For all practical purposes, signatures can now be electronically verified for personal identification and authentication. The technology can be considered to be around 95 per cent accurate for general use and over 99 per cent accurate in dealing with forgeries where the forger has not seen the true signature.'

Based on a system known as DigiScan, the device works by deriving a numerical code from scanning a minimum of six sample signatures. The numerical code is then either printed alongside the signature box on the document to be signed (such as a cheque) or encoded in the magnetic stripe on a plastic credit or identification card.

A comparison between the written signature and the numerical code indicates whether the signature is acceptable. The operation takes three seconds. The scanner unit is self-contained and need not be connected to any other electronic device or network. The numerical code cannot be used to create an acceptable signature. The system can use variable decision thresholds, according to user and application requirements.

For further details and price structure contact ROCC Pattern Recognition Ltd, Kelvin Way, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 2LY, telephone 0293 31211.



IN PASTORAL: "Work together, not against each other."

# UK Unix set unites to eliminate wasted effort

British computer manufacturers have teamed up to put their combined weight behind the Unix operating system in a bid to boost Unix and to cut the UK's £2,000m computing trade deficit.

The Cue (common Unix environment) group, including over 15 companies, is starting similar joint development on open system interconnection (OSI) standards.

The group's formation has been welcomed by the X/Open group of international companies working on Unix. Cue representatives have already been invited to X/Open meetings.

"UK companies were all reinventing the wheel in their Unix development and then going out to fight for a small share of a small market," says the Cue group's founder, Eddie Bleasdale of Bleasdale Computer Systems.

"If we go on like this, it's no wonder the UK has a £2,000m trade deficit. The answer is to work together, not against each other. I'd like to see us all using the same processor but that's one step too far at the moment. Even so we can still cut our development costs."

Bleasdale adds, "We're not a standards-making body like the Open Software Foundation

or X/Open. We're concerned with the practicalities of building systems; we're working together to implement standards as they emerge."

Group members are working together on Unix security and on a survey of the market for open systems. They are also working to produce an open systems demonstration conforming to the Government OSI Profile (Gosp) specification.

David Williams, research and development manager at ITL, expects that group members will do joint marketing and make joint bids for contracts and approach software

firms as a body to encourage them to develop applications packages.

The group has already negotiated a cut rate on Unix conformance testing services from Unisoft, a fellow member.

Cue group members include Acorn, IMP, High Level Hardware, Ferranti Computer Systems, training and research firm Kernel Technology, Rocc, Cambridge Micros, terminals manufacturer Lynwood Scientific, software firm The Instruction Set and US manufacturers Syfa and Motorola, which is represented by its computer systems division.

by John Kavanagh

## Perspective

# What Cable TV Will Do To Insurance

With the government now more or less committed to implementing the recommendations of the Hunt Committee on Cable Television, many people are just beginning to wonder exactly what sort of impact cable TV will have on their lives. The Midland Bank have already set up a home banking experiment and some in the telecommunications industry are talking with wide eyed enthusiasm about people buying everything from home through a computer terminal by the end of the decade. There are just as many people who consider this scenario an absolute anathema. David Worsfold tries to offer an insight into how this world of high technology might affect the insurance industry.

ONE person who firmly believes in expanding the part computer and television technology plays in our lives is Mr Mike Aldrich, Chief Executive of Rediffusion Computers. He has a vision of the multi-TV household with a "play TV room" and a "work TV room". In the play TV room the television would have a video-cassette recorder and videodisk, videogames and a hi-fi. While in the work TV room there would be a smaller television set with computer printer, keyboard and data storage connected into the household's cable TV and probably also to the telephone. "The non-entertainment services provided by cable systems will be far more important in the long term than the multi-channel television that has caused so much comment to date in the wake of the Hunt report.", commented Mr Aldrich.

Among the services included in such a system would be a teletext service, similar to those already available, teleshopping, telebanking, telepublishing (the electronic distribution of newspapers and magazines) and reservation services for restaurants, trains, airlines etc.

There are two main hurdles that will have to be overcome before this type of armchair life becomes reality. Firstly, existing regulations do not allow subscribers to a cable network to send messages to each other. This message switching as it is called remains the exclusive domain of British Telecom and Mercury.

### US technology

The second hurdle is the technology required for switching. The cable TV technology used in the United States, and a frontrunner for installation here, does not include switching facilities. Needless to say, Mr Aldrich is keen to see one of the switching systems being developed by British companies become the

norm in the United Kingdom.

The Midland Bank's £150,000 pilot project is a first step on the road to Mr Aldrich's dream of TVs for work and play. From next spring, some of its branches will have television sets through which customers will be able to ask for a balance, a detailed statement and check standing orders. The system is based on viewdata technology which allows information transmitted along a telephone line to be displayed on a domestic TV.

Initially, the trial will not allow monetary transactions, although it is planned later to offer customers the facility to make payments, change standing orders, check their balances and order cheque books from terminals in their homes. Some American banks are already further advanced with home banking experiments and the other major clearing banks in this country will be starting schemes of their own soon.

### People's attitudes

How far this information technology boom will change the world of insurance depends very much on what view one takes of its potential to change people's attitudes to insurance. Today, most insurance is sold rather than bought. Conventional wisdom has it that the only major exceptions to this are motor insurance which, of course, is required by law and home insurance among home owners. Is there any good reason to expect that because of computer technology people will suddenly want to buy, say, life assurance by flicking a switch and seeing what's going. Even if they do use their home computing system to summon the appropriate information, are they going to buy it "cold" without any expert advice to guide them through the maze of alternatives?

Even taking into account the fact that nearly every schoolchild learns how to use a computer it is difficult to think of a



Television could play an ever increasing part in insurance

compelling reason why people should suddenly change their attitude to insurance and start buying policies completely unprompted.

An interesting view on the likely role of cable TV comes from Friends' Provident who have recently linked up with British Telecom's Viewdata system to provide a direct line to their central computer for brokers and agents. Mr Richard Pugh, their Technical Services Manager, explained that they had experimented with taking the existing technology into people's homes using Prestel adaptors. This showed to a limited extent the potential of such systems as a marketing aid and this is where Mr Pugh felt cable TV would find its main use: "The level of activity would not justify something along the home banking line but as a marketing aid 'on tap' in people's homes it has vast potential". Because of its rather different nature, motor would,

felt Mr Pugh, become part of the home banking package.

People, particularly the younger generations, are generally believed to place great faith in what appears on their television screens so the marketing potential of being able to present figures to them on their own television sets should not be underestimated.

There remains, of course, the question of where the information available for calling up on the screen comes from. Will it be exclusively provided by individual insurance companies and therefore an aid for the direct salesman? Or will new service companies come on the scene to provide comprehensive information on different types of insurance that will be available to brokers and salesmen at a fee?

As there is going to be provision for locally-based cable TV services, there seems no inherent reason why brokers

themselves should not make direct use of the facilities by having their own information put on the system if they have the necessary technical base. Either way, it looks as if there will be opportunities for the broker prepared to get out of the office and go into people's homes. Once there he can make use of either his or a company's computer to display to a client a range of options on his television screen.

With so many unknowns in the cable TV pot it is dangerous to make too firm a prediction of where we will be at the end of the decade. Reality may fall a little short of the Aldrich-type view, but there can be no doubt that it will change the way insurance is sold even if it is not possible to persuade clients to "buy" it of their own volition.

First, however, we have got to endure five years of digging up every street in the country just to get the cable laid.

4 DECEMBER

## Racal Blending High Growth And Low Profile

By Bob Hagerty  
International Herald Tribune

LONDON — For a company whose profit growth has averaged 44 percent annually over the past 10 years, Racal Electronics is not overly eager to talk about itself.

The chairman and chief executive, Sir Ernest Harrison, meets with the press only about once a year.

Press releases are brief, and some so technical that, to a layman, they almost seem to have been written by the company's encryption devices. Announcements of new products toss out references to "DF stations," "R.F. attenuators" and "FSK demodulators." A recent release vaguely acknowledging talks on the possibility of a minor acquisition was sandwiched between two boldly printed warnings: "Press statement to be issued to enquiries only" and "No further comments will be made at this stage."

"We don't tell everybody what we're doing," observed Ken Ward, director of corporate relations.

Perhaps partly because of that reserve, the City of London is full of share analysts willing to tell everybody that Racal is doing wonderfully. Despite the recession, analysts' forecasts call for gains in pretax profit of 25 to 35 percent from the £102.6 million (\$165 million) recorded last year, when sales totaled £64.9 million. The company says only that it expects another year of record profit, the 28th in a row.

In line with these expectations, Racal shares have risen nearly 30 percent over the past year, closing Monday at 534 pence. Few analysts are recommending purchase of the shares on a short-term basis, however, because this year's advance in electronic shares is widely considered to have left prices on the high side.

Also arguing for caution is a belief that no company can sustain indefinitely the kind of growth Racal showed in the 1970s. "What Racal has achieved is quite remarkable," said John Tysoe, an analyst at I. Messel & Co. "I think they have to settle back to a period of slower growth."

Nonetheless, most analysts call Racal a good bet for long-term investors, and what problems the analysts can identify do not appear devastating.



Demonstration of a Racal "manpack" radio.

In military radio equipment, which accounts for around a quarter of Racal's sales, analysts see an eroding of Racal's preeminence as competition grows tougher from such rivals as Plessey and General Electric of Britain, Thomson-CSF of France and Rockwell International of the United States. Analysts took note last September when Racal lost to Plessey on a contract to re-equip the Australian armed forces with radio communications equipment. Plessey says the contract has a potential value of 150 million to 200 million Australian dollars (\$145 million to \$194 million).

Analysts also see pressure on Racal's data communications group, which accounts for about 28 percent of sales. On the data side, modems are Racal's big product. Modems convert signals from digital to analog and back again, allowing data to be sent from computer to computer along telephone lines.

The problem is that five to 10 years from now

(Continued on Page 11)

## Racal Electronics Blends Explosive Growth, a Low Profile

(Continued from Page 9)

many computer networks are expected to become fully digital. That would eliminate much of the demand for modems, according to Peter Foster, a consultant for International Data Corp. of London, although some uses would remain and new kinds of connectors would be needed.

Racal executives respond wearily to the modem question. "I suppose there must be a grain of truth in it," because analysts have been badgering him about it for years, said Leighton Davies, who heads Racal's data group. "I sort of think some of these analysts get paranoid at times," he added.

Paranoid or not, analysts see competition intensifying in both defense and data. "I think real prices will fall," said Robert Pringle of Hoare Govett. "It will be very much up to volume to rise." Another worry for some is that the Japanese, under pressure from Washington to build up their military, will become potent competitors.

But Racal has spread its bets.

Among areas in which the company expects growth are office-machine networks, electronic funds transfer systems, cable television gear, intruder detection and equipment for marine survey and "precise positioning" of oil rigs. The company is also widely spread geographically; about 70 percent of sales are overseas.

Still, in light of Racal's reach into dozens of fast-changing markets, Richard Ryder, an analyst at Phillips & Drew, questioned whether the company's long-term planning is adequate, saying Racal may be relying too heavily on the flair of one man, Sir Ernest.

Though the company is hardly considered a one-man show, praise tends to center on Sir Ernest, 56, who joined Racal as chief accountant in 1951, one year after it was formed as a two-man consultancy. "Ernie Harrison is an incredible entrepreneur," said M.J. Aldrich, managing director of Rediffusion Computers and another prominent British executive.

Leaning against a wine bar in the City, a share analyst was less



Sir Ernest Harrison

flattering. He said Sir Ernest suffers from "an almost insane patriotism," demands "ruthless dedication" to the company and pounces on his executives when they err.

Other analysts insist that Sir Ernest would not get stellar results if he were such a tyrant. "He's only dictatorial if somebody doesn't

perform up to expectations," said one analyst among the admirers.

The admirers say Sir Ernest inspires his staff to work extremely hard. "They do not play golf, they do not go out for a day fishing," Mr. Ward said of Racal's top executives. Racal men do unwind, he said, but only after hours, and even then "their friends tend to be colleagues."

Aside from being hard-driven, Racal's management is shrewd, analysts say. The company has grown by "making the companies they acquire as efficient as they themselves are," said Messel's Mr. Tysoe.

For instance, Racal bought Decca Ltd., a maker of radar and marine navigational products, in April 1980 for £106 million. In the year ended March 31, 1980, Decca had a loss of about £12 million; two years later, the Decca operations retained by Racal showed a profit of £9.5 million. "There was no way we couldn't think we could do better," Mr. Ward said.

To make companies do better, Racal breaks them up into small

units — a staff of about 500 is optimum, Mr. Ward said — and lets young engineers build their own highly specialized businesses.

While it gives young executives wide latitude, analysts say, Racal's central management zealously monitors the books. When a problem shows up, the central managers swoop down and "are prepared to be fairly ruthless about it," said one analyst.

The company also has been good at choosing its markets, generally shunning consumer items in favor of capital goods. In its military business, Racal avoids relying on meeting the specifications of one defense ministry. Instead, it designs a product to its own standards and then goes out and peddles it wherever possible. This style of operating has meant that about half of Racal's military business is in the Third World. "That's where the margins are," said Mr. Ward.

Inevitably, both sides of some conflicts use Racal's radios jammers and counter-jammers. True to form, the company does not discuss which side wins.

Extract from  
Computer Talk, London

# Recognition of Information Technology Achievement **Lovely Rita — now it's up to you**

## Aldrich

Mike Aldrich is chief executive of Rediffusion Computers, and this year has been a visible and controversial figure in the industry.

Among other things, Aldrich's activities this year have included producing a seminal paper on Contel which lead to an ITAP study on cable: he co-authored the Cable Systems report as a member of ITAP; he led the development of the Telecentre/Teleputer system which made the UK the first country to successfully cross a computer and a tv set and combined sound, vision and data all in one machine — and he has written a book on videotex.

Also, under his leadership Rediffusion has become a key company in the world videotex market.



## The busy Baker

Kenneth Baker MP was made Minister for Information Technology in January 1981, the first time that such a post had been given full responsibility for all aspects of the computer industry.

During Information Technology Year, Baker has been the driving force behind and the public face in front of many major initiatives.

To his credit he has the micros in schools scheme, which planned to put a micro in every secondary school by the end of next year, and which has now been extended to include 27,000 primary schools. His MAP scheme — to encourage the applications of microelectronics in all sectors of manufacturing industry — has recently been given a £30 million three year extension by Baker.

Other moves to encourage the use of the new technology have included the ambitious Robots scheme — where companies can qualify for grants of up to 33 1/3 per cent of total set up costs for introducing robots.

Baker was the force behind the liberalisation of BT.

The finalists for the computer industry's personality of the year award have been selected, and it is now up to you, our readers to vote for the winner.

The panel of judges for the Rita awards met last week to discuss the nominations made by *Computer Talk* readers for the personality category. The panel included David Fairbairn of the NCC, Ted Cluff of the IDPM, Doug Eycions of the CSA and David Firnberg. From a varied and interesting list of possibles, which included a tv producer, a programmer and even a computer journalist, a short list of

four was drawn up.

This week we are asking you to vote for the winner. Remember that the chosen personality must have made a significant personal contribution to the computer industry this year. Simply indicate your choice with a cross on the ballot paper provided, and send it to *Computer Talk* as soon as possible. We have listed the four finalists here, with brief details of their careers and achievements.

The winner will be presented with his Rita award at a gala dinner on 18 January, which will mark the opening of the *Which Computer?* Show.



## The brainy Benjamin

Alan Benjamin, chairman of IT Year, was the brains behind the concept.

Throughout the year, Benjamin has worked without rest to bring the message and activities of Information Technology Year to the people. Probably the industry's best known and most successful PR man, he has never been afraid of standing up and making his presence and opinions known.

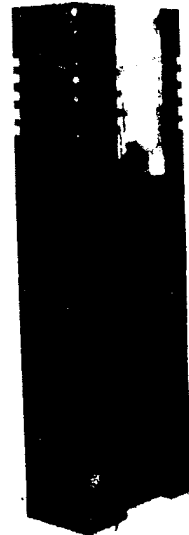
Benjamin is also a leading light behind the BCS' work in the Third World, and although probably remembered by many for his work when director-general of the CSA and then as communications director at ICL, he has for the past two years been the main communications man in leading UK software house CAP.

## The wily Wilmot

Robb Wilmot has been managing director of ICL since May, 1981. He took over the company when it was in severe financial difficulties and while still a mere 36 has been responsible for turning the company around and back on the road to profitability.

He started to refer to his company as the 'New ICL', indicating a complete change of strategy. During the past year, he has finalised deals with Three Rivers of the US, Mitel of Canada and Fujitsu of Japan. He has opened the doors of ICL to software houses and third party dealers with the novel Traderpoint scheme and under his slogan 'small is beautiful' has launched the ICL personal computer as part of the company's new networked product line.

This year, ICL expects to make a profit. Some of Wil-



The Rita award



mot's moves have been controversial, such as his decision to slim the workforce of the company by half, but as one reader who nominated Wilmot for the Rita award pointed out: 'Whatever you think of ICL before or after his accession, Wilmot has made an impact second to none in the last year.'

Ballot paper	Place an 'X' against the candidate of your choice.
Return to <i>Computer Talk</i> , Quadrant House, The Quadrant, Sutton SM2 5AS.	
<b>ALDRICH</b>	
<b>BAKER</b>	
<b>BENJAMIN</b>	
<b>WILMOT</b>	