

# The all-in-one terminal

The growing trend towards the convergence of separate technologies was well illustrated recently with the announcement by Rediffusion Computers of their 'Teleputer' viewdata terminal.

Described rather grandly as 'the world's first multi-media participatory communication system', the Teleputer in fact represents Rediffusion's bid for what it sees as the potential mass market for integrated computing and two-way information systems based on viewdata. A further interesting feature of the Teleputer is the inclusion of video technology in the form of computer-controlled video cassette units and (by next year) optical video disks.

There are four models

in the Teleputer range, starting with Alpha 1, a new 14in colour viewdata terminal capable of accessing British Telecom's Prestel service or any Prestel-compatible private system. Features of the set include a ten page local memory for storing viewdata frames, a directory for frequently dialled frames, and interfaces for a choice of keyboards and a printer.

Alpha 2, the next model up in the range, adds facilities for off-line editing and preparation of frames by information providers. However, it is with Alpha 3 that the convergence of technology becomes apparent. In addition to full function viewdata, this model includes a Z80 micro-computer with 64KB of RAM, plus one or two floppy disks

offering 500KB of storage.

The micro uses Rediffusion's own operating system with BASIC interpreter or the industry standard CP/M system, thus giving access to a large library of application software.

## Frames on disk

An optional 16KB video RAM is also available to provide high quality graphics, as is an optional IEE interface and modem which provide telecommunication facilities including access to the packet switched service (PSS).

A further useful feature of the Alpha 3 is automatic unattended access to viewdata systems, allowing frames to be dialled up at preprogrammed times and then stored on disk for future reference.

Finally, models 4 and 5 in the Alpha range provide computer control of respectively video cassette and optical video disk

systems. In the business area this facility is aimed at computer-assisted learning applications.

Currently the system employs Sony's U-Matic VCR, whilst it is planned to incorporate Phillips optical video disk system by mid 1982. Application packages for video courses are currently being negotiated by Rediffusion with a software house.

It is worth noting that although viewdata has as yet signally failed to make any impact on the consumer market, a recent study predicted that some 20 million terminals would be in use in Europe by 1989 — the vast majority in residential use. A variety of services are predicted for the home user, including teleshopping, home banking, electronic mail, and of course video games. Clearly it is with this market in mind, that Rediffusion are making their initial move into business viewdata. Prices for the Teleputer start at £750 for Alpha 1, and £3,995 for Alpha 3.

Extract from Computer Talk  
— 5 October, 1981

## Teleputing is a UK first

Britain is the first country to successfully cross a computer and a television set — and there could be one in every home by the end of the decade.

The Teleputer, introduced by Rediffusion Computers last week, is an information device combining up to six technologies — colour TV, viewdata, personal computing, video cassette recording, video disk and multi-mode communications. The technologies interact under computer control to provide an integrated communication system.

A basic Teleputer consists of a 14-inch colour TV set, a micro beneath it housed in a slim box and a remote keyboard. Floppy disks for data storage and printers are available to attach to the basic device, which comes in five models starting at £700.

The device can be linked in to British Telecom's packet switched service for long distance data communication and the optional use of the CP/M operating system opens the door for most micro application packages.

Mike Aldrich, managing director of Rediffusion Computers, described the Teleputer as 'the heart of the home information system'.

Aldrich claims to be one step ahead of the Americans and the Japanese working in the same area by combining sound, vision and data. He is geared to producing the product in thousands.

'This device will take the computer into the sitting room,' he said. Or perhaps into a new-style study called the "information room" when the home market develops later this decade.'

Extract from Electronics Weekly — 7 October, 1981

## Pushing ahead

JUST 12 months ago the product planning committee at Rediffusion Computers Ltd sat down to discuss future developments the company might profitably pursue.

In the back of their minds was the company's successful entry into the private viewdata system market. The question posed by managing director Michael Aldrich to his executive team was, "Where do we go from here?"

The answer has arrived in what must be described as rapid time even for the fast-moving computer industry.

For last week Aldrich was able to unveil what he describes as (and he should know, he invented the word) a teleputer terminal. The terminal which will sit comfortably on a small desk, will combine the six technologies Aldrich feels business users, his initial target, and domestic users — as a longer term prospect — will require.

### FIVE MODELS

These are colour television, viewdata/videotex, personal computing video cassette recording, video disc and multi-mode telecommunication.

The teleputer system, known as System Alpha (better than calling System One, remarks Aldrich) can be configured as five models.

Alpha 1 uses a 14in. colour screen, and can be connected via a telephone line to the Prestel network or Prestel-compatible viewdata systems. It can use the normal dial-up telephone network, private leased lines or dial in British Telecom's packet switched service. It also offers a local page store optional printer, choice of keyboards, auto dialling and an integrated modem.

Alpha 2 has off-line local editing for preparation of viewdata page

Alpha 3 moves a step further by incorporating a 64KBytes personal computer with local diskette storage and an optional printer, unattended automatic access to any number of viewdata/videotex computers: software including Rediffusion's own control program — CP\*.

An Intel 8035 micro is used for the videotex processing, and a Z80 local processing.