

Foreword

Working with information is one of the central themes of economic and social development today. In the office, information is the basis of every activity. Today's office work is characterized by a strict division of tasks which requires active communication in the form of the spoken word, texts and images. However, the information media used – voice, text, image and data – cannot be easily combined and mixed, given conventional communications engineering.

The personal discussion has always been the model for all forms of technical communication. With the ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), the integration of voice, text, image and data communication in *one* network, on *one* line and under *one* call number is now becoming a reality. The qualitative improvement in technical communications obtained by such integration is a significant step toward this objective.

The ISDN will be the basis for public networks of telecommunications administrations, and also the basis for private communication systems in industry and administration.

The 8th plenary assembly of the CCITT in mid-October 1984 agreed upon ISDN recommendations for worldwide application. Parallel to the international standardization process, Siemens developed the first ISDN Communication System for the office and presented it to the world in December of last year as the HICOM Communication System.

In HICOM, Siemens offers a powerful tool for the solution of many urgent problems in the office. HICOM gives each user two information channels and a signaling channel.

The "intelligence" built into HICOM allows the user

- to work with a single call number for voice, text, image and data communication,
- o to use several communication forms simultaneously, e.g. to telephone and receive a facsimile or open dialog with the videotex data base,
- o to connect various different office systems and
- o to utilize the facilities of central data processing systems and data bases at his own desk.

Analog and digital telephones can be connected, as can personal computers, teletex and videotex equipment and office systems. A multifunction terminal which unites telephone, memory typewriter and data terminal in one device was designed specially for HICOM.

With HICOM, Siemens has integrated the three C's – "Components", "Computers" and "Communications" – in a single communication system for the office. HICOM helps companies to make quick decisions and to act faster in response to a given situation, and hence to sharpen their competitive edge.

In future the HICOM Communication System will be at the hub of office communications, provide important switching functions for internal and external exchange of information, and allow access to essential processing functions. This crucial function in the concept of Siemens office architecture makes so much possible:

- o The user can have all the required communication forms made available to him simultaneously.
- o The necessary user devices, memory and printing facilities and centralized processing equipment can be connected via a standard interface.
- o Anyone can be connected with anyone else using a single, standard procedure, as is the case now with the telephone.
- o Non-Siemens systems will be connected by network interworking.
- o Processing and communication units will be able to communicate with each other as part of the uniform office architecture.

The HICOM Communication System, which is the core of this expandable future-oriented system concept, constitutes a decisive step forwards for the communications market and for office work.

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