



International News

USSR

BUSINESS IN THE USSR

October 1981 was an auspicious month in the Soviet Union for Rediffusion Computers, for not only did the company sign two more contracts for the supply of R870 systems making a total of 31 systems to 22 customers, but they also signed the largest ever single contract taken by the company for the supply of 46 R-range systems to the Ministry of Gas USSR to the value of £7.86m. It is now just over four years since Rediffusion signed its first contract.

With the exception of one highly specialised installation at the State Bank of the USSR, the systems are all used for real-time distributed data processing routines ranging from the daily entry of orders for processed meats and sausages through to the on-line control of railway deliveries of iron ore and collection of vehicles within a large automobile plant in Moscow.

Whilst the type of customers

and applications are varied, the common denominator arises from the imaginative use to which all the systems are employed in real-time applications to ease the work of the originators through to the supply of on-line enquiries and management information. With three exceptions, all the users can be considered as first time computer users. Consequently much can be said for the use of video displays, where all the information can be shown clearly in Russian, the scope of the operating system, and the simplicity of the programming language (Editor). Even comparatively inexperienced programmers have been able to set-up very comprehensive databases.

Another factor in this success equation has been the continuity and skill of the Rediffusion support staff, who on a rotation basis spend periods of up to four weeks at a time in Moscow ensuring that the training, installation and implementation of the systems goes smoothly to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Selling in the Soviet Union is

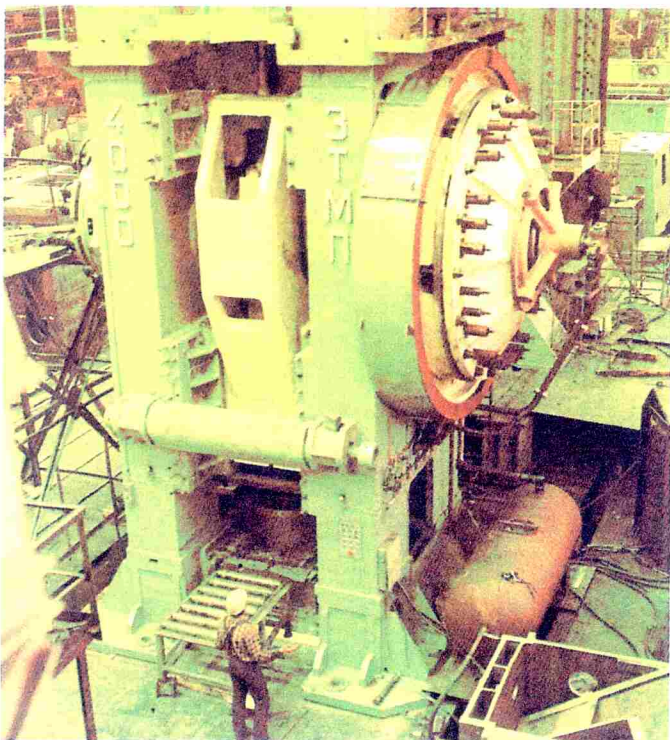
dependent very much upon good customer references, for whilst much can be done in the way of individual exhibitions and seminars (perhaps, three or four each year) to draw attention to the product and its possibilities, in the end the decision rests very much upon the practical experience of users.

It is hardly surprising therefore, that the systems have been especially developed to cater for the local needs of the market. The obvious requirement was to provide cyrillic keyboards, displays and printers, which apart from the special outline of the characters themselves, also needed extra characters to accommodate the 31 characters within the Russian alphabet. All 'Help' lists, menus, captions and manuals had to be translated into Russian. The less obvious, but necessary requirements, then led to the extended sorting of cyrillic alpha-characters, full compatibility with the Soviet range of mainframe computers (the Riad and Minsk 32), and the facility to operate directly on-line with such systems. Another

problem arose from the need to print both latin and cyrillic on the same line, compounded by the need for both upper and lower case characters, and then, in turn, the 150 or more languages used throughout the Soviet Union.

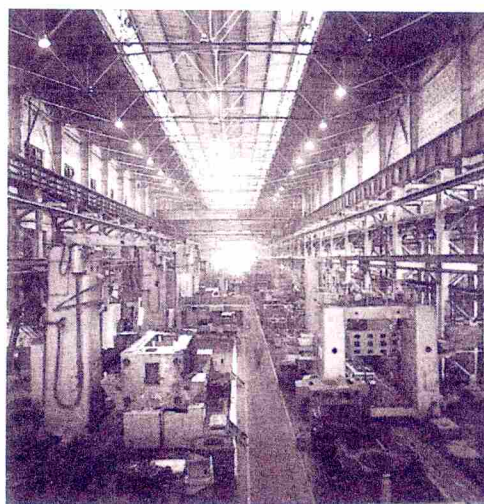
Step by step, solutions to these requirements have been found and implemented, although all 150 languages may take a little longer, some requirements have been specially introduced into the market for ready acceptance by the Soviet users. For example, Rediffusion did not hesitate in introducing its intelligent videotex colour monitors into the Soviet Union, where it has been received with tremendous enthusiasm.

Videotex terminals have already been installed in nine user pilot schemes. Over two hundred of these terminals were included in the ministry of Gas contract. So far the videotex market in the USSR is exclusive to Rediffusion, and it is perhaps pertinent to note that when these devices are installed next year, the Soviet Union will have more videotex systems installed than the current

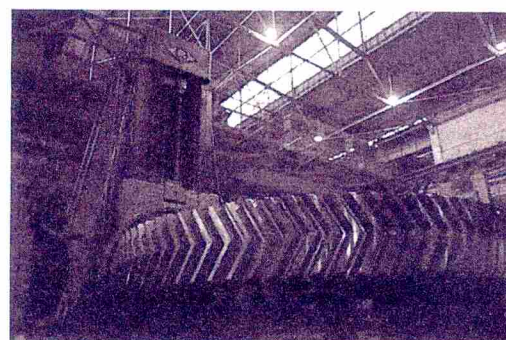


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The Voronezh Heavy-Duty Mechanical Press Factory, manufactures presses of 50 types (see picture 2), including those intended for hot forging with an effort of 40,000 kN and over (see picture 4). The herringbone gears for the presses are cut on high-precision special-purpose machines (see picture 3).



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numbers published for such countries as the United States, Finland, Austria, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

In many ways the Soviet story has only just started, and as the new Soviet five-year plan (1981-1985) gets under way, Redifusion can look forward with confidence to even more success in the near future.

But let us now look briefly at how some of the Soviet customers use their systems:

MOSMYASOPROM — A 15-terminal Redifusion data entry system was installed in 1977 for on-line entry of daily orders for processed meats and sausages. It prepares a summary of orders by product and quantities through to the allocation of orders, despatch notes and delivery schedules, invoices and direct debits for the collection of monies due in settlement. It also operates on-line to a Riad 22 mainframe.

VORONEZH HEAVY-DUTY MECHANICAL PRESS FACTORY — They use an original Seecheck system with two R870 systems. There are 35 visual displays and videotex terminals for stock control, parts explosion, factory scheduling and management information routines. The systems are fully compatible with a Minsk 32 and Riad mainframes.

PROGRESS PUBLISHERS — use an R870 system for all administration routines, stock control, orders on printers, home and export sales, management information applications etc.

The system is used for the direct entry of authors' manuscripts to prepare magnetic tape for a computerised phototypesetting machine, and, in effect, Progress is now becoming a 'printer' of its own books.

Progress Publishers entered into a Co-operation Agreement with Redifusion in 1979 in matters relating to the use of computers within the Printing and Publishing industry and which also provides a technical school and warranty facilities for the use of Soviet end-users.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE — All imports and exports are controlled through about 70 foreign trade organisations reporting to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Since 1978, Redifusion has delivered R870 systems to the following organisations:

V/O Prodintorg
V/O Aviaexport
V/O Techmaslexport
V/O Licensintorg
V/O Mezhdunarodnaya-Kniga
V/O Medexport
V/O Autopromimport
V/O Stankointport

The applications are mainly concerned with the preparation, progress and control of all matters relating to import and export contracts and the

relationship between customer and supplier at home or abroad, as the case may be. In most instances the work is entered and completed by the contracts staff without the aid of 'professional' operators.

THE STATE BANK OF THE USSR — The bank uses two R400 data entry systems for reading telex messages in punched paper tape received from all over the Soviet Union. These contain monthly statistical data, which is then updated on to a master file for subsequent analysis and print-outs to be prepared.

On one application alone, no less than 10,000,000 characters are processed each month.

MINISTRY OF HEAVY POWER AND TRANSPORT — The ministry use an R870 system for the control and progress of major building projects, such as railways, airports, highways etc. It provides management and summary information and exceptions as and when required.

ZIL — use three R870 systems as stand-alone distributed data processing systems, one is located in the financial director's department, the second is in the sales office and the third is used for the on-line control of railway deliveries of materials, and collection of finished goods and vehicles within its lorry plant.

Zil make extensive use of remote terminals operating over telephone lines within the plant, including each of the six railway 'stations', which control the activities of each train load.

MOSCOW HOSPITAL — The hospital has two R870 systems and use them for on-line updating and enquiry of patient records, statistical analysis, control of medicines and drugs and other administration tasks.

They also make much use of the system for medical student training and examinations. A test group of 200 students has proved that the medical training system has created a greater awareness and appreciation by the students and tutors towards their studies. As an immediate by-product, it has instilled the necessary disciplines and aptitude for the time when, as doctors, they will have a far greater use and requirement for the computer techniques being created within the hospital.

So already the hospital is a most enthusiastic exponent in the use of videotex.

TRAINING ACADEMY — The academy installed an R870 system which provides specialised advanced training courses for high-level Soviet management, whereby students will be able to appreciate and evaluate the introduction of interactive computer techniques within their own organisations.

The academy is another very important videotex installation.



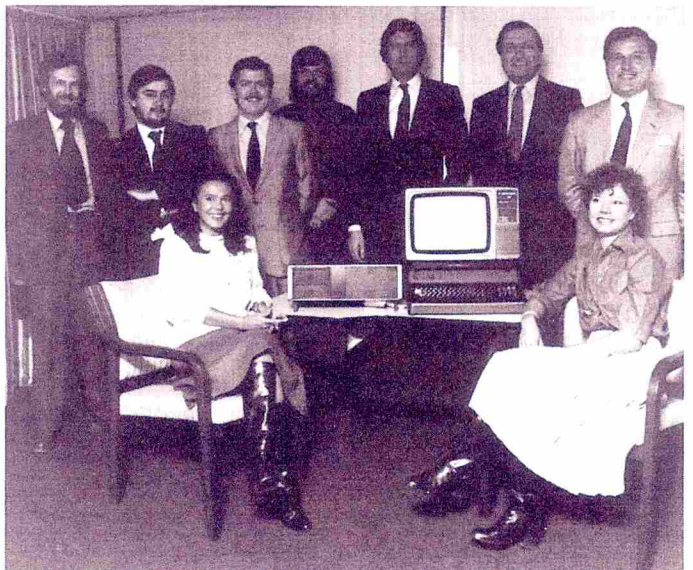
Picture shows the three-man team who were responsible for completing the complex Ministry of Gas contract negotiations in 21 days. L to r Ken Seabrook — general manager, Soviet operations; Ken Coulter — general manager, worldwide marketing and Barry Roberts — general manager, international marketing operations.

MINISTRY OF GAS — The largest ever single contract to be placed with Redifusion Computers which comprises 46 R-range systems with over 200 System Alpha videotex terminals and 300 other terminals and devices. The computers will be used to provide a complete maintenance and logistics reporting and control system for the new Siberian Gas Pipeline. The new system is conceptually similar to Redifusion's UK national engineer despatch, control and spares/logistics system which is used to provide a field maintenance service to users of Redifusion's computers.

The contract will require around 1500 Soviet specialists to be trained to use and maintain the Redifusion products. The Ministry of Gas trainers will be trained at the Crawley and Moscow training centres and they, in turn, will be responsible for training their own users and specialists.

An interesting point of the contract is that, bearing in mind the distance between London and Moscow, the sale was made by a three-man team which consisted of Ken Seabrook, general manager, Soviet operations, Barry Roberts, general manager, international marketing operations and Ken Coulter, general manager, worldwide marketing. They were supported by a team of specialists from the company's Soviet operations. The contract negotiation was computerised using a Redifusion system in Moscow producing contract drafts, product specifications, delivery schedules, and price analysis and synthesis. The final contract was the computer print-out which all the parties signed.

An incredibly complex negotiation was completed in 21 days and everyone agreed that the only participant that wasn't exhausted was the R-range computer.



Pictured above are the team who were responsible for Redifusion Computers being awarded the largest contract to date. Their sheer determination and grit, working sometimes a 17-hour day, was rewarded with the company being successful in landing a £7.86m contract for their videotex and minicomputer systems.

EXHIBITIONS IN USSR

As a necessary pre-requisite to the company's marketing operations in the USSR and, undoubtedly a major contribution to its success, attendance at one or two exhibitions a year is both a pleasure and hard work for the Soviet team.

It is at exhibitions that the company has the chance to demonstrate the equipment's facilities and sophisticated features to a wide spectrum of management and specialists from all over the Soviet Union. This year's exhibition, SVIAZ '81, was no exception, and the number of ministerial visitors received was extremely high.

The equipment on the stand, which was specially configured in anticipation of the interest shown by the Ministry of Gas, consisted of two R870 systems, on-line to each other, together with remote terminals and videotex terminals speaking over telephone lines. In addition an OCR 'B' wand and a WRITAWAY handprint recognition terminal with Cyrillic display were shown. The high note of the exhibition was undoubtedly the first public showing in the world, of the new 'Teleputer' terminal, which besides creating public interest did much to clinch the Ministry of Gas order. It was particularly appropriate that Rediffusion was able to sign this contract so soon after the end of the exhibition.

Success is never one-sided.



Pictured on the Rediffusion Computers' stand at SVIAZ '81 exhibition are l to r H.M. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Sir Curtis Keeble, KCMG; Barry Roberts — general manager, international marketing and Ken Seabrook — general manager Soviet operations both of Rediffusion Computers.



Pictured visiting the Rediffusion stand at SVIAZ '81 which was held in Moscow last September are a delegation from the Ministry of Gas. (Photograph taken by Jon Rose, a member of international marketing)

and exhibitions which are so essential to a Soviet operation, are another reminder that many other people and organisations, both internally and externally, have their part to play, from the factory personnel who build the anonymous system for export through to shippers, exhibition organisers, and all the people involved in systems support, maintenance and training.

V/O ELECTRONORSTECHNIKA — is the foreign trade organisation responsible for the import and export of all computer systems for the USSR.

Their responsibility is to represent the interests of the end-user in the selection of the computer system, the supplier, and in the legal and commercial considerations resulting in the final contract and its implementation. In the normal way this task would be complex, but by the time it is compounded by the fact that suppliers can come from many countries with different languages, customs, formalities, terms and conditions, it will be appreciated that their job is far from enviable.

Consequently, Rediffusion are pleased that they have been able to build up with V/O Electronorgtehnika a mutual relationship of understanding and trust over the past four years, which has resulted in many contracts being awarded to the company

CZECHOSLOVAKIA £300K of Orders at Brno Fair

Rediffusion Computers' Czechoslovakian marketing operation had another successful year at the Brno International Engineering Fair last September. The exhibition is the major landmark in the Czech business calendar for companies marketing there and, traditionally, a substantial proportion of business is contracted at the fair.

For Rediffusion, this year's exhibition was of particular importance because it saw the launch of the new System Alpha 'Teleputer' intelligent micro terminal. This preceded the UK launch by one week, such is the importance the company attaches to the Brno Fair.

The 'Teleputer' system aroused enormous interest and the prospects for substantial sales in 1982 are excellent. Roger Landau, general manager for the CSSR, thinks the market is right for this type of videotex system because the Czech government is tightening its embargo on the classical key-to-disk system to allow greater scope for penetration of its own domestic products. He is confident that the System Alpha range of videotex terminals will sell extremely well as there is no direct local competition.

An order for one 'Teleputer' system was taken on the stand and will be installed at UVVTR in Prague, who are the Research Institute for Computer Usage in Management — an important body recommending equipment to Czech industry. Landau regards this contract as a step in the right direction for cementing future Czech sales.

Orders were signed to the value of £300,000. These included four new systems bringing the total number of systems in CSSR to 115.

CSAD USTI NAD LABEM, the Czech road transport company, contracted to buy an R300/70 data entry system with 10

terminals and 33MB disk.

GEOFOND of Bratislava (the Slovak division of Geoslovak Industry) ordered an R1800/30 compact office system with three terminals and 33MB disk. This will bring their total installations to five.

CSPD of Bratislava, (the Danube River Transport Company) bought an R1800/30 with three terminals and 5MB disk.

KORAMO, Kolin is a refinery and part of the Chemopetrol Group. They contracted for an R1800/30 with eight terminals and 33MB disk. Nine Rediffusion systems are already installed in the group.

The remaining contracts are enhancements for existing equipment for Uranium Mines, Czech Savings Bank and TMS Pardubice.

Rediffusion expect to receive a further £500K of contracts before the end of 1981. These would normally have been signed at the Brno Fair but because of the embargo on imported commodities this has caused delays in the normal purchasing procedure.

In spite of the embargo, Rediffusion regards the future in CSSR as very promising. One viewdata pilot scheme is running well and two more are planned by the end of this year.

With the high technology range of viewdata and System Alpha products and more to be released during 1982, this will continue to give Rediffusion the marketing edge and further enhance their reputation as being the number one supplier of advanced information systems.

The Department of Posts & Telegraphs

The Department of Posts & Telegraphs has ordered a Rediffusion R1800 series system. It will be used for fault recording and other data entry work.

Education Time Tabling and Systems

Education Time Tabling and Systems (ETS) Ltd, has ordered a second Rediffusion minicomputer.

The bureau will be transferring the educational and commercial applications from the R1800/30 to the new R1800 computer using this as a data capture system.

Both systems will be able to 'talk' to each other and it is planned to use the R1800/30 for viewdata in training.