Interactive Media Systems

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Broad industry support at first European CD-I Conference

The first European CD-I Publishers' Meeting and Conference, held in London on 18 and 19 June under the sponsorship of Philips, Sony, Matsushita and Poly-Gram, showed the broad industry support and commitment that now exists for the system.

The meeting was attended by around 450 delegates, and over 100 journalists from all over the world. Particularly notable was the strong representation from Japanese companies among the conference speakers and delegates, as well as at the associated exhibition.

This event, held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel, was structured as a two-day conference, with a simultaneous exhibition entitled the 'CD-I Arcade', at which products were shown and demonstrations given by a total of 31 CD-I industry partners and licensees.

Among the 17 speakers who gave presentations during the conference sessions, were Philips president Mr. J.D. Timmer, and Mr. G. Bastiaens, director of Philips Interactive Media Systems. Summaries of some of these presentations are given on the following pages.

The two conference sessions were chaired on 18 June by Richard Horsnell, chairman of the UK multimedia design house Convergent Communications and former adjunct director of Philips International in the Netherlands and managing director of Philips Business Systems in the UK; and on 19 June by John Browning, technology correspondent of The Economist magazine.

"Breakthrough in industry acceptance": Mr. G. Bastiaens

The first European CD-I Publishers' Meeting and Conference represents a breakthrough in the industry acceptance of CD-I. Never before have we seen such a large-scale presence of both the hardware and software industries, all of them displaying their commitment to the success of this new medium, and their enthusiasm for the opportunities that it offers.

While the initiative for this event was taken by the leading system partners Philips, PolyGram, Sony and Matsushita, we were able to count on the support of no less than 27 licensees from around the world, who showed a wide selection of products and applications, many of them far advanced towards their final development stages.

Together with the attendance by over 450 delegates from the hardware and publishing industries, we can justifiably regard this event as a big success, and one that has set the direction for the coming year.

We intend to make this conference and exhibition an annual event, to keep all those involved up-to-date with the development of CD-I, to help new users evaluate the benefits of CD-I for their applications, and to promote the growth of the business.

With the system's consumer introduction scheduled to take place next year in Japan and the USA, we can expect to see some more exciting developments before the 1991 European CD-I Publishers' Meeting and Conference.

G. Bastiaens
Director Interactive Media Systems

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Speakers at the European CD-I Publishers' Meeting and Conference

Some of the main speakers at the conference sessions of the two-day London CD-I Publishers' Meeting, with brief resumés of their presentations, were as follows:

Mr. J.D. Timmer, president of Philips

CD-I builds on the success of CD Audio, for which 74 million players have been sold worldwide, Mr. Timmer told delegates. Now, CD-I promises the same high audio quality as CD, with the additional functions of full motion video, pictures, text and data, all integrated in a user-friendly system.

By combining three important demands - entertainment, education and information - with the involvement of interactive operation, CD-I meets the requirements of the professional, consumer and educational markets.

Consumer Electronics manufacturers are investing in CD-I because of the business opportunities it offers them. Publishers should now do the same, because it will open up new mass markets on top of the existing, conventional media.

Mr. G. Bastiaens, director of Philips Interactive Media Systems

Mr. Bastiaens summarised the present status of optical media and CD-I in particular, at a time when over 100 publishers in the USA, Japan and Europe have started creating titles for the consumer market.

He referred in particular to the availability of studios and authoring tools as an important condition for the success of interactive multimedia, which depends on the ability of publishers to create attractive software titles.

Further breakthroughs in software tools and generic software will enable creative designers to generate more titles, faster and easier at much lower costs, fuelling the growth of the business.

Mr. N. Idei, director of Sony Corp.

From a description of the development of CD, Mr. Idei looked ahead to consumer electronics in the 1990s, predicting that HDTV and digital VCRs would make their appearance in the second half of the decade. But as well as hardware products, packaged media will also undergo great changes - with CD-I being a major factor.

After describing the concepts of multimedia, and the computer technology underlying new CE products, Mr. Idei gave his vision of CD-I as a multimedia platform bringing computers and software far closer to the consumer. The more intelligent the computer, the greater the software business that it generates, he pointed out. Sony is ready to play its part in making the 1990s the multimedia decade, Mr. Idei concluded.

Mr. G. Stulberg, chairman and CEO of American Interactive Media, Inc.

In his presentation on 'CD-I - this is what it can do...', which he gave jointly with Mr. B. Luskin, president of AIM, Mr. Stulberg demonstrated the capabilities of CD-I with different kinds of programming: children's, music, reference and self-enhancement. He contrasted the opportunities of CD-I with the earlier failure of technology in the educational area - particularly where computers were concerned.

Mr. Stulberg described his realisation that CD-I could revolutionise the use of technology in schools, and how AIM was created to develop and produce CD-I titles for the consumer and ultimately educational markets.

Mr. R. Arroyo, senior vice-president, American Interactive Media, Inc.

'The market is ready for CD-I, and CD-I is nearly ready for the market' was the basic proposition behind Mr. Arroyo's presentation, entitled 'The marketing strategy for CD-I'.

He described the signs of market readiness, and the findings of research surveys showing a strongly positive attitude towards CD-I. Mr. Arroyo reviewed the marketing assumptions for the CD-I launch, and detailed the communication strategy that has been developed - including demonstration plans, the direct marketing strategy, and promotional opportunities using a variety of channels.

Mr. Ian Maxwell, joint managing director of Maxwell Communication Corp. PLC

Presenting his views on the essential success factors for CD-I from the publisher's point of view, Mr. Maxwell indicated the importance of CD-I to his organisation. Maxwell Communication Corp. already has a strong commitment to this medium, and intends to develop a number of worldwide publishing activities based on CD-I. Mr. Maxwell is also chairman of the Media Club of the EEC, and in this capacity he announced a European CD-I development project which will have the support and funding of the Media Club.

Mr. W. Huber, head of the EURONET Information Services Policy unit

Mr. Huber described the opportunities for information services within the EEC, and compared and contrasted the roles of the USA and Europe in the field of database production.

He discussed the distribution of the information market among the EEC countries, and presented a survey of the electronic database projects and applications which are at present in progress in the EEC. Mr. Huber described the IMPACT (Information Market Policy Actions) 2-year plan for the development of an EEC information services market, and detailed a number of pilot and demonstration projects under this plan.

He emphasised the importance of world standards for electronic publishing, and described some of the many opportunities that he saw within the EEC for CD-I as an information-distribution medium.

Mr. P. Mittelman, president of CD-I Systems, Inc.

Illustrating the application of mass appeal software, Mr. Mittelman described his company's disc entitled 'Caesar's world of gambling' - a full simulation of the gambling experience at Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas. This disc offers a high degree of realism, and accommodates different games, player ages and skill levels. No printed documentation is supplied with the disc, so it is provided with narrated tutorials and spoken descriptions. As well as offering an interesting CD-I demonstration, this project illustrates the technical and artistic complexity of CD-I title production.

Mr. J.-P. Isbouts, director of the IMS Authoring Group

Based on his responsibility for the development, co-ordination and sales of CD-I authoring systems, Mr. Isbouts gave a complete status report on the CD-I authoring tools and systems which are at present available and under development. He described the worldwide organisational set-up of the IMS Authoring Group, and the extensive support facilities that are available to publishers for CD-I. Mr. Isbouts explained the importance of the present and future developments in authoring tools as a key factor for the successful production of CD-I titles. He also announced the CDiNAVIGATOR as a breakthrough in the use of advanced CD-I authoring and programming tools by non-expert designers and producers.

Robert Sorensen, president and CEO of OptImage

In his review of the tools which are available to CD-I programme creators, Mr. Sorensen considered the history of authoring systems, leading up to today's second-generation systems in their level one, level two and level three forms. Of these systems, the level one or starter system provides an introduction to the system and allows simple presentations, level two is targeted at small development teams, and level three provides studio facilities with separate suites for audio and video development, plus a high-performance software development environment.

Mr. D. Marshall, managing director of SPIN UK Ltd.

Concentrating on the role of CD-I in education, Mr. Marshall reviewed the demands of all the various stakeholders in the educational process, the problems facing them, and the way that CD-I could help solve those problems. He then described his company's demonstration disc project, and summarised the advantages of CD-I over other interactive media. Concluding, Mr. Marshall analysed the requirements for success in the educational market, and outlined the opportunities that CD-I presents as an affordable teacher and student resource.

Mr. M. Higashi, director of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.

Mr. Higashi discussed the importance of a co-ordinated launch for CD-I from the viewpoint of the audio and video industry, using as an example the development of the home VCR market from Matsushita's first entry in 1977. He then reviewed the major success factors and opportunities of CD-I - use of the disc medium, compact size, superb functionality, user-friendliness and worldwide compatibility. With the tremendous potential that CD-I offers, the key to success lies in joint support and promotion of the system by both hardware and software manufacturers.

Mr. M. Kuhn, senior vice-president of the PolyGram Group

Highlighting the interaction between the hardware and software industries, Mr. Kuhn referred to CD-I as a unique medium, as well as a unique stage in that interaction, because both sides are now starting to speak to each other before the introduction. Factors which have in the past caused friction between hardware and software industries, and which have adversely affected the introduction of new technologies, are now absent. The conditions for the success of CD-I are present if both industries work together as never before.

31 companies show products and titles at 'CD-I Arcade' exhibition

The 'CD-I Arcade' exhibition which formed part of the London CD-I Publishers' Conference, attracted a total of 31 exhibitors showing products and demonstrating their new CD-I titles.

Centrepiece of the exhibition was the sponsors' area, featuring the conference sponsors Philips, with the IMS Groups from London and Los Angeles, plus PolyGram, Sony and Matsushita.

Philips showed the range of CD-I players and development systems, together with demonstrations of a number of CD-I titles.

A total of 16 companies were represented on the large Japanese stand, including both hardware companies and publishers, some of them showing advanced development projects and title demonstrations.

A view of the Philips stand at the 'CD-I Arcade' exhibition, showing some of the demonstration set-ups for CD-I titles.

The Philips stand at the 'CD-I Arcade' exhibition attracted a tremendous level of interest; here, Philips IMS personnel answer visitors' questions about the demonstrations.

New announcements at Philips CD-I press conference

A number of new announcements were made at a press conference held by Philips on 18 June, coinciding with the London CD-I Publishers' Meeting and Conference. The main elements of these announcements are summarised below:

Philips and Interactive Support Group sign exclusive distribution agreement

Philips Interactive Media Systems (IMS) and Interactive Support Group, Inc., of Chatsworth, Ca., USA, have signed a letter of agreement towards the exclusive distribution by Philips IMS of ISG's line of authoring products. These include programming and simulation utilities for the Macintosh, PC and SUN SPARC station platforms developed by ISG's engineering staff in California.

"ISG's products reflect the ingenuity of the multimedia revolution, carried through by a small group of talented individuals", said Mr. G. Bastiaens, director of IMS. "We are particularly pleased that we can add these innovative CD-I tools to the product line of our Authoring Group. They are complementary to the OptImage products we have today."

Support for the ISG product line in Europe will be provided by Paris-based Interactive Delta Company, itself an important source of CD-I production and engineering talent.

Philips CDiNAVIGATOR - the first non-expert CD-I production workstation

Philips Interactive Media Systems announced the release of the CDiNAVIGATOR - a comprehensive multimedia software package that allows non-expert designers and producers to perform complete CD-I programming.

The CDiNAVIGATOR was developed by OptImage - a venture in which Philips and Microware are the main partners - and it is marketed worldwide by the Philips IMS Authoring Group. The software is designed to run on the Philips CD-I starter system, an authoring workstation with the Philips CD-I player 180 as its principal host.

CDiNAVIGATOR allows creative designers and producers with little or no computer experience to translate their ideas into actual multimedia, CD-I ready titles, just by simple 'point-and-click' operations. The current release of the CDiNAVIGATOR is aimed at industrial and professional applications like training programmes, point of information kiosks, electronic catalogues and educational programmes.

Motorola and Philips agree to source CD-I video processor

Motorola Semiconductors and Philips International announced their agreement to supply a full-screen, full-motion video IC for CD-I interactive applications. This device is central to the co-operation announced by the two companies in November 1989, and completes the full audio/visual capabilities of CD-I.

As part of the development of CD-I, Philips Interactive Media Systems has created a highly cost-effective solution to video decompression and display. This device, implemented in Motorola's high-density CMOS technology, will be offered to third-party CD-I manufacturers.

Bertelsmann and Philips to co-operate in CD-I

Bertelsmann AG of Gütersloh, Germany, one of the world's leading media groups, and Philips International are to co-operate in the development and publishing of interactive CD-I titles, particularly for the consumer market.

With major activities in both traditional and electronic publishing, Bertelsmann already has a large amount of material which is suitable for publishing on CD-I.

Mr. Guido Korff, project manager for Interactive Media Products of the Bertelsmann companies Sonopress/Telemedia, said that the co-operation with Philips provides Bertelsmann with opportunities to publish its material on this promising new medium.

Extensive press coverage of London conference

The London CD-I Publishers' Conference attracted extensive international press coverage in a wide variety of media. Just a few of the headlines are reproduced below:

"CD-I: every day something exciting on TV"

"Philips lures publishers with new CD"

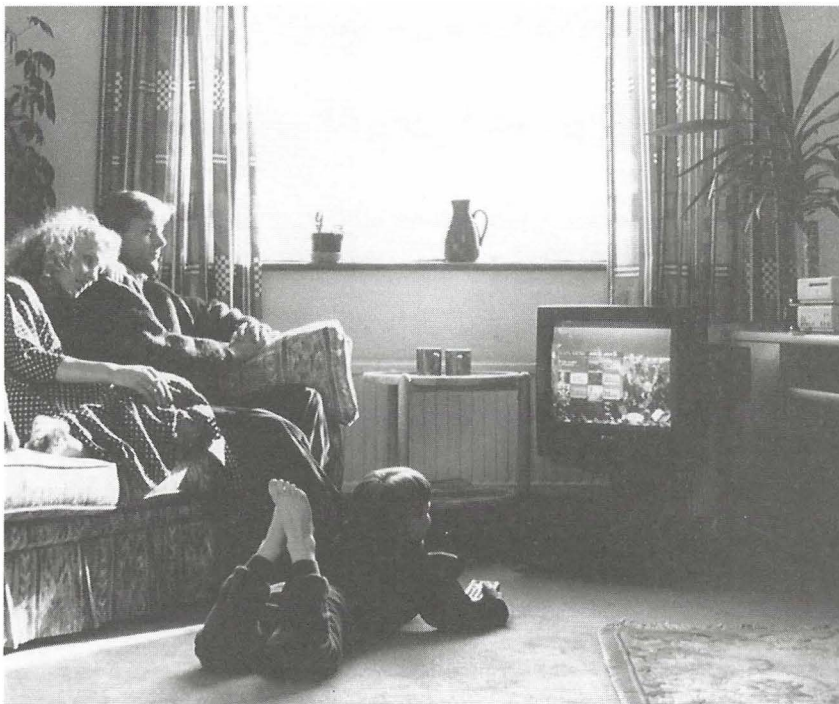**"CD-Interactive offers text, pictures and sound"**

"Interactive videodiscs offer unlimited communication"

"Philips hooks Bertelsmann to produce revolutionary software"

"Publishing is booking its place in the CD revolution"

"Philips to introduce new CD-Interactive next year"

"CD-Interactive on the European professional market in 1991"

The 'CD-I living room' environment, in which busy parents watch while their son enjoys the interactive education and entertainment that CD-I makes possible.