



PRIME MINISTER

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY YEAR 1982: MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

As you know, we announced earlier this year our decision to designate 1982 as Information Technology (IT) Year as part of our programme to stimulate interest in and awareness of information technology. The arrangements for the Year are being managed by a Committee, largely composed of private sector interests, and will be financed jointly by industry and the Department.

2 We intend to launch IT Year on 2 November and to invite representatives of the national, technical and world press to the launch. We plan to support the launch by using some practical examples of information technology at work. For instance we will be using British Telecom's Confravision service to launch the Year around the country, the first time that the Confravision service has been used in this way. Kenneth Baker has suggested - and I agree - that we should add a personal message from you on video tape as an unannounced final bonus to the proceedings.

3 Your personal connection with the Year would give a valuable lead to the many different interests who will be contributing - in many cases giving generously of their time and money. In particular it will be a prelude to the end of year Conference which you have agreed to open.

4 The purpose of this minute is therefore to ask whether you

Prime Minister or Press Office 1

Would you be willing to record a videotape message for the launch of IT Year on the lines of the draft at A ?

Li:Ure  
27 October  
1730-1745.  
Halo -

Yes. *LM*  
*9/10*



would be prepared to pre-record a three-minute message on video-tape. The message would then also be used on other occasions throughout the year at conferences; exhibitions, etc. I attach a draft of the sort of message we have in mind. In addition to drawing attention to the importance of IT and the opportunities it offers, I think the message should stress the importance of educating children to use the new technology - a theme which you developed at the launch of the Micros in Schools scheme.

5 I am copying this minute to Keith Joseph.

PJ

P J  
7 October 1981

Department of Industry  
123 Victoria Street



A

PRIME MINISTER'S VIDEO BROADCAST ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

I'd like to talk to you for a few moments about information technology. Information technology is not something that will just happen during Information Technology Year; it's here already. It covers all manner of activities from satellites to computer games, it's in our homes through the telephone and the television, in our offices through computers and word processors and in our factories through robots and computer-aided design and it is also in our hospitals and schools.

*letter  
or write  
def.  
please.*

In the last few years, rapid changes in microelectronics have made the creation, the passing and the recording of information the fastest growing economic activity in the world. It is this all-reaching nature of IT which makes it so important for our future economic prosperity.

The development of IT products and services is a vital step for Britain because we have a wealth of experience in communicating through the arts and through broadcasting and through the universality of the English language.

This is a great opportunity and we mustn't miss out on it. That's why the government has launched a major programme, IT Year 1982, to make us all aware of the importance of IT. Did

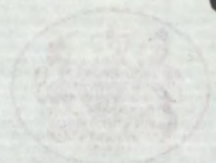


you know that only half of the companies in Britain use microelectronics at all? It is only by using these new technologies that we can remain competitive. The way forward is to create more opportunities and that is why we decided to end the telecommunications monopoly in Britain. This is an industry which must be driven forward by competition and not dominated by monopoly. At the same time, we have increased the investment in the telephone network of Britain because we want to ensure that we have the best communications system in the world. If we don't, then businesses will migrate from our country.

In 1982, Kenneth Baker, the Minister for Information Technology will co-ordinate this programme. Many new initiatives will be taken. We've announced the offices of the future in Whitehall, the Micros in Schools Scheme which I launched in April has been an outstanding success and it will be extended in 1982 to all Secondary Schools. For the young and unqualified unemployed, we are setting up a national network of IT centres.

IT Year '82 will give us an opportunity to celebrate our achievements but more important, it will point the way to the great opportunities that lie ahead for British industry.

65



-7 OCT 1981

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From the Private Secretary

13 October 1981

Information Technology Year 1982: Message from the  
Prime Minister

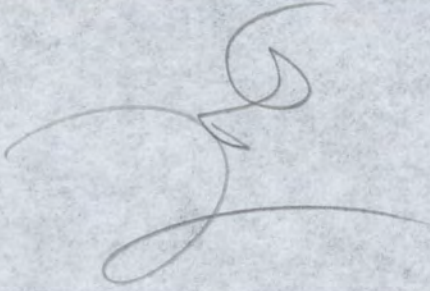
The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 7 October, and has agreed to record a personal message on video tape to be used in the launch of IT Year, and throughout the year at conferences, etc.

As I told you on the 'phone, the Prime Minister would be able to set aside 15 minutes to record this message at 1730 on 27 October. She is broadly content with the draft message attached to your Secretary of State's minute, except that she would prefer a simpler and more informative definition of "information technology" to be drafted to replace the last sentence of the first paragraph. You said that you would arrange for a redraft to be provided. I should be grateful if this could reach us as soon as possible.

I am copying this to Chris Eagles (Department of Education and Science).

W. F. S. RICKETT

Richard Riley Esq  
Department of Industry



MR GAFFIN

Please see the attached. It seems that the Department of Industry intend to delegate the handling of this video tape recording to their press office. Perhaps you could liaise with them over the arrangements.

WR

13 October 1981

MR RICKETT

Mr Baker's office have confirmed that they will be coming to us with revised advice (see X)

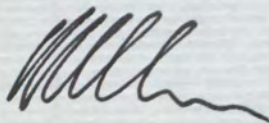
WK 20/10

Department of Industry confirm that they are indeed still interested in the Prime Minister making a contribution to the launch of the BBC television series on computer literacy as well as to the launch of IT Year.

2. Further to Mr Baker's note of 25 August, D/Industry now tell me that an exhibition has been organised through the Parliamentary Information Technology Committee. This will be staged in the Upper Waiting Room of the House of Commons between 15-20 November.

x | Mr Baker's Private Office should be coming to you with a proposal for the BBC to conduct an interview with the Prime Minister during that exhibition, for use at the launch of their programme in December. As I said to you, this would be one interview, not two as mentioned in Mr Baker's note, and it is not now intended to use it as an introduction to the series itself.

3. For the launch of IT Year it is hoped to record a message by the Prime Minister to be put on video for use at the press conference on 2 November. This recording could be made at any convenient time until then and Shandwick PR, retained to organise IT Year publicity, will provide the cameraman and equipment necessary.



HUGH COLVER  
PRESS OFFICE

9 October, 1981.