

All plugged in!

Mike and Sandy, at home in 2000 AD

AT COLGATE, just down the Horsham road from Pease Pottage, is the home of the 21st century.

But Mike and Sandy Aldrich's home in Tower Road doesn't look at all unusual from the outside.

What makes it revolutionary is the presence in Mike's study of a small piece of electronic wizardry called the Teleputer.

Basically, it consists of a small colour TV set, a keyboard terminal like a micro-computer and two magnetic disc storage units, capable of storing about a million "bits" of information — say about the equivalent of 300,000 words.

This small machine is going to revolutionise working and home life, says Mike, who is managing director of the Teleputer's Crawley-based manufacturers, Redifusion Computers.

"It is basically a sophisticated information and communications system, and it is the biggest advance since the telephone.

"It can send, receive and store huge amounts of information, and the consequences of having one at home will be devastating."

Most important, the concept of "Teleworking" — working from home through the computer. — will revolutionise working habits.

"People won't have to go to work any more, because their work can be sent to them through the Office Advisory System," says Mike.

And the 9-to-5 working day and the five-day working week, will vanish.

Housewives will no longer have to "go" shopping, because they'll be able to order what they want through the Teleshopping System.

TREVOR FRENCH reporting

And families will have access to an enormous range of services — without putting a foot out of doors.

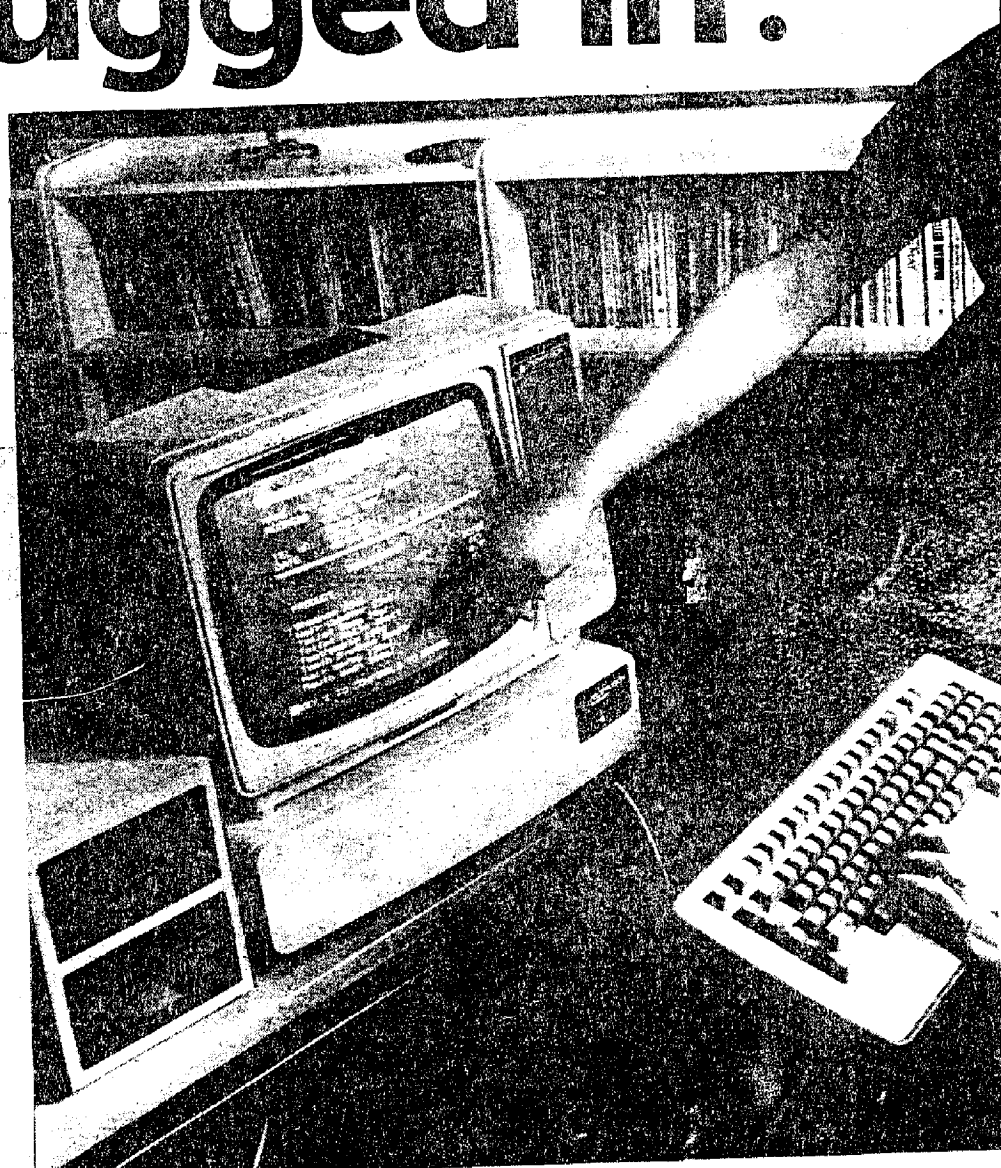
"We'll be able to dial into thousands of services all over the world," says Mike, rapidly keying instructions on the board.

A few seconds later, up on the screen in bright colour

comes the Dutch information service VIDITEL, from a computer in The Hague.

"Or I can get full details of aircraft movements at 15 major airports in Britain

Push, buzz, beep — and up comes the arrivals board at Gatwick, with information accurate up to four minutes.



It sounds like science fiction, but such services are already in homes, says Mike. At £3,600 a Teleputer is relatively cheap, and they will probably cost less than £1,000 within four years.

Also, there are no installation costs. It simply plugs into your existing mains supply and telephone socket.

"Already more than a million homes in Britain have micro-computers, and I think within five years we'll see almost as many Teleputers."

Crawley Observer, Thursday, April 28, 1983

plugged in!

● Sandy and her daughter — "shopping" at home.



own the Hor-
e Pottage, is
century.

Aldrich's home
at all unusual

ary is the pre-
small piece of
he Teleputer.
small colour TV
te a micro-com-
ic storage units,
a million "bits"
t the equivalent

oing to revolu-
life, says Mike,
of the Tele-
facturers, Redif-
icated informa-
system, and it is
he telephone.

Armchair shopping

FOR Mike's wife Sandy, the Teleputer will eliminate one of the banes of her life—the weekly shopping.

Of course, she'll still have to make a list. But she'll only have to walk as far as the Teleputer, instead of driving miles and trudging round a supermarket.

It was Mike who demonstrated the Tele-shopping System, as Sandy is still learning which buttons to push.

"First, you 'dial into' the Teleshopping programme," he said, rapidly pushing the relevant buttons.

Buzz, beep — and there on the screen is a list of categories, including fresh meat, dairy products, fruit and vegetables, and toiletries.

"Choose your category" (beep) "and up comes a numbered and priced list. Here's an example — 150ml hairspray, £1.09. Push the right button" (beep) "and it's stored."

And so on until you've listed everything you need.

"Next you send off your order, again just by pushing a button. The message will be sent to a 'superwarehouse,' where your goods will be selected, packaged and sent to you at your home."

The bad news is that the computer will also instantly debit your bank account for the cost of your shopping.

Again, the computer will not take over all kinds of shopping; only what Sandy calls "chore shopping".

"I'd still want to be able to window-shop for things like clothes, which you have to try on," she says.

Of course, the Teleputer will also function as a personal computer, and can be used to work out family budgets, and store menus and recipes.

Help for the elderly

TESCO is already operating a teleshopping service for senior citizens and the physically handicapped, who find it difficult to get to the shops.

Terminals have been installed in two branch libraries at Gateshead on Tyneside and in the social services centre there, as well as in the town's Tesco store.

People with limited mobility use the library terminals while the housebound phone their orders

...and here, as a tail-waggers' postscript...

What Tess the dog thinks of it all



● Until it gives me a bone, it's just a yawn.

Take a letter, Miss Robot

MIKE has offices in London, Brighton and Crawley — and can be "in" all three within seconds.

"First I read my 'in tray'. This morning, for example, I've been sent an agenda for a meeting." Mike types a message approving the agenda.

"Anyone in the company can reach anyone else, or get thousands of bits of information, almost instantly."

Another feature is the diary, which notes dates and times of meetings and engagements.

"I can call a meeting from home. The computer will consult the diaries of the people I want, schedule the meeting, and tell them.



Family fun — by button

OF course the Teleputer plays space invader games — that's old hat.

But it could also book you a squash court.

"Say my son Luke (right) wants to book a court for this evening at Crawley Leisure Centre," says Mike, pushing buttons as he speaks.

"Imagine the centre has a computer. Dial into it and — here we are — we get a full display of all courts and times available.

"Type in the court number and time," (beep) "and bingo, the court's booked. The computer will also pay for the court, and debit your bank account."



The wired-up community

MUCH of Crawley is already lined up, by Rediffusion's rival, Visionhire, for Cable TV.

As well as entertainment, cable can bring links to banks, shops, libraries, social services, even your friends, face to face.

Instead of using the phone lines you're using cables beneath the streets.

At Guildford Rediffusion is bidding for a Home Office cable TV licence for up to 30 channels including local government, community services, churches, electronic mail and newspapers.

Cost to Rediffusion would be £15m, but with subscribers paying £3 to £12 a month and advertising and programme providers contributing too, there's big money to be made.