

Information Super Highway

By Hap Hansen

The information Super Interstate Highway has been constructed. It was built right through our living rooms. I'm one of the many who don't yet have a roadmap for the information Super Interstate Highway, so I'm trying to thumb a ride. As time goes on, there will be a dramatic increase in traffic on this highway. No stop signs. No caution signs. It will be 'damn the traffic, full speed ahead.' We are already inundated with information. Much of it is useless. But if we don't learn quickly how the system works and is going to work in the future, we'll be run over, around and through with information.

The information future came with blinding speed. And it's way ahead of schedule. For some time now, computers have been communicating with each other; and too few of us know what they're saying! We need to know computerese on an advancing schedule, because already, some of our computers are interfaced with our telephones, fax machine, answering machine and television set. Want to order a diamond ring from a merchandising channel? Punch in the appropriate numbers on your remote control and have it delivered to your door just in time for your big dinner party tomorrow night. Need a pizza? Reach for the remote, punch in five numbers, speak into your remote control, order the thin crust, pepperoni, sausage and mushroom delivered to your door in 30 minutes, while your credit card has automatically been charged for the pizza, including tax, tip and delivery charge.

Tired of watching a paltry 35 channels on your TV? Punch in yet another sequence of numbers on your remote and receive 500 channels or more, some with an automatic \$5 charge to your pre-approved credit card if you happen to watch 10 minutes or more of the big game. Can you imagine, the frustration of flipping, or watching someone flip through 500 channels? Then discovering there's nothing worth watching? The television industry can't fill 35 channels with intelligent programming now. What will they do with 500 channels? More soaps? More all-star wrestling? More reruns of 'Leave It to Beaver?' Or will there be more opportunities for million dollar prizes if one becomes a champion in the Tiddlywinks game of the century?

Have we entered a future world of convenience and pleasure? Or are we proceeding toward a faceless, cashless, uncaring society? I hope it's the former, but whatever it is, it's here!