

HOW TO USE MY BUSINESS COMPUTER TO TALK TO THE WORLD

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... for only 20¢ a minute!

How would you like to be able to use your System 80 Mark II Business Computer to:

- Call up the very latest stock exchange, interest and currency exchange rates from overseas?
- Search the files of leading overseas newspapers?
- Check on the latest overseas patents?
- Communicate via the latest electronic mail techniques?
- Find out the latest overseas knowledge on a certain drug or medical treatment?
- Get the latest statistics on overseas industries, health surveys, population or companies?
- Scan abstracts of the latest research reports in any of hundreds of fields in science, medicine and engineering?

... all of these and many more in seconds, and in your own home or office.

Sound incredible?

A glimpse into the distant future? Don't you believe it. You can do all of these things, **right now** – and it will cost you far less than you think!

Over the last few years, huge data bank services have been established in the USA and other countries. Hundreds of different data banks have been set up by research bodies, universities, colleges, newspapers, hospitals, stock exchanges and all sorts of public institutions. Many of these individual data banks have hundreds of thousands of stored documents – millions and millions of words – so that already there is a truly mind-boggling amount of information available. And it's growing daily!

Interested?

See overleaf for details on how you too can use your computer to scan this incredible world of information

Available to anyone with a low-cost computer

The big thing is that all of this stored information is available (for a fee) to **anyone** with a low-cost computer or data terminal, via the normal telephone network. And not just to people in the USA, either. Thanks to MIDAS, the Multimode International Data Acquisition Service run by our Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC), the same service is available to people **anywhere** in Australia - providing they have access to a telephone. And the cost is exactly the same whether you live in Sydney, Perth or Mount Isa!

What exactly is MIDAS?

MIDAS is basically an international data communications link, operated by OTC, which allows Australians to connect into the big overseas data base networks and enjoy the facilities available to users in the USA and Canada, and shortly in the UK and Europe as well. You connect to MIDAS by dialling a special telephone number in Sydney. Calls to this number are toll-free from anywhere in Australia, due to a special agreement between OTC and Telecom Australia. So as a MIDAS subscriber you pay only for the time you spend hooked up on the data link itself, regardless of whether you live in Sydney or on the other side of the continent.

How much does MIDAS cost?

Because OTC is using specially developed equipment which lets many users "share" the satellite link at the same time, the cost is shared out too. You pay only 20 cents per minute, plus 60 cents for each 1000 characters of information obtained. This is generally less than you'd pay for an overseas telex, cable or telephone call!

Of course MIDAS itself only provides the link overseas. Like an overseas user, you still have to pay for the use of the various data banks themselves. But like MIDAS, these generally charge at quite modest rates. Typical rates vary from 60 cents to \$1.50 per minute.

What about security?

Could someone use my computer when I'm not here, and run up a huge bill on my account?

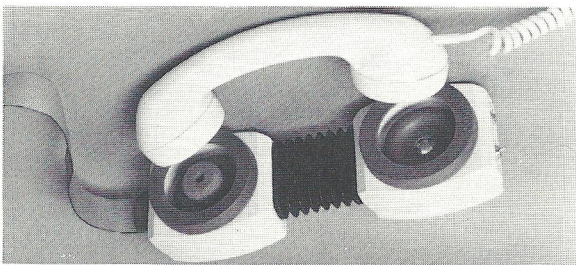
Not unless you let them. When you register as a MIDAS user, you are given details of the special MIDAS telephone number together with your own special security password and user code number. Without having these, no unauthorised person can use either your computer or their own to run up a bill on your account.

Does this mean MIDAS is complicated to use?

No - all you have to do is remember your password and user number. Of course you also have to know how to use the data bases you want to search, but you get details on how to do this when you register with them.

What equipment do I need to use MIDAS?

Apart from your System 80 Mark II Business Computer, with its normal Expansion Unit (X-4010) and Video Monitor (X-1196), all you need is a modulator/ demodulator (Modem) unit to allow the computer to communicate via the telephone. Our Acoustic Coupling Modem (X-3270) does the job very well, yet costs you only \$399.00.



How do I go about using MIDAS?

The first thing you need to do is contact the Customer Systems Manager, Marketing Branch, OTC, at GPO Box 7000, Sydney NSW 2001, or telephone (02) 230 5000, and ask for a MIDAS application form and information. If you let them know your occupation and the sort of information you'd like to use MIDAS to get, OTC may also be able to tell you which data bases are likely to be of value to you, and how to register with them. If you have a range of specialised interests, they may be able to send you a directory for one of the data base networks.

Registering with MIDAS itself will cost you nothing. This is also the case with many data bases, although some do charge a small registration fee. But in general, you're charged only for your use of the services they provide. You're not committed to any minimum time, either.

Once you're registered, using MIDAS is very easy. You simply set your Business Computer for communications terminal mode, dial up the MIDAS number, and join your Acoustic Modem up to the telephone handset as soon as you hear the tone. You then hit the "A" key to let MIDAS know what sort of a terminal you're using. From then on, MIDAS itself guides you on the screen, and within seconds you're talking to the overseas data base of your choice.

Can I use MIDAS if I don't have a Business Computer?

You may be able to, although it probably won't be as convenient. MIDAS will work with most data terminals providing they can communicate at a rate of 300 baud using the ASCII code (7 data bits, no parity). Our Sorcerer Computer (X-3001) can be used as a terminal if you load in the "Dumb Terminal" Program (X-3637).

Note that regardless of the terminal or computer you want to use, you'll still generally need a modem like our X-3270 to couple it to the telephone.

DICK SMITH Electronics

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