

# A POWERFUL COMPUTER SYSTEM TO SERVE SPORT



*The "machine room" in the basement of Olympic House.*

Ensuring the regular celebration of the Olympic Games is no small task. The universal dimension of the Olympic Movement requires all-round organization and communication. In order to perform its mission, the International Olympic Committee has chosen to equip itself with a powerful computer system, with the collaboration of IBM as official sponsor of the Olympic Games.

*By Marie-Christine Mattle*

**B**ased in Lausanne, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is the supreme authority of the Olympic Movement. As such, it has the role of promoting the organization and development of sport

and sports competitions; orientating and keeping sport on the path of the Olympic ideal; and ensuring the regular celebration of the Olympic Games. The IOC is represented in 172 countries by National Olym-

## COMPUTER SERVICES AND SPORT

pic Committees which are responsible for participation by their teams at the Games and organize these Games when they take place on their territory. The scale and complexity of the tasks arising from this mission have led the IOC to equip itself with a modern computer system. This vast project involved, on the one hand, the installation of the hardware and cabling of the buildings, and on the other, the implementation of numerous applications. Responsibility for this project was entrusted to Mr Alexandre Fellrath, head of computer services at the IOC.



*Mr Alexandre Fellrath, newly made Director of Computer Services, gives a presentation of the new installations in the IOC.*

### COMMUNICATIONS, PRIORITY NUMBER ONE

At the time when the decision was taken, the IOC already had a computer system, but this was an old one used solely for office tasks and document management, and it urgently needed replacing. In short, a totally new start was required. Given the specifications, only an intermediate system could be considered, and it was a AS/400 model B60 which was chosen, it being this computer's communication capacities,

among other things, which led to this decision. Its installation in December 1989 came immediately after the IOC signed the contract with IBM. And the subsequent operations were conducted at an equally brisk pace.

One of the IOC's primary concerns was to be able to communicate, both within its own premises and with the outside world. Thus a token ring was installed at the administrative centre and the Chateau de Vidy, the two buildings being linked by fibre optic cable, and a link established with the Villa Olympique, Olympic Museum and Olympic Solidarity. For these three, the connection with the AS/400 is ensured by means of X.25 lines. All 80 of the IBM PS/2 models 55SX installed at the IOC are connected to the IBM AS/400. For the cabling within the buildings concerned, the IBM cabling system was used.

Furthermore, thanks to the IBM value-in-kind services, the IOC is in permanent contact with the organizing committees of the Olympic Games in Albertville and Barcelona, for the 1992 Winter and Summer Games, and Lillehammer and Atlanta in preparation for the Games in 1994 and 1996.

### MODERN OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND ADMINISTRATION

Where applications were concerned, the IOC's first priority was to resolve traditional office technology problems such as word processing, messages, archives and agendas.

IBM products like Display Write 4 PC and the integrated office automation functions of the AS/400 were the perfect answer to these needs, and they were installed during the first three months, together with an automatic telex and fax management system. This means that, for the last eighteen months, the IOC staff have enjoyed the benefit of ultra modern office computer technology, and now nobody could do without it. The time, not so long ago, when seven copies of every letter had to be typed seems to belong to

another age. But the IOC's needs did not stop there. It also needed a powerful document management system for the 200,000 or so index cards allowing the original documents stored in the archives to be found. This application was provided by the TIS company in Fribourg. At present, the IOC is studying the possibility of moving to electronic storage of the documents in question using the IBM Image Plus software. Moreover, the vast quantities of mail which leave the IOC headquarters every day for the four corners of the world make use of a file containing some 15,000 addresses. Some kind of address management system was therefore vital, and an application supplied by Trigesta Informatique in Geneva was chosen. The same firm also supplied the administrative applications for accounts, billing, salary and stock management. Finally, there was the hotel accommodation software supplied by PGP Management, which allows rooms to be reserved, allocated and lists drawn up for the participants in the various IOC meetings around the world. Such a transformation in working methods had to be accompanied by a programme to train the staff in the use of these new techniques. Today that has been done, with each member of staff having received an average of three days' training a year.

### **3,000 PRESS DESPATCHES A DAY**

For the IOC President, it is crucial to know what is happening in the world in terms of both sport and politics.

For this reason, links were established with seven international press agencies which "spit out" their telexes around the clock, at the rate of some 3,000 a day. The press management application allows these dispatches to be memorized directly by the AS/400 and a list of them to be established from a table of keywords for research purposes. At a later date, there are plans to be able to transfer those telexes of particular interest into a micro-computer printing system in order to produce the press review, around 50 copies of which are printed daily.



*Signing of the contract between  
IBM and the IOC.*

### **MAJOR CHALLENGE**

In January 1991, the IOC gave the go-ahead for the Olympic database project which will contain a host of information on participants at the Games and their results, records in the different disciplines, the history of the Olympic Movement, recognized sports and events, competition venues, doping, sponsors, etc. This will enable the IOC to respond better to the requests it receives from the press and sports federations.

The IOC has many other computer projects for the years ahead, such as the automatic transfer of information after each Olympic Games in order to include it in the database, or computer-assisted translation. In short, where computing is concerned, the IOC is setting its sights ever higher.

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