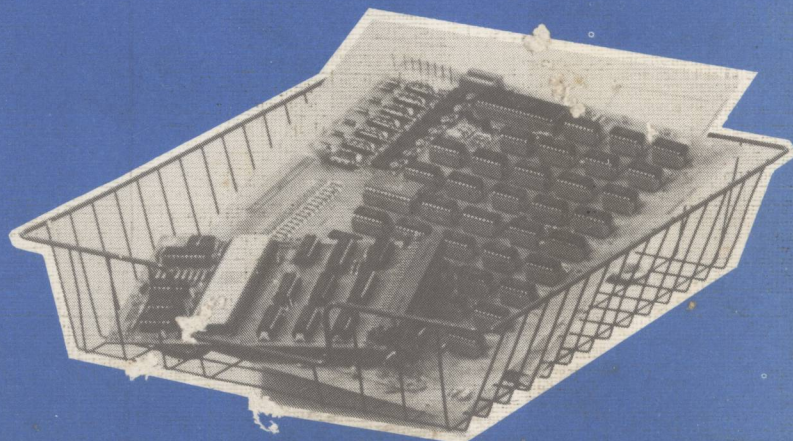




# PLANNING OFFICE AUTOMATION — Electronic Message Systems

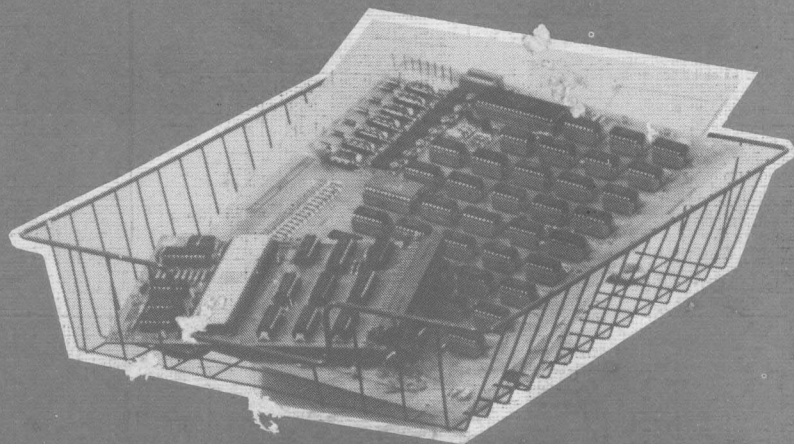
J A T Pritchard  
P A Wilson





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J A T Pritchard  
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# **Planning Office Automation**

## **Electronic Message Systems**

**J A T Pritchard  
and P A Wilson**



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# Preface

'The electronic office as a total integrated information system is very much a concept of the future, but evolution towards it is clearly evident today. This book deals with current developments . . . It is the intention that future work . . . will look at the design, implementation and operation of the electronic office' (extract from the Preface to *Introducing the Electronic Office*, see bibliography – item 1.1).

The work from which that book derived set the scene for a follow-up programme and in April 1980 NCC commenced a programme of work supported by the Department of Industry through the Computers, Systems and Electronics Requirements Board (CSERB). The aim of this programme is to establish the present and future needs of user organisations in the UK and their degree of satisfaction with existing products and services in the office automation (OA) area, and to produce books and guidance to assist users.

Initially a user survey was carried out to identify what progress was being made in the areas of electronic message systems (EMS) and information management systems (IMS). In-depth structured interviews were held with twelve organisations, each of which received a copy of the resulting 96-page report *Office Automation – The Report of a Survey of UK Users* (1980) by the authors of this book (see bibliography – item 1.2). The organisations who were invited and agreed to participate in this survey were selected because they were known to have experience in – or plans at an advanced stage to become involved in – relevant OA systems.

Subsequently work began upon the second project in the CSERB-supported programme, from which this book derives. Its aim is to provide readers with advice which will assist them to develop an OA strategy, with



particular reference to electronic message systems. Mindful that EMS can be but a part of an organisation's complete OA activity, a third project will investigate strategic issues and design considerations for IMS – as the second project has for EMS – and form the basis for a companion volume *Planning Office Automation— Information Management Systems* (see bibliography – item 1.3)

Subsequent projects will investigate the evaluation and selection of EMS and IMS products and services, and their implementation and operation.

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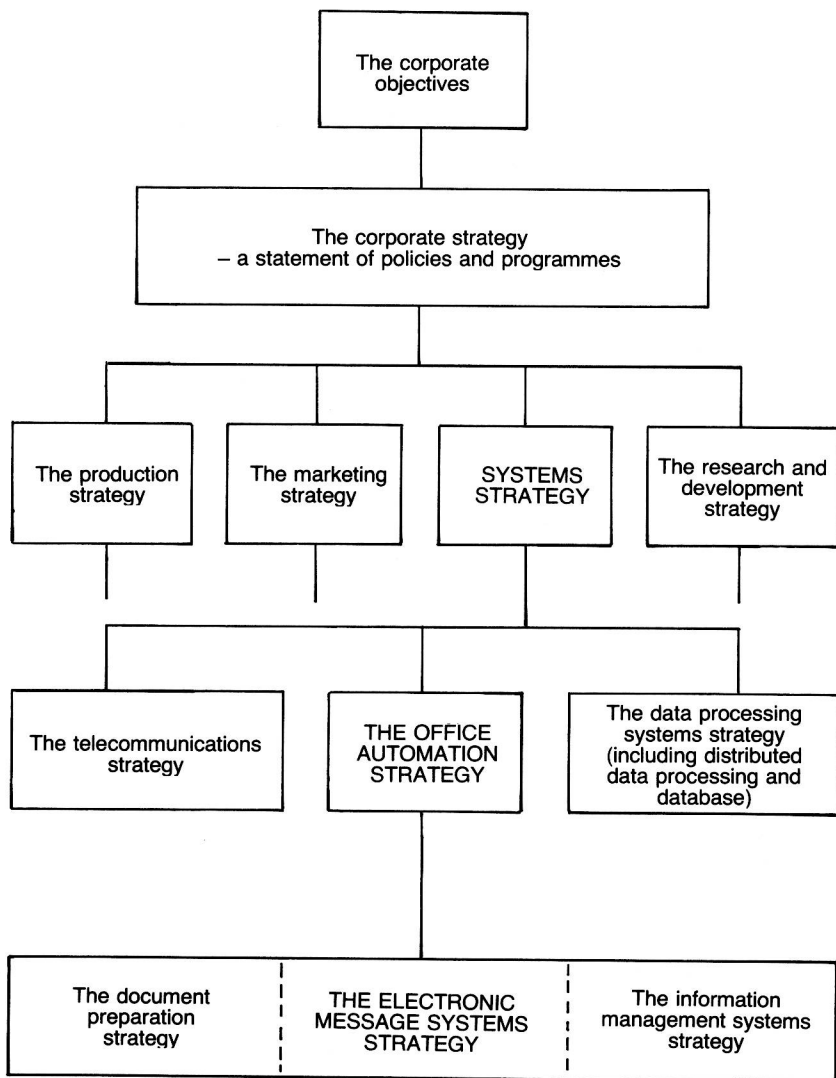


# 1 Introduction

This chapter prepares the reader for the subsequent chapters which address the planning and architectural design processes. Electronic message systems (EMS) are but a part of the automated office; other parts are information management systems (IMS) and document preparation systems (DPS). Thus it must be emphasised that although this book discusses strategic planning for office automation (OA), it concentrates upon electronic message systems. The reader is recommended to remember the word 'integration'. Just as he will discover the advantages of seeking to integrate text, data, voice, graphics and image in the EMS strategy, so he is advised, now, to take note that an OA strategy should integrate EMS, IMS and DPS.

Figure 1.1 illustrates how an organisation might relate this concept to its corporate strategy. It is saying to the reader that, perhaps for the first time in his life, he should look upon office activities as being of such crucial importance to the efficient and effective operation of his organisation in the future that they require a strategic 'plan' supported by the full backing and involvement of the senior executives. This topic will be discussed later in this chapter.

This chapter continues by discussing the aim of this book and the audience for whom it is intended. Then it introduces terminology, in this way identifying some of the components of the electronic or automated office, with particular emphasis upon EMS. Next it enumerates some of the benefits which, it is claimed, OA will bring. The word 'claimed' is used deliberately: although there are now organisations with a few years of successful operation of OA systems, not many UK organisations have as yet introduced on-going OA systems, other than stand-alone or shared-logic word processing (WP) systems. Several firms have pilot schemes in



**Figure 1.1 Integration – the Bringing Together in a Unified and Co-ordinated Manner of Related, but hitherto Independently Operating Processes**

operation or have plans for such schemes at a very advanced stage. A number of possible difficulties are mentioned.

The chapter then discusses why a strategic approach is needed. The final section highlights the 1980 UK user survey of EMS and IMS (see bibliography – item 1.2) mentioning in particular the survey report's conclusions.

## **1.1 AIM OF THE BOOK; ITS AUDIENCE**

The book's prime aim is to help its readers to devise a practical and effective strategy for introducing OA in general and EMS in particular.

Subsequent chapters will discuss:

- how an organisation should set up a strategy study;
- the gathering and analysis of relevant information which can be used to select strategy options;
- the strategy options that are open to organisations wishing to implement OA;
- the design of the telecommunications and EMS architecture;
- how the results of the study should be reported and authorised.

The topics mentioned above will be discussed in the form of answers to questions which a reader might ask. After reading this book, the reader should be in a position to ask the appropriate questions about his organisation and its requirements, so that he can develop a strategic approach to OA, and can design the telecommunications and EMS architecture whilst being aware of the importance and relevance of influencing factors.

A number of readers may react to this book by feeling that some of the EMS referred to are:

- not yet available, or are not yet mature;
- available now, but their use within the organisation cannot yet be justified;
- available and can be justified, but the impact of their introduction upon the organisation's structure and methods of working will be so great that their implementation must be deferred or even abandoned;



- available, and can be justified, and could be introduced without too much trouble, but do not warrant introduction just for the sake of change when current methods apparently are adequate.

If, for whatever reasons, organisations are taking the view that OA is not for them – at least for the time being – they should realise that we live in a changing world. The silicon chip and microelectronics – as well as other new technology – have arrived and are being applied; they are not going to disappear. Indeed it is organisations who fail to adapt and introduce the new technology who will first of all become uncompetitive and then disappear themselves.

This book should be read by anyone who will be involved with OA strategy, but particularly by those personnel who are concerned with organising or carrying out a strategy study. Some organisations have taken the step of creating a department or unit to plan for the introduction of new technology into office systems and positions such as Manager of Office Automation, which reflect this. Others have formed working groups or committees for this purpose. Figure 1.2 lists the personnel whose terms of reference should include some involvement with OA strategic planning and for whom this book is intended.

**Managers, deputy managers and members of the following departments:**

- administration;
- telecommunications;
- management services;
- office systems (or office services);
- data processing;
- corporate planning and research;
- office automation (or office technology).

**Consultants;**

**Trades union officials.**

**Figure 1.2 The Audience for this Book**