

INDONET (Data Network)

Between 1982-86, C.M.C. Ltd. organized a series of seminars on networks debating the merits of networks - whether they should be publicly or privately owned, what services they should provide and so on. The feasibility study for a computer network which resulted from this, formed the basis for a Government of India approval for installing the network.

The INDONET network was made operational in March 1986. The thrust areas of the company were to:

- A. Create the infrastructure for a network and promote a "network culture" within the country.
- B. Create a "software library" so that specialized users could afford to use software

C. Provide a platform for developing software

D. Develop in-house expertise in networking and disseminate information to the computing professional arena through training programs, seminars etc.

Government laws placed restrictions on the ownership of the actual lines carrying the data. The Department of Telecommunications (DOT) was the only organization, apart from the railways, allowed to own telephone lines. The first three years, 1986-89 were spent in educating the personnel of the DOT to get higher quality/reliability for data networks as opposed to voice networks, which had been the only kind of networks serviced by DOT.

The network was still neither very reliable nor available however. Users of the network took it mainly as a batch and remote computing facility rather than exploring its possibilities as a network. Users with in-house computing facilities ignored the computing capabilities of the network. There was no possibility of connecting these in-house systems to INDONET because in most cases, the data protocols were different. Meaningful applications were also not available as the uptime was very low.