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THE FIRST  
INTERACTIVE  
ELECTRONIC  
REFERENCE BOOK  
ON BRITAIN

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## **BBC DOMESDAY PROJECT**

In 1086 the Domesday surveyors captured the facts on English contemporary life and economy. The record remains, for many communities the starting-point of their self-knowledge.

In its 1986 commemoration, the BBC's Domesday Project covers an even wider range of areas and subjects, but like its predecessor still involves local people as well as national resources. We shall cover as many acres of England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man as our respondents can handle. One of the two discs is a 'People's Database' of information and pictures supplied by the communities themselves.

### **WHAT WILL THE DOMESDAY PROJECT INCLUDE?**

Two interactive videodiscs are being produced, forming a massive electronic reference book on the life of Britain in 1986. One disc is largely local data and pictures; the other mainly national in content. The first has information, pictures and texts provided by schools and community groups. The national disc in addition has tapped government and university sources, and includes the results of a national picture competition. At least a million people have been involved in the project, under the guidance of a special BBC team. Emphasis throughout has been on preserving the integrity of the sources, whilst using the latest techniques in interactive video to enhance their display.

Both discs include text, pictures, maps and indexes, and the national disc also includes statistical tables.

### **WHAT THE LOCAL DISC CONTAINS**

The full Ordnance Survey maps, and equivalents for all areas, in colour, some 20,000 in all.

- Complete gazetteer of 250,000 place-names, at 1:50 000 scale.

- Entry to data under place-name, or grid

reference, or by map point using mouse or tracker-ball – all instantly retrieved.

- Pictures of all the places covered, taken specially for the project.

- Subject access to the topics written about by each local area. These include not only standard useful information, but also insights into local controversies and concerns, to form a real mirror of modern Britain.

## **WHAT THE NATIONAL DISC CONTAINS**

A massive array of statistical data, showing the state of Britain and its regions. There will be over 3000 such data sets.

- Pictures, mostly in colour, showing all aspects of British life.

- Texts on a very wide range of subjects, giving a key to thought in contemporary Britain.

- Amenity counts for each area which has supplied them, showing standard features and how often they occur.

- Land cover on a 1 sq.km. basis.

- Indexing both by an organised thesaurus of terms, *and* by specific topic, covering all matters dealt with in the tables, pictures and texts.

## **WHERE HAS THE INFORMATION COME FROM?**

In addition to the many individuals and community groups who have contributed to the local disc, or taken photographs for the national competition, the Domesday Project has called on many other sections of society. It has drawn heavily on the ESRC Archive at Essex University, the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies, at Newcastle, the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, and Birbeck College, London University. A wide range of government departments have been involved, and other national and regional organisations have contributed. Pictures have been obtained not only from agencies and libraries but also from industry and commerce. No sector of British life, from which data, pictures or texts could be obtained, has been omitted from the Project.

## **WHO NEEDS THIS INFORMATION?**

The Domesday discs are aimed at all types of user, for they contain basic information on Britain at every level. The academic will use them heavily, seeking to formulate his ideas from the raw data. So too will the businessman/woman, who needs to understand trends or gain basic community information. Factual information is needed by every man, woman and child at some time, and learners from young school-children to high-level researchers will find what they need here. The discs are interactive, that is, by personal use of a microcomputer they will reveal the variety of content and display it vividly in the form users find most helpful.

The discs are likely to be useful to a wide range of people in planning, local authorities, trade and industry, journalism and the media. Amongst libraries and information sources, they should be valuable to:

- **ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**  
for study and research
- **PUBLIC LIBRARIES**  
to aid reference enquiries of every kind
- **SPECIAL LIBRARIES**  
as general background
- **INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL LIBRARIES**  
to give that essential piece of information, or map
- **SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTRES**  
as the learning tool of tomorrow

The Domesday discs contain masses of fresh material, covered for the Project, available nowhere else. The huge effort which has gone into the work can never be replicated on this scale, though new projects in this and other countries are already being planned. The discs also contain information from many well-known standard sources, many now, thanks to Domesday, available in this interactive form for the first time, and displayed in new ways.

## QUESTIONS THE DISCS WILL ANSWER:

### a small sample

- What is the distance between Bovey Tracey and Tiverton by crow or by road?
- What does Queensbury say about Black Dyke Mills Band?
- What will a well-furnished house in 1986 contain?
- Show me some texts on football violence - and what 'people' think about it?
- What do the leading artists and craftsmen produce?
- What may I expect to see on a moorland walk?
- Where is the Black Hairstreak found? What does it look like?
- What are the relative popularities of leisure activities?
- How many garages *are* there in Loughborough?

## WHAT THE DOMESDAY SYSTEM INCLUDES

If you begin from scratch, you will need:

- a new videodisc player being developed by Philips Laservision
- a compatible microcomputer, eg BBC model B micromputer with suitable RGB monitor
- an interface unit incorporating a second processor
- the two videodiscs, published by BBC Enterprises

The estimated cost of the system is around £1,500 to £2,000 depending on the configuration. We must however emphasise that at this stage prices have not yet been finalised.

The Domesday System will be available in November 1986.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE TO:**

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