

look ahead

DOD TO TAKE BIDS FROM SE SUPPLIERS

DOD told all of its IBM-installation managers last month to obtain SE and training help via competitive bid, if possible, instead of negotiating sole source arrangements with Armonk. GSA issued approximately similar instructions to IBM-using civilian agencies.

These instructions may help independents — leasing companies were specifically mentioned — to get SE contracts from operators of larger military and civilian systems (360/50 and above), according to a knowledgeable source. Smaller-system operators, he adds, should have little trouble proving that sole sourcing is more economical.

DOD specifically forbade its dp managers from negotiating personal service (open-ended) contracts for SE services. DOD and GSA both said federal dp managers should not sign IBM commercial SE contracts.

The two pronouncements were inspired partly by the failure of IBM and GSA to agree on an FY '70 FSS contract. That agreement reportedly will be consummated "shortly." But even afterward, the feds will continue to insist on competitive procurement of unbundled services, unless IBM agrees to de-bundle them for government customers. Such a concession is not considered likely.

FOUR-PHASE PHASES IN NEW MIDICOMPUTER

The prototype is ready and so are plans to introduce a new midicomputer developed by Four-Phase Systems, Inc., Cupertino, Calif., which is headed by Lee Boysel, formerly manager of the MOS/LSI design engineering section at Fairchild. And MOS/LSI is used exclusively throughout the new machine, which can be multiaccessed, enabling it to drive a cluster of 32 crt keyboard terminals with "their support electronics pulled back into the semiconductor memory and shared among the cluster." During the development of its computer, Four-Phase maintained "complete" control over the topological layout of the LSI chips, maintaining its own mask making, wafer handling and packaging areas prior to testing of the finished LSI packages . . . which seems to be an answer to the problem of how to control MOS supply: Make your own.

The machine is described as a little faster and more powerful than the HP 2116A and the Honeywell 316, with a longer word length (still secret) than any of the minicomputers. Price, still to be decided, will be from \$10-15K.

WANT TO SAVE MONEY? THEN CALL YOUR BROKER

With the economy stalling out and even IBM reporting lower net for the last quarter, this might be the year of triumph for the second-hand computer dealers.

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