

Bell Labs Places Big I.B.M. Order

By GENE SMITH

Bell Telephone Laboratories, Inc., has placed a multimillion-dollar order with International Business Machines Corporation for an I.B.M. System/360 to be used by its electronic switching division.

It was also learned that the division was in the process of moving from its Holmdel, N. J., site to the new Indian Hill Laboratories at Naperville-Wheaton, Ill. A total of 750 persons are involved in the transfer.

A spokesman for Bell said the Model 360 was a "time sharing computer complex." I.B.M. spokesmen, confirming the order, explained that the 360 was "an extremely large order."

They said that the system consisted of model 67 large-scale computers, which are two-in-one installations that share a pool of four main memory systems. Each of the four

Continued on Page 46, Column 7

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Continued From Page 45

memories contains 262,536 characters of information and eight characters can be retrieved in 750 nanoseconds, or billionths of a second.

In addition, the complex uses an I.B.M. 2361 large-capacity storage unit that contains 2 million characters of information. The rate of retrieval for this unit is eight characters in eight microseconds (millionths of a second).

A time sharing system provides simultaneous access to a number of information characters for hundreds of persons in different locations with only an infinitesimal time lag in retrieval.

There are no figure available on how many bits of information the Bell Labs group might need at one time, but the selection of the I.B.M. unit is seen as tacit approval of that system for its speed and accuracy. It is known that several major manufacturers were trying to land this contract, which is valued at about \$8 million.

The new laboratories at Indian Hill are scheduled for completion in 1966 with the computer to be delivered some time next year as well.

Computer industry sources indicated there were four sites for large scale time-sharing computer installations within the Bell Laboratories organization. Three of these sites have already placed orders for time-sharing systems from the General Electric Company's computer department at Phoenix, Ariz. These will be specially modified G. E. 635 computers, each containing dual processors. The total order is believed to be in excess of \$20 million.

New Honeywell Unit

Honeywell, Inc., announced yesterday that it had developed the Honeywell 8200, which it described as an advanced, large-scale computer able to handle more than 3,000 simultaneous "conversations."

This marked the company's entry into the "time-sharing" market. The system was devised for mixed business and scientific data processing applications in which multiple access to a computer is vital.

Claude H. Smith, vice president for marketing for electronic data processing, noted that the computer market for time sharing and complex data communications was "relatively new and still small."

"However," he added, "some applications for these types are now being pursued by a few major companies and universities and will lead the way to more widespread use by industry and education in general."

Mr. Smith said the Honeywell H-8200 performs different memory operations every 750 nanoseconds.