

## Keeping Current With Technology

"Technology." Over the years, we have all heard and used this term many times. But yet, during the past year or two, it has virtually burst onto the contemporary scene with a whole new dimension and depth of meaning.

To compare the technology in our daily lives of five years ago *versus* that of today, is almost like comparing flight by hot air balloon to flight by supersonic jet aircraft. Simply put, recent changes in technology have been that great.

Every facet of our lives from work to play, to recreation, to personal living has been affected, and the developments have occurred with astonishing swiftness. Indeed, the rate of change has been as mind-boggling as the degree of change.

For example, just about a year ago, video games arrived and mushroomed with such attraction and public acceptance that investment counselors were touting the stock of all their manufacturers, the games were by far the biggest seller of the 1982 Christmas season, and video game parlors were popping up in almost every neighborhood shopping center. But now, less than a year later, we just heard a report that video games have peaked in popularity, and predictions are that the games, their franchise operations, and their manufacturers will soon experience a severe decline that will be every bit as rapid and intense as their recent, rocketing popularity.

One of the most innovative and revolutionary computer manufacturers, Osborne Computer Corporation, had a similar rapid ascendancy as it carved out a major share of the computer market of two to four years ago. But just as this column was being written, business and financial reports in the public press are describing the sudden demise of that company. It went from one of the most popular growth stocks to filing for bankruptcy within the short period of approximately six months. In explanation, a security analyst said that "time had simply passed them by." Their relatively small, portable units were a dramatic breakthrough compared with the large, floor model consoles previously available; but, in turn, those table model units were made equally obsolete by the much smaller, lighter, and more portable units that competitors came out with just a few months later.

In the pharmaceutical field, the impact of rapidly changing technology is almost as dramatic.

At a corporate level, there have been some mergers and acquisitions that at first seem strange, but upon reflection make a great deal of sense. Witness the marriage of Smith Kline & French Laboratories, and Beckman Instruments Company. Ten years ago, we could never have visualized

any common denominator between a "Spansule® Capsule" and a "DU Spectrophotometer." But today is a completely different story.

And at the level of drug dosage forms, we increasingly hear of "new drug delivery systems." Time-release implants, transdermal absorption, nasal administration, implanted drug pumps, and various other approaches to *in vivo* biological drug delivery are no longer either dreams, speculations, or theory, but are now being routinely used in patients.

Again, the suddenness of this change is literally breathtaking. Scientists and practitioners who were up-to-date a few short years ago, today find themselves embarrassingly obsolescent if they have not kept abreast of these developments.

For this reason in particular, the American Pharmaceutical Association and its subdivisions—including the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences—have chosen the theme of "Technology 2000" for the APhA and APS Annual Meeting to be held May 5–10, 1984, in Montreal, P.Q., Canada.

All aspects of the meeting—from exhibitors, to general sessions, to special presentations—will focus on and emphasize technology, its recent advances, and its impact on current pharmaceutical research, development, and practice. With respect to exhibits in particular, a special effort is being put forth to attract technology-oriented exhibitors so that the Exposition at the 1984 Annual Meeting will constitute a convenient, ready-made opportunity to see first-hand the most up-to-date equipment being put through its paces in providing modern technological benefits.

All of these offerings should go far in assisting the meeting registrants to put this new technology into mental perspective and to relate it to the way that pharmacy will be practiced and pharmaceutical research will be conducted in the 21st century.

We strongly urge all of our readers to plan to attend the 1984 Annual Meeting in order that, individually, they will not find themselves suffering the fate of some of the recently high-flying computer manufacturers who suddenly found to their dismay that "time had simply passed them by."

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