The Internet and Property

We are about to enter the Information Revolution – and if you think that we are already there you have a rude awakening awaiting for you in the next 3 to 5 years just read the newspapers of the last two weeks.

The journey to the Information revolution will be exactly the same as the journey through the Mechanical Revolution – just faster. Just as the steam engines and prime movers became smaller and distributed – so will the computer processors of today. And this is going to make a significant difference to the way we communicate and pass information. The old telephone systems will become obsolete and new *Internetworking Protocol* systems will maximise the capability of the Information Age. We will enter an age when we are permanently connected to the system and only use it when necessary. Voice and Vision and Data will cease to be three things on three networks and become one thing on one network. Point-to-point will be old-fashioned, point-to-multipoint will be commonplace and multipoint-to-multipoint not out of the question.

In the near future your home will become intelligent – your TV will become an information portal – Artificial Intelligent Agents will seek and sort information for your convenience and your consumer durables will have built-in processors and talk to each other – everything is going to become interactive. The aim of the future is *Seamless, Effortless, Ubiquitous Access* to any *Information*, on any *Topic* , at any *Time*, in any *Quantity* any *Where* that *I* want *NOW*! We will even transfer information that you have not even considered as information in the past. For example, a device that does bio-metric monitoring and passes the results as required to your doctor for action.

The demand on properties will be extensive. Can all this technology really be contemplated if the buildings continue to be Information Deserts? All buildings have water, gas, electricity, sewage installed not only to meet today's demands but those of the future as well – but what do we include for IT? – A *phone socket*!

We will even carry information with us in the near future and exchange it even in public places. The advent of the smart card technologies will allow early applications but soon there will be embedded chips within the human body carrying personal information such as your medical and genome makeup. It is imperative that new buildings (and even retro-fitted older ones) must be able to remotely access this information to service the needs of the carriers and safeguard them. Just imagine a building that knows exactly who is inside. In the case of fire and complete role-call is instantly available. Or an airport terminal that acknowledges your arrival and announces that you have completed your ticket-less check-in already. Carrying such information about ourselves will establish adequate security systems to let us transfer information, even in public places, with confidence.

Soon all our personal communication will be via mobile terminals, and the property market will need to address the seamlessness of communications. I need to be able to start a conversation in my office, transfer to my car and conclude it at home. Buildings need to be

aware of my presence and pass that information to the system so that I obtain all my information without having to laboriously enter data into that system.

The *e-*marketplace is upon us and will become increasingly important. It is essential that as we enter this marketplace we understand how to differentiate our companies and products and become trusted participants in that marketplace. Companies are unlikely in the near future to use large factories or offices as the art of production becomes virtualised. Where are the smaller facilities available by the day or the week? The new *e-*companies can not wait for new construction and might no longer require accommodation next week. They want to plug in and play. New ways of working will involve Virtual Teams and we need to investigate the implications of remote working and its demands on the property industry.

The advent of machines that talk and listen will greatly affect our interactions with buildings. I see in the near future your approaching a light switch and negotiating a lighting level. The switch then sends an *e-*mail message to the light bulb. By about 2010 computer processor chips will cost about a penny each – everything will have a processor on board and will actively be involved in our lives, tirelessly attending to all those information chores.

In the 21st century the number of services and facilities will be endless. The question we need to be asking is, "will our buildings of the future be part of the Information Revolution, or just bricks and mortar boxes?" The occupants of the future building must not only be able to use the facilities, <u>but</u> want to use the facilities.

Are you ready to build the 21st century?