

## A COMPUTERIZED WORLD

Since the first computer was made in the late fifties, the technology has developed extremely. Computers which took the place of a living-room then, are now being made in credit card-formats. More and more areas are being taken over by the computer.

As computers are capable of handling large amounts of data in a very short time, they are well suited for word-processing. I guess that it won't be long till all the paper-archives are replaced by magnetic tapes and diskettes. A diskette can contain much more data than a written page, and it takes less place! It is possible to get the Norwegian telephone book on just one diskette.

In near future, a new area will be taken over by computers, namely maps. Different routes are stored on one single compact-disk. Imagine, simply insert the CD into the CD-driver in your car, and tell the computer where to go. The rest will be done automatically. This will be a safer, faster, and more comfortable way to travel.

Another new area, called "virtual reality" is currently being tested. This is a way to simulate reality on a monitor. In order to feel this so-called reality, you have to wear special electronic glasses and an electronic suit. Fastened to the suit are sensors, which send information to the main computer. This computer works with the data and displays them on the electronic spectacles. This is a technique which use three-dimensional views, therefore the scenery seems incredibly realistic. If you want to be a boxer, simply change the scenery on the main computer, and you are in the ring.

Today, many kids have got video games. You could say these games are the present's answer to ludo and monopoly. In a way, it is a great advantage that the kids are being presented to computers at an early age, because they will definitely have to use them later, when they start to work. In the future there will be few occupations which won't use computers, one way or another. But the videogames are often being presented as something negative, which hinder the kids from doing homework and other more useful activities. This partially true, if they do much of it. But generally, I think the young people's contact with computers is positive.

In Norway today, it is getting more common to have a computer at home. You can use a personal computer to keep household-budgets or other economics. It is also possible to get in touch with your bank and transfer money while you're in your sitting-room.

It is possible to contact other databases and gather information from them. The use of computers has lead to other criminal actions. "Hacking" is one of them. A "hacker" steals and manipulates information from other databases. These crimes can be very harmful. In The USA, hackers have managed to break into NASA's database.

The computer-programmes, the software, are extremely high priced, sometimes they are even more expensive than the hardware. Therefore, it is not unusual to make copies of these programmes. This is strictly illegal, but nobody seems to care, because it is difficult to control it. Software producers lose BILLIONS of dollars each year because of this. Many methods have been invented to prevent this, but since the "hackers" often are more intelligent than those who make the software, I doubt that there will ever be a successful way to hinder this.