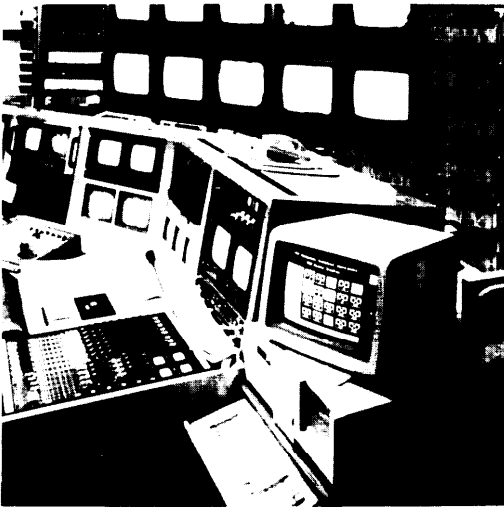# Information Technology and OTA

The Office of Technology Assessment is an information resource for Congress. Within OTA itself, information management and technology are a high priority in gathering information, analyzing it, and producing high-quality reports for the Congress. In FY1991, OTA emphasized the importance of information management by reorganizing the Operations Division to include a group, Information Management and Publishing Services, which combines the Telecommunications and Information Systems office, the Information Center, the Publishing Office, and the Information Marketing office. The group is responsible for office automation support, information retrieval and research services, publishing services, and dissemination of OTA information and products.

The introduction of microcomputer technology in office systems has dramatically affected the quality and productivity of OTA. Since the first personal computer was purchased in 1984, the number of publications produced by OTA has increased from an average of 35 in 1984 to an average of 45-50 in 1991. Gradually, each OTA staff workstation was equipped with a personal computer and a local area network was established. The advantages this system has brought include more efficient communication of information within the agency, higher productivity for research staff, a higher proportion of research staff to support staff, and streamlined publishing services.

Information technology in OTA also includes sophisticated use of information retrieval technology, including on-line access to research databases from each workstation and research use of CD-ROM databases in the Information Center. In FY1991, OTA gained access for each workstation to the Internet international research network, advancing our abilities to communicate with the research community worldwide.

Looking to the future, OTA will continue to explore the leading edge of information technology for improvements in our own productivity and dissemination of information. Electronic delivery of OTA publications via on-line information systems and international research networks is currently being explored. Advanced systems for transfer of information and communication within the legislative branch are in the planning stages with the coordination of offices and agencies across Capitol Hill. OTA does more than assess technology-the application of new technologies in producing high-quality, cost-efficient information for the Congress is a top priority.