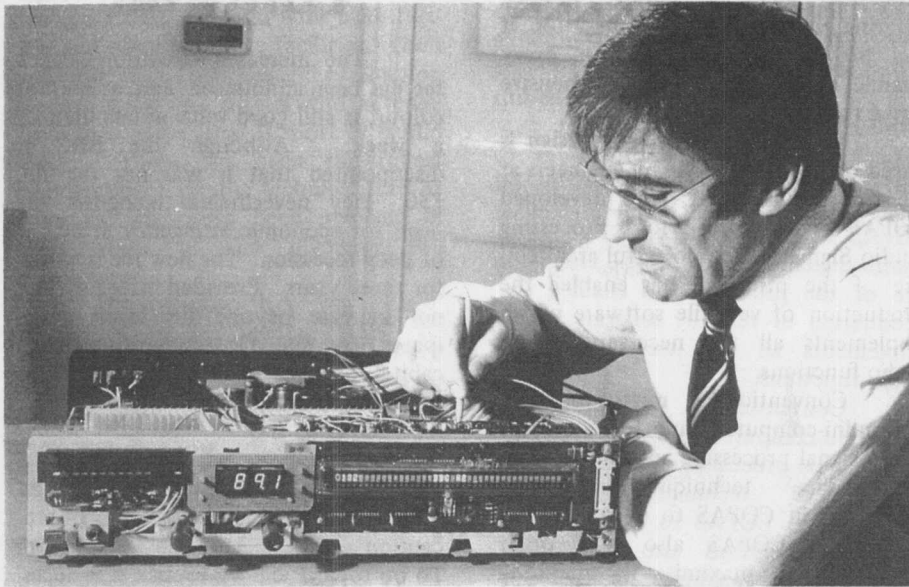


JEE

# ENG INF

The Quarterly For BBC Engineering Staff

## RADIO - DATA will aid tuning



Mike Buckley, Research Department, checks the operation of the display panel on a prototype radio-data receiver.

Managing Director Radio, Aubrey Singer, recently announced a firm policy of making all services properly audible on vhf by the late 1980s. As well as providing country-wide coverage, it is necessary to help listeners tune to the vhf station and programme that they want; and Research Department has recently unveiled the latest stage in its development of a new experimental system called radio-data. Radio-data could combine with microchip technology in future radio receivers to give a new dimension to radio listening.

In one version of tomorrow's receiver, a small built-in ancillary electronic display would indicate the station to which the receiver was tuned. Another form might use a voice-synthesiser to give the same information. Even portable and car radios could have this facility for little extra cost.

Alternatively, radio-data, combined with electronic intelligence in the form of a microprocessor in the receiver, might completely automate the tuning process. The listener would simply select the desired station or

programme and the receiver would automatically search and find it, without the need for the listener to know anything about frequencies or wavelengths. Car radios would retune automatically as they moved from one area to another.

Although primarily intended as a tuning aid, radio-data also has limited capacity to carry other information, such as programme or music titles or sports scores for display on the receiver.

The system could even give information about future programmes and the listener could pre-select those he wanted. Whenever a chosen programme was broadcast, the receiver would switch itself on and select the right station.

The key to all this is a data signal which is added to the sound-programme signal at the vhf transmitters. These data signals cannot be heard at all by listeners but suitably equipped future radio-receivers could decode the data and use it to drive the display or control the receiver.

The use of vhf for radio-data is preferred because of the much greater information capacity available there, as well as being in line with the BBC's aim 'continued on Page 3'

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