

Joint Benetton-Engineering release

The "Millennium bug" resolved two years ahead of deadline BENETTON HAS CHOSEN ENGINEERING FOR THE TRANSITION TO THE YEAR 2000

UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.

Ponzano - Milan, 18 November 1997 - The Benetton Group has already successfully adapted its computer systems to deal with the Millennium problem. In fact, in 1996, an important project was initiated with purpose of foreseeing and preventing all the problems connected with the transition to the new millennium. The adjustment of the entire date system from two- to four-digits, affecting 6,000 programs and around 6 million lines of code, required a significant investment in terms of both financial and human resources.

Most computers around the world, if not properly re-programmed, will cease to function correctly on 1st January 2000, a date which the programs will read as 1st January 1900. Adjusting software to the year 2000 is a problem faced by most companies around the world with some experts putting the cost of the operation at about 300 billion dollars.

The reasons which prompted Benetton to tackle this problem in plenty of time are two-fold. The first is strategic: the company intended to resolve the problem of the next Millennium early so it could concentrate on the other important issue of the Millennium - the introduction of the Euro: the second is "opportunistic", since it can be presumed that as the year 2000 draws closer costs will increase.

The project, split into sub-systems, has been designed with the help of Engineering Ingegneria Informatica, the parent company of Gruppo Engineering, Italy's leading software company, who, as part of the activities surrounding the year 2000, have perfected a solution - Change Now 2000 - which uses the Recyc2000 product, already chosen by important European companies.

The entire project involves a significant commitment in terms of time, people and resources that have to be tackled with typical industrial practice. The initial phase involves the analysis and inventory of all programs requiring up-dating, followed by the adjustments and, finally, testing and installation. To date, sales and shipment programs have been adjusted, tested and set up; those covering the agency network are at an advanced phase of adaptation.