

## PREFACE

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# *Will There Be a Paradigm Shift in the World of AVN?*



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It is currently the age of IT. Remarkable things are happening with the spread of personal computers and mobile phones. Not only is the world overflowing with the hardware of the products themselves turning one's eye to software and services, one sees that the world is also going through dramatic changes in those regards. Internet related businesses utilizing PCs and mobile phones are expanding with phenomenal momentum, bringing major changes in business models. Who foresaw the rise and flourishing of day trading in stocks via the Internet? Or the spread of Internet shopping and Internet auctions? The world is truly changing in ways that go far beyond what we can foresee.

Let's switch the topic to manufacturing. The dramatic changes mentioned above may be said, quite simply, to be gifts from the technological progress made with the Internet and computers. But I would like to point out that this history of development has given rise to a kind of paradigm shift in what is termed the model of information processing. Going back twenty years in time, the world was at the height of the mainframe era. All information underwent "centralized" processing by bulky general-purpose computers called "mainframes". Ten years after that, with the rapid development of the Internet and PCs, we had passed into the age of "distributed" processing. Large quantities of information were stored in individual PCs that were interconnected via the Internet, and thus underwent "distributed" processing. But as countervailing factors there arose the threat of computer viruses and the problem of leakage of personal information, which were taken up by the media as Internet community problems on numerous occasions that I have no

time to recount. These countervailing factors initiated another trend from "distributed" back to "centralized". This can be seen in the appearance of new PC terminals that have no hard disks, and backbone servers connected directly to the Internet to perform "centralized" processing. What this amounts to is that as regards handling of information the world of IT has undergone repeated paradigm shifts from "centralized" to "distributed" and back again to "centralized".

Now let us return to the main topic. What are things like in the world of AVN, our mainstay product? AVN have always been somewhat like a personal computer fitted in a vehicle. Numerous services including car navigation and entertainment such as audio and TV are provided via AVN to the driver. It is expected that the AVN will continue to become even more sophisticated and multi-functional from here on, through features such as the monitoring of vehicle diagnosis and security systems for safety and reassurance. But on the other hand, as networks become higher in speed they will probably be used to distribute the latest map data and multimedia contents to AVNs. And conversely, diagnostic information on "distributed" vehicles will probably be sent automatically via networks to centers where it will be subjected to remote "centralized" monitoring. If that happens, what kind of division of roles will there be between the AVNs and the centers' systems? To put it another way: Will there be a paradigm shift from "distributed" to "centralized" regarding information, as happened in the IT world? If so, what kind of desirable forms will AVN be required to take?

I believe that we should keep our eyes on this trend, in order to continue to lead the industry with our AVN in the future.

*Keiji Suzuki*