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## Guide to the Photo Data Systems Incorporated records

### Collection number: X3598.2006

Computer History Museum

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Date Completed:

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Photo Data Systems Incorporated records

**Dates:** 1960-1969

**Collection number:** X3598.2006

**Collection Size:** 0.25 linear feet3 folders

**Repository:** Computer History Museum

Mountain View, CA 94043

**Abstract:** The Photo Data Systems Incorporated records are comprised of administrative papers and records, design drawings and promotional materials regarding the Slide-a-Mat machine invented in the 1960's. It was an early system demonstrating the concept of shopping from the comfort of an armchair and push button shopping.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

Collection is open for research.

### Publication Rights

The Computer History Museum can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claims of the copyright holder. Permission to copy or publish any portion of the Computer History Museum's collection must be given by the Computer History Museum.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of Item], [Item Date], Photo Data Systems Incorporated records, Lot X3598.2006, Box [#], Folder [#], Computer History Museum

### Provenance

Slide-a-Mat documentation was donated by Shawn Carolan-Abell and Viki Carolan-Gonzales to the Computer History Museum in 2006.

### Biography / Administrative History

Around 1965, Ann and William Carolan invented the Slide-a-Mat machine and formed Photo Data Systems Incorporated. The machine's cabinet was 3 feet by 4 feet by 4 feet, and contained two 12 inch screens, which displayed pictures and detailed information on products ranging from appliances, furniture, houses, and vacation packages. In front of the machine, buttons allowed customers to navigate through different products or product features such as color and size. To place orders, the Slide-a-Mat included a telephone with an optical sense card reader and a set of cards. When ready, the customer slid a vendor-specific plastic card into the telephone which automatically dialed the vendor. The Slide-a-Mat machine introduced the terms "push button shopping" and "shopping from armchairs" long before online commerce.

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The company had hoped to place machines in public places such as airports and shopping centers.

The Slide-a-Mat was patented in the 1960s, but bankruptcy after facing difficult market conditions led the company to go under.

### **Scope and Content of Collection**

The Photo Data Systems Incorporated records are composed of administrative records, design drawings and promotional materials from the 1960s. The records are divided into three folders and total 0.5 linear feet, in one box. All folders are arranged alphabetically by title.

The first folder is Administrative Papers, circa 1965. The folder contains Photo Data Systems Incorporated's organizational structure, goals and exhibit agreements. It also contains a letter from MAR Enterprise.

The second folder is Design Drawings, circa 1965. The folder contains two copies of the Model C-1 schematic drawing.

The third folder is Promotional Materials, circa 1965. The folder contains two idea catalogs from different showrooms, Photo-Data Selectors promotional material, Slide-a-mat business stationary and 4 copies of Slide-a-Mat brochures.

### **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Carolan, Ann J.

Carolan, William

Photo Data Systems Incorporated

Shopping

Slide-a-Mat machine

### **Separated Material**

Physical objects including the original prototype machine and many publicity photographs, may be found in the CHM collections database at <http://archive.computerhistory.org/search/> .

102660220 Administrative materials 1965 ca.

102660222 Schematic model c-1 July 30, 1965

102660221 Promotional Materials 1965 ca.