

# Meet Isao Ima

## Working out of Belleville he plans news speedup on Japanese technology to benefit North American industry

By BILL WHITE LAW  
Staff Reporter

North American industry can only benefit from the plan of one Belleville's newest resident.

In Japan, a small electronics firm develops a radical innovation in the field of semi-conductors that marks an important step forward in high-technology research and development.

The discovery could have been put to good use by North American companies. But by the time word of it finally reached them the technology was outdated.

While the scenario is fictional, it's a good example of the communications barrier that plagues North American interests seeking to learn more about Japanese technological innovation.

And although there is currently no easy way for Americans and Canadians to quickly apprise themselves of such information, Isao Ima is setting out to change that.

Ima is in the process of establishing a bimonthly newsletter that will provide the North American technological market with comprehensive and timely information about what's happening in Japan.

The newsletter, says Ima, could be the initial step of breaking down the language barriers that often preclude

North Americans from making good use of Japanese research.

Through the project, Ima is seeking to redress the imbalance that currently gives the Japanese unlimited access to North American science and technology.

Ima, who had been toying with the idea for several years, was finally convinced of its viability by a recent series of American congressional hearings that explored the pitfalls of the "information gap."

The consensus that emerged from the hearings was that published information in North American journals is readily available to Japanese who speak English. By contrast, the wealth of material published in Japan is generally only available to North Americans "through a filter of abstracts, summaries and translations all too frequently done by non-technical personnel."

The hearings also determined that delays of months — and even years — following publication in Japan are not uncommon.

Ima believes that his newsletter can lend a balance to the information exchange. And he feels Belleville is a good location from which to start his publishing venture.

One major benefit is the city's loca-

tion between Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal and its proximity to the large number of research centres

stretched along the American eastern seaboard.

Although Canada and the United States are the other's largest trading partner, each is turning to Japan with a view to expanding the horizons of its economy. And there is friction generated by the trade imbalance weighted heavily in favor of the Japanese with both countries.

Despite telecommunications systems that make information transmission virtually instantaneous, it's important that the right kind of information finds its way into the right hands, leading to the creation of new jobs and new ideas, says Ima.

And while Japanese government agencies exist to provide such information, the commonly-held Canadian view that the private sector does things better than the public sector is also a Japanese sentiment, he added.

The primary barrier is one of language. Proficient technical translators are difficult to find, says Ima, who will do much of his own translation work. The new city resident has impressive credentials. He has a Masters degree in systems engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, a Bachelors degree in mechanical engineering from Japan's Gunma University and is a graduate of both the American Graduate School of International Management and the International Management School in Colorado.

But the newsletter's value extends beyond the information it will offer subscribers. Those interested in more detailed information can ask Ima for further material which he will gather from an established network of contacts in Japan.

At the outset, the newsletter will deal primarily with information relating to electronic technology but will soon expand its scope. And Ima

hopes it will be of interest to more than people involved in the world of high-tech. Investors looking for new fields will find its information useful, he predicts.

The first hurdle Ima must clear, however, is establishing his subscribers' list, which he would like to see rapidly grow to his 7,000 copy target.

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