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ISSUE 210

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PRODUCTION Manager: Darren Thomas Designers Richard Davies,

Spencer Pugsley, Paul Hand EDITORIAL TEL: 021-706 1433

Editor: Nigel Cummings Contributors

Dave Burns, S V Copestake, Nick David, Preston Fitch, Mike Ganley, Clive Gifford, Peter Hayes, Henriques, Matthew Holbrook, Evelyn Mills, Anthony Robertson, Jonathan Russell, James Sheet, Dr John Wase, Dr J G Wright

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NEC 286 IBM compatible, brand new with makers warranty, 42M hard drive, 3.5in floppy, vga monitor, keyboard, MS-DOS, manuals, £330, 081-645-

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BOOK: PETER NORTONS windows 3.1 power programming techniques 2nd edition 1992, Norton YAO, includes companion source code disk, retails £52 only £24, 031-458-3619.

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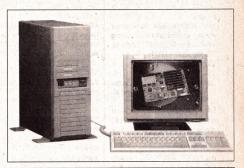
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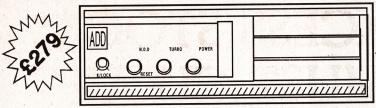
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# Stephen Copestake is 'Making a Date...'

This is the second instalment in our occasional examination of LocoScript Professional, Locomotive Software's new upgrade to LocoScript PC.

In this section of the series, we discuss LocoScript Professional's date options in some length. Most of the established and relatively expensive IBM PC word processors allow the user to insert dates into documents by the use of one or two keys. LocoScript Professional is now no exception to this.

From within the document being edited, pressing [Ctrl] and [F8] together inserts the system date. This is the date held in the computer's internal clock and retained when the machine is switched off. It is the current date. You would, of course, normally use this function when typing a letter. Typing [Ctrl] followed by [F8] - unless the process has been customised - produces a date in the following format:

Day in full [space] day number of the month [space] month [space] and year in full

LocoScript Professional provides an extension to this function by making special use of the 'blocks and phrases' facility. This feature of LocoScript PC(and, of course, of LocoScript PCW) has been extended to include an additional phrase. You now have phrases 0 to 9 and 1]. The new phrase holds date information, both textual and formating. To access this from within the document, press [Ctrl] + [F7]; this calls up the phrase menu.

Unless you tell LocoScript Professional otherwise, the information held in phrase [.] will be the date on which the file was created. This may, or may not, be what you need. This setting can be altered by pressing [F9] and going into the document set-

up. From Document set-up, press [F8] (Options) and you're presented with three settings that concern us here:

Document Date
Document Time
Set to current time and date.

The Document Date and time will refer automatically to the creation of the file. The option 'Set to current time and date into these values ie, the current values. Other dates and times - if you need them - can be inserted manually from within the [F8] menu. The key is, the [F8] Date and Time options within Document setup determine what appears within the document when [Ctrl] + [F7] options are invoked.

# Flexibilty

This process is quite flexible. For instance, [Ctrl] + [F7] followed by [.], [/] and [EN-TER] produces the same effect as [Ctrl] + [F8]. More on this later.

There is also a further, ancillary [F8] option. You can elect to retain the alterations to the date and time, or you can have the program update these when a document is next edited.

These options can seem rather complex at first. Using them, however, is actually quite simple.

You might think that inserting the date of file creation would not be of much use. Actually, it can be rather handy. One use, of

instance, is to insert the date of creation of a file into a footer. This has a value for writers producing articles or stories. Of course, the PC automatically records the date and time of file creation and these are accessible from within the Disc Manager screen. However, having these values appear on the manuscript is decidedly useful.

We said that LocoScript Professional takes, among other things, the format for dates and times from the [.] phrase. The question now arises, how can

the user alter the format? The answer is quite simple; you have to insert the relevant codes into a document (preferably a template), which avoids having to do this time after time) and copy and save them as Phrase [.]. The codes are inserted into the document by pressing the [++] key followed by [DT] for date and [TM] for time. Pressing [+] followed by DT and [ENTER] produces a menu from which various date formats can be chosen. As an illustration, the name of the day can be inserted and /or the number. The month can be entered in full or as an

abbreviation, and/or as a number...

It is essential to ensure that each code is separated by a space. It is also possible to customise dates in line with normal formatting procedures. For instance, the suffix (e.g. -th), if chosen, can be inserted as a superscript.

There is a further dimension to this. Since LocoScript Professional stores date and time information, for its own purpose, as codes, it is also possible to have these codes inserted into a document. In this way, for instance, with the system date codes inserted in a document, whenever the document is opened for editing, the current date will automatically appear in the format that has been specified. This is achieved as follows:

Open a document for editing and press [F9]. Now press [ENTER] to select DocumentSet-up. From within Document Setup, press [F8] to produce the 'Options' menu and then move the cursor down to 'Set to current time and date'. Press [ENTER] and these values appears against Document Date and Document Time. Since, however, we don't want these dates to be crystalised (we want them to be updated each time the document is opened), move the cursor down to 'Keep these values'. Pressing ENTER here produces a further menu. From this, choose 'Update the Time and Date' and press ENTER. Now press [F10] to confirm the alternation. Press [F10] again, followed by [ENTER], to return to the main editing

Press [Ctrl] + [F7] now and the system date duly appears under phrase [.]. To in-

sert this information into a document as codes, press [.] and [ENTER]. If you want the system date to appear, but as text rather than codes, type [.] followed [/] and [ENTER].

LocoScript Professional's Date and Time Insertion facilities are very elastic, and are on a par with anything else on offer in the PC world. They make the program even more useful for writers, and alike.

LocoScript Professional is available from Locomotive Software, Dorking Business Park, Dorking, Surrey,

RH4 1YL. Tel: 0306 740606. Price £99.00 plus the dreaded VAT. Users of LocoScript PC can upgrade for just £29.95 + VAT.



## STOP PRESS

If you have version 1.00, 1.01, 1.02 or 1.03 of LocoScript Professional, you should obtain an upgrade from Locomotive Software.

A minor bug that sometimes caused problems with date insertion has now been fixed.

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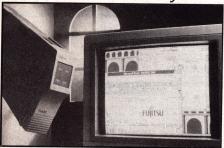
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# WINDOWS FAXIET



Following the successful launch of its FaxJet hardware and DOS transmission software, Fujitsu Europe has launched a new Windows package which is claimed to be a fraction of the cost of traditional network Windows fax solutions.

Faxjet/Windows, which can also be used in stand-alone mode, is also claimed to be one of the easiest systems both to install and to use.

It is a package which works in conjunction with FaxJet hardware which interfaces with a standard laser printer to provide the added advantage of plain paper fax reception.

The system can be used stand alone or in a networked environment, providing fax transmission facilities to anyone that has access to a FaxJet connected printer.

FaxJet/Windows installs just like a print driver allowing users to select "print" from any Windows application to send a fax with all font attributes preserved. The fax appears as a print file to the network, making it compatible with all major networks including Novell, LANtastic and LAN Manager. It is also compatible with simple peripheral sharing devices.

The FaxJet hardware has a two inch footprint for unobtrusive installation beside a laser printer. As well as working with all Fujitsu laser and inkjet printers. FaxJet can be used by HP LaserJet Series II and III laser printers and compatibles; and with HP DeskJet inkjet printers and compatibles.

It comes as standard with IMb of memory (upgradeable to 4Mb) for storage of incoming faxes and handles all dialling and transmission functions for outgoing faxes. The FaxJet/Windows software is priced at £125, and the associated FaxJet hardware at £795. For more information please contact Fujitsu on 081-573-4444.

# **AMD-INTEL News**

A federal magistrate, sitting as a federal court judge, has ruled that the appropriate forum for resolving the 386 contract dispute between Advanced Micro Devices and Intel Corporation is the Californian court system. U.S. Magistrate Judge Patricia V. Trumbull granted AMD's motion to stay Intel's federal 386 copyright infringements uit and denied motion for partial summary judgement.

The case involves a lawsuit

brought by Intel against AMD infringed Intel's copyrighted microcode for 386 microprocessors. A court appointed arbitrator earlier this year awarded AMD a "permanent, royalty free, non-exclusive non transferable worldwide right ... under any and all Intel copyrights, patents, trade secrets and maskwork rights contained in the current reverse engineered 386 family of micro processors".

# **NEW SCREEN CLEAN**

Office cleaning equipment supplier Sapona has launched a new range of advanced screen cleaning products to help computer VDU users in the fight against display screen eyestrain, headaches and fatigue.

The launch comes as new EC health and safety directives urge operators to take preventative measures - like ensuring screens are kept clean - to avoid the health risks caused by long periods staring at the units.

A screen clouded with static, ingerprints, grease and dust will make matters worse, distorting the information and inevitably leading to mistakes, eyestrain, headaches and general fatigue. Regular cleaning with Sapona products will tackle many of the problems.

The new screen clean range has been specially developed for use with VDU screens to clean thoroughly without scouring off the screen's own delicate protective coating, which standard cleaning fluids destroy inadvertently causing more screen glare and flicker.

Sapona screen cleaning products are also available in a handy mini-briefcase kit for around £10.99, with screen wipes and sprays available from

around £3. These prices are quite reasonable as the product appears superior to many proprietary cleansers currently available

The screen cleaning products are part of Sapona's new range of computer and screen care products which includes computer cleaning wallet kits for both 3½" and 5½" dis 5½" dissectives, CFC-free environmentally friendly pump action sprays (250ml), screen wipe sachets in 100, 50 and 40 packs and a selection of cleaning accessories.

Innovative new Mini-Briefcase kits are also available containing all the necessary cleaning materials to clean and maintain PCs for over three months, including keyboards, casings, disc drives and screens.

The kit is packaged in a strong compactPVC case, which can be stored easily and safely when not in use. Kits are available for 3½" and 5½" drives at a recommended selling price of £13.61 (+VAT) each.

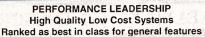
Sapona products are currently available from all good office stationers or office supplies catalogues; or telephone Sapona on 0384-424441 for stockists.





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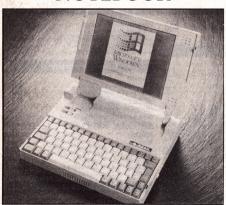
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# Rays & Views

# ADAPTABLE NOTEBOOK



Mesh Computers introduce a new notebook, the highly versatile M-386SXL 25MHz, that has been designed to make adaptations by the user as simple as possible.

Many parts normally buried deep inside the casing are now easily accessible. These design features are sure to appeal to notebook users, offering convenience, upgradability and ease of maintenance.

Without opening the case the user can extend the 4Mb RAM to 8Mb RAM, install a 80387SX Coprocessor upgrade, to replace the 80Mb hard disc.

The 10" high resolution LCD VGA screen simply lifts from the unit when necessary, to re-

place the screen takes only a few seconds.

Power supply is provided by rechargeable NiCad batteries, the quick charge 15 volts AC adapter can charge the battery pack during operation of the computer.

The M-386SXL comes complete with fully installed MSDOS 5.0, Windows 3.1 and MS compatible mouse.

The many options include a pocket Fax/Modem card, extra battery pack, car lighter adapter and an external 5.25 inch floppy disc drive.

The M-386SXL sells at £1095, for more information please call Mesh Computers on 081 452 1111.

## MATHS FOR ALL

AccessMaths from Northwest SEMERC\* and the ACE Centre is a new software package that provides users with poor manual dexterity with keyboard, mouse and trackerball access to the drawing facilities and measuring tools required for the National Curriculum at Key stages 2, 3, and 4. The package also features a number of mathematical activities for younger learners.

Maths tools such as a ruler, a compass, which children with physical disabilities find difficult to manipulate, are represented onscreen to allow the user to measure the distances and angles in their drawings. AccessMathsis designed for use with a BBC 128 and costs £30. For more information please contact Martin Littler on 061-627-4469.

## **OCE LASERS**

Oce-Printing System (UK) Limited launches the Oce 6500 and 6450 laser printers. Unparalleled in the market place, these printers are the first to offer the latest in network technology combined with true 600 dpi (dots per inch) resolution. The Oce 6500 and 6450 are designed to receive, store and process data atspeed from a variety of sources thereby relieving the user's system of traffic.

Offering full Adobe PostScript, the Oce 6500 prints A4 at17pm (pages perminute) with double sided printing as an option (at up to 15ppm). The Oce 6450 provides PostScript Levels 1 and 2 and prints A4 up to 8 pages per minute and A3 at up to 4.6ppm.

Users may select between resolutions of 300dpi and 600dpi on both printers as their application requires.

An Intel 80960CA RISC based internal controller runs at 25MHz in each printer and utilises proprietary Crown Technology. This allows the Oce 6500 and 6450 to process PostScript files at unsurpassed speeds over other printers in their class. Interfaces available comprise Standard LocalTalk. RS232C serial and parallel and additional optional interfaces provide compatibility with a wide variety of computer platforms including PC's, Macintosh and Unix workstations, DEC systems and IBM mainframes.

Support for Ethernet net-

works such as DECnet, TCP/ IP, EtherTalk and NetWare of fered via optional interface cards. Printer emulations provided comprise HP-PCL Level 4, HP-GL and CCITT Group 4. Two exceptional features are standard on the Oce 6500 and 6450 laser printers:

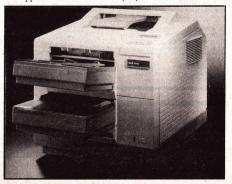
\*ESP (Emulation Sensing Processor) allows the printers to recognise the incoming data and automatically invoke the required printer language. This feature makes each Oce laser printer an ideal shared resource for multi-host, multi-network environments.

\*SIO (Simultaneous Interface Operation) allows all interfaces on the printers to receive data simultaneously.

In terms of memory, the Oce 6500 is equipped with 8 Mbyte : RAM (upgradeable to 16Mb) and 1 Mbyte ROM as standard and the Oce 6450 with 12 Mbyte RAM (upgradeable to 32Mb), 4 Mbyte ROM. SCSI connections support both internal and external hard disks.

Both printers offer a range of licensed, resident Adobe typefaces in conjunction with standard HP fonts. Two cartidge slots accommodate optional plug in cartridges for additional typefaces and emulations.

The Oce 6450 is available from £3695 and the Oce 6500 from £5995. For further information please contact: Emma David Oce-Printing Systems (UK) Limited on 081-502-0038



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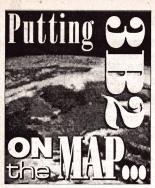
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In this issue Stephen Copestake, continues his occasional series, looking at 3B2.

This is the second instalment in our examination of 3B2, one of the latest known Desk Top Publishing packages on the IBM PC, and undeniably the most powerful. It's probably the most powerful DTP package anywhere.

It also exists on a variety of other machines, in a format which is identical in all of its incarnations. The only - slight - exception to this is its Apple Mac likeness, where some concessions are made to the way its users are accustomed to work. The definition 'DTP application' may not be altogether suitable for 3B2, because it's so much more than that. In fact, it's a complete Publishing System aimed at Publishers as well as home users. It has a truly amazing variety of options, and the degree of customisation is quite extraordinary. A lot of this arises from the consideration 3B2 gives to the needs of professional typesetters. Colour separation, spot colours and a whole lot more.

In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, 3B2 is amazingly easy to use. Everything is intuitive, and there are none f those arbitrary divisions which characterise so many DTP programs. For instance, in 3B2 the procedural division between text and graphics is almost nonexistent. It is often true with other applications that text frames can't be combined with graphic frames: it's a case of never the twain shall meet. And it's very often impossible to treat ordinary text as a frame. The pity of this is that it's frequently very convenient to select and move/ copy text sections with the click of a mouse rather than using laborious cut and paste techniques. If you want to move a graphic frame, say, you can normally select it with a mouse and move it as a block. But most programs make you treat text as something entirely different.

One of the main reasons why 3B2 is so versatile is that it's based entirely on mac-

ros. Everything, even the menus, is a macro. Every command can be entered -from within the pull down macro bar (accessed by pressing the [Esc] key) - as a macro. For instance, entering [TSAVE] will save a file.

The macro element goes far beyond this, however. The entire 3B2 system is configured by the user. Many of the possible commands can only be accessed by macro instructions. The result of this is that the user of 3B2 is drawn into the program in a way that few other programs manage to achieve. You have the feeling, in effect, of sitting on the top of a very extensive, and alluring, iceberg just waiting to be explored. It's even possible to alter 3B2's menu structure. Commands can be converted into foreign languages - or customised to individual requirements - very easily. This is possible because every 3B2 file is, in essence, ASCII. Full 8 bit ASCII too, which is unusual. 3B2 document files do, however, have a series of special codes thrown in for good measure: these are 'tags' and textstream markers. 3B2 makes great use of tags and text-streams. More of these in later instalments, 3B2's menu files are, however, pure ASCII and can be edited from within a text editor or standard word processor.

Let's look at some of 3B2's editing facilities. We'll take, purely as an illustration, something that very few DTP packages will provide automatically: dropped capitals. Dropped capitals are a very useful device in typographical work: they set off opening paragraphs in just about every book. There is, in fact, quite an art to designing them manually. Make them too small or large, and the effect is destroyed. Place them too close to the rest of the host paragraph, or have them encroach into the left margin, and the result looks horrible. The shape of the letter enters into it too. Some letters, like [J] look awful because of their design.

#### **Entirely Unique**

The result of this is that, even after considerable practice, manually inserting dropped capitals in programs like PageMaker 4 (which, in spite of its fame, has no facility for doing this automatically) is a lengthy, not to say laborious, process. With 3B2, it's a cinch. Not only this, but 3B2 also automates dropped words. In this, it seems to be entirely unique.

Let's look at how it's done. At the top of the 3B2 editing screen are four icons. These represent:

> Document Mode Page Mode Text Mode Graphics Mode

To the right of these are a variable number of sub-icons. They vary as the main icons are selected with the mouse. From this rather small number of icons arises an amazing abundance of options!

The one we need now is Text Mode. Click on this, and ensure your cursor is in the relevant paragraph. You now have four available sub-icons. Click on the third from the left (it depicts a page of text) and the Paragraphs Menu pops up. This is very extensive, although there is some crossover

with another of the sub-icons. From this menu, click on [Structure] and the following options are open:

Indented/Normal
Outdented
Centred
Flush Right
Drop capital
Drop word
Bullet
Tabbed

#### **Interesting Options**

Some interesting options here. 'Outdenting' is something not seen on word processors, or indeed many DTP packages. This technique extends text beyond the left margin while the rest of a paragraph maintains its normal proportions. 'Flush Right' is where text is aligned along the right margin while remaining jagged on the left.

Click on 'Drop word', a sub-menu appears with the following boxes:

> No of lines to indent No of lines to drop

You need to indent dropped words and capitals by at least three lines to have any real effect. If 'No of lines to drop' is set to more than zero, the dropped word will encroach on the text below.

The result of this operation is very impressive, certainly much easier than doing this manually. There is one further point to mention. When you've told 3B2 what parameters you want, there are two ways of confirming the operation:

> Make New Style Update Style

If you opt for Update Style, all of the paragraphs within your document that carry the same style designation will have their first word dropped. This won't normally be what you want: dropped words have to be used sparingly for best effect. Select 'Make New Style' instead, tell 3B2 what name to give the new style, and the details of the additional style are added to the list displayed on the left of the screen when Text Mode is in operation. To use the new style for any further paragraphs that need this enhancement, simply click in the relevant text and select the style - from the list - with the mouse.

More on 3B2's cornucopia of editing facilities in the next instalment.

Advent are in the process of bringing out 'DIAMOND', an upgrade to 3B2. 3B2 will still be available, however. 'DIAMOND' should have around 70 improvements. More on DIAMOND in due course.

3B2 is available from : Advent Desktop Computing Ltd, "3B2" Business Park, Westlea, Swindon, Wilts., SN5 7DH. Ring Advent for price details. Tel: 0793-511-432

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Matthew Holbrook finds a way of tapping all that information held in a DOS directory listing

One of the most limited MS-DOS commands is, as strange as it may sound, good old DIR. This command goes right back to the early days of MS-DOS.

For most of its life it has provided just two switches - pause screen and wide screen. Hardly revolutionary, is it?

Only with the release of MS-DOS 5 has DIR received any useful enhancements. The DIR and XDIR commands provided in DR-DOS are a little better - but not much. In real operating systems, the command for producing directory listings generally has twenty, thirty or even more switches. An operating system that I'm evaluating at the moment has an astonishing 43 switches on its DIR command! Even poor old CP/M Plus (the operating found on Amstrad CPCs and PCWs) has 19 switches in its DIR command - not to bad.

#### **Directory Enquiries**

This week I am privileged to be looking at another of Clockwork Software's innovative utilities. This one is called Clockwork Directory (CDIR for short) and is another of the company's tiny, but powerful utilities. The main program file comes to a wacking 8942 bytes! Taking the three supporting files into account, the total disk usage comes to 14807 bytes. John Worley, technical guru at Clockwork gets most upset at having to issue disks that are also empty. For example, a double density 3.5" disk has room for 737,280.00 bytes. CDIR uses just 2.01% of such a disk!

CDIR is not a replacement for the builtin MS-DOS DIR command. Rather, it provides a way of producing a directory listing in a scrollable, movable Window. A file can be selected from this window and various bits of information about it get assigned to environment variables. These can then be checked inside a batch file. The documentation for CDIR also gives examples of it being used with BASIC and dBASE.

#### In use

Using CDIR is as simple as running the CDIR.COM file. A window then appears listing all files in the current directory. The window sits over whatever's on the screen and it can be moved horizontally with the cursor keys. It is possible to move around the window using intuitive keystrokes. Pressing a letter will cause the cursor to jump to the first file starting with that letter. Pressing <Return> on any particular file will cause it to be displayed on the screen either in text or hex formats. Pressing return on a directory (or the .. symbol) causes CDIR to open that directory. It is also possible to jump around the window in a variety of ways.

The information that is passed into environment variables gets assigned to CDIR's eight 'receiver strings'. This information is really very useful. Batch file programmers often need this sort of information and un-

fortunately it is something that MS-DOS ignores completely. On offer is the file specification, the path, the filename, the forename, the extension, the file's date and the file's date and time.

The receiver strings are referenced by special names. For example, to find out the name of a file that hasbeen selected in CDIR, the string '??filename' is used. The length of the string name indicates the storage space in memory. The length of any

string can be increased by appending \* symbols to it. It might be wise to do this for items like path names, which have no specific, real limit.

#### Batch example

Let's look at a very simple example of CDIR being used from a batch file. The file needs to offer the user a list of files. The user makes a choice and then that file will be printed. It would be impossible to offer a listing for the user to choose a file from using the just the MS-DOS batch language. However, with CDIR, nothing could be simpler. The program provides all the facilities that you need - a movable, window, the ability to change colours and a scrollable listing of files, complete with associated information.

In the batch file you will need a line something like 'set file=?'filename\*\*\*. This sets up an environment variable ready to hold the return parameter from CDIR. You then call CDIR. When the file list comes up, the user can press <FI0> to select a particular file. This is what's passed back to the

calling program. Back inside your batch file, the environment variable will have been assigned with then ame of the file. The variable can then be used in the normal way (by enclosing its name in % signs). A line such as 'echo Your file was %file%' will prove that the value was returned correctly. The screen shot shows CDIR in action, complete with the batch file.

#### Switched on

CDIR takes a number of switches. These only need to be issued once as changes are written back to the .COM file if the /K (keep) switch is used. /N followed by another letter causes files with a certain attribute to be excluded. The default is to include everything. The letters are H for hidden, D for directory, R for read only and S for system. The default colour scheme may be changed with the /C switch and the horizontal position with /P. A file specification may also be used in the CDIR calling command - including wildcards if indeed necessary.



Using CDIR to select a file and then return its various details to a batch file.

The documentation for CDIR is brief, but you don't expect much with an 8 Kutility. In fact, you get just two sheets of A4. Although CDIR might appear to be a little complex at first, the documentation is relatively clear and it does give a number of examples.

CDIR, like most of Clockwork's software is priced very reasonably. It costs just £10.00 plus VAT and is supplied in the disk size of your choice.

All in all I found CDIR to be a very handy little utility. The only thing against it is that you are restricted to what you can use it for. For example, if you write batch files for other people (such as installation routnes) you would have to buy them their own copy of CDIR for them to make use of your batch file. Of course, this is always the problem when you have to resort to third party products for performing operating system functions. Still, CDIR has a lot of uses and I can thoroughly recommend it.

Information is available from Clockwork Software Bidbury House Havant Hants PO9 3IG Tel: (0705) 483217

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Part Two

#### Using the Colour Shielding and Masking Options

Last week I began discussing masking objects using the standard masking procedures, this issue sees the continuation of masking. I shall be discussing the colour features that I touched on last week when I mentioned the mark mask ability.

Colour Shielding is an immensly versatile tool found under the masking icon, colour shielding is used primarily for masking certain selected colours as opposed to masking selected shapes. If you happen to work in full colour a lot, you may be tempted to ask "how is it possible to seperate an clicked on to select it. Rectangular average requires a box section to be drawn around the area in question. Picture Publisher then automatically draws an average colour from within the sample area, it must be said that this effect is not exclusive to colour graphics however, the same results happen when using greyscale images.

#### Colour Shield

The colour shield menu contains a list of eight boxes representing the colours that can be shielded, as each one is selected an example of the colour selected appears in a box beside. Next to this there is an option to select the percentage of the range of colours available, and next to this there is is an option to select whether or not to mask the individual colours using an on or off button, from here it also possible to preview any adjustments that have been made to the colours and a reset button to undo any unwanted changes, The top of this menu is a pull down menu, from here it is possible to select whether to "Protect" clours or "Select" colours

Picture Publisher allows you to modify any previously drawn masks by using the incredibly versatile "Mask Transform tool", basically what this tool enables you to alter are the dimensions on geometric masks, from here it is possible to not only alter the dimensions of the mask alone but it also to transform the image within it. You may also use this, if you are not sure on the end result to duplicate the image and produce all the transformations on this.

These options are available through the "Modify" menu in the ribbon bar, there is also a "Mode" menu which enables proportional scaling and resizing to be performed. Masks can also be rotated to suit certain situations, this is performed by simply selecting the handle of the object that needs rotating and dragging it around to the position required. Skewing masks is also avail-

be achieved to some extent by clicking High" in the quality box, this also can be found within the Ribbon area of the page, this particular feature has been designed primarily for the use of skewed or rotated images as these can look jagged when they have gone through some particular treatments.

The effect of transparency can be achieved also by using the Mask transformation tool. This can be achieved in percentages, so the background or object can be made anything from midly transparent with hints of images being shown through to being totally see-through. This tool can is used through the ribbon menu also, there is a slider control which can be slid either way to produce the desired transparent effect, the image automatically re-draws to show the effect of any changes.

Points to freehand drawn masks can be added, removed or just moved about using the "Mask Point Editing" tool, if a mask has been drawn around an image and you later decide that you would like an extra part of the object that has not been masked. Clicking on the editing tool results in a function menu appearing in the ribbon area, within in this menu there are several options to choose depending on the circumstances required.

These options are; Move, Add, Delete and Clip points, clipping enables the user to remove several points at once if desired. When using this tool the object must be selected, the path becomes a series of lines and points. I personally found it a little hard to follow all of the lines, particulary as they are dotted red and black. Anyway once selected it is just a matter of whether you are going to add, delete, move or clip any points.

All of the functions listed here, require clicking on the line that is to have alterations, from there points will be added or removed, if you are moving a point then it is required to actually drag the point to the new position. Clipping points requires a

bounding box to be drawn around all the points in question.

First Impressions?



entire piece of cloth from a background, bearing in mind that cloth has many different hues of colour within it?",

This particular dilemma is solved quite easily because Micrographx have quite cleverly added a facility which enables you to allow for deviances of colour, for example it is possible to choose a blue object and use colour changes that are within a range of 5% either way of the chosen colour. Shielding allows up to eight colour ranges to masked at any one time, this I found was more than adequate enough in most cases.

Önce the colour shield has been selected a number of changes occur on screen, the ribbon bar across the top changes to method, but more noticeably a colour shield menu appears. Using the "Point sample" or "Reatangular average" options from the method list to determine how individual colours will be selected. Point sample selects the colour that is beneath the icon and has been

able using the centre handles on the object and dragging it across in the desired position.

## **Edge Blending**

Edges can be blended when using the Mask Transformation tools, these are used from the ribbon area. Once the object that requires this technique has been selected, by clicking "Blend" in

the edges box the selected object will blend the edges of the mask so that they merge into any background that the object may

have been placed on. This is very usefull for creating seamless joins which enable the picture to look natural.

Enhancing the quality of the image can

So I had now completed my first session using Picture Publisher, while as I menioned last week the whole layout and and feel of the program was totally alien to anything I had previously used. Then I found that after such a short spell on the program there were actually many similarities with this and graphic packages. Picture Publisher is very helpful, I particulary like the hint line and as for using the pro-



gram it really is a doddle, so far. To be fair then I really haven't put the program through its paces yet! More exploration of the tools next week.



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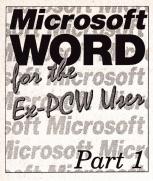
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# Stephen Copestake examines MS-Word for the Ex-PCW User.

Users upgrading from the Amstrad PCW into the PC environmenthave a wide selection of word processors to choose from. There is much more variety on the PC than on the PCW. If you take a merely visual look at the top PC word processors, the differences are astonishing. Word Perfect looks complete different to WordStar. Not just slightly different, or very different, but entirely dissimilar. To an extent, the move over recent years has been towards uniformity.

WordStar, for instance, and WordPerfect haveboth been obliged to install pull-down menus, although their use is optional. They are optional because users of WordStar and WordPerfect have become used to typing in key combination to achieve what they need.

Very often, these key combinations are entirely non-mnemonic. [Shift] + [F7] in WordPerfect, for instance, to access the print

menu. [Ctrl] + [K] + [?], in WordStar, to achieve a wordcount. Some people have grown used to these codes and wouldn't be

parted from them under pain of death.

Even with the use of pull-down menus, however, programs like WordStar and WordPerfect don't have the sort of visual appeal to which users of LocoScript PCW are accustomed. LocoScript PCW's Disc Manager is, in my experience, unique: it's so easy to use and comprehensive, especially in the PC version.

To be honest, PCW user don't know how lucky they've been. When they upgrade to the PC environment, they can choose to use LocoScript Professional which has a lot more features than the PCW version and the same visual feel. However, it lacks several of the functions associated with top-of-the-range PC word processors. Examples of these omissions include:

Graphic handling
An undo facility
An outline mode
A book-mark facility
Indexing
Tables of Contents
Automatic hyphenation
Comprehensive Line
Drawing facilities
A Macro facility

WordPerfect and WordStar have most, or all, of these facilities in varying forms. However, the PCw user who switches to these will find that the transition, at least in the early stages, will be drastic. Is there another answer? Yes there is the mighty Microsoft Word.

Like virtually all PC programs, Word has to be installed before it can be used. This is a painless procedure. When it's complete, you're presented with a screen which is arguably the best of all the PC word processors. It is also, apart from LocoScript Professional, the nearest to LocoScript PCW's. It's hard to say precisely why the screen is to clear and effective. There are, in fact, a whole series of colour options which can be specified form the [Utilities] menu. Unlike some other PC word processors, there are only three colour choices for each option, yet the effect this produces is excellent. In fact, Word has a truly staggering array of options in just about every field. The menu bar that appears at the top of the screen can be toggled on or off from within a sub-menu of the [Utilities] menu. Even when the menu bar is hidden, the menus can still be accessed by pressing [Alt].

#### **Arguably Unbeatable**

Word's [Outline] mode is arguably unbeatable. In contrast to separate ideas processors such as 'Brainstorm', top PC word processors have a built in Outline facility. In effect, this means that the same text can be viewed in two ways: as a normal word processor file and as an outline. The advantage of this approach is that it's very easy to

most entirely unknown on the PCW: the only exception to this is Protext. A Macro is simply a series of recorded key strokes or written commands. It is, in effect, a mini program. Word comes with a generous supply of pre-defined Macros. Some of these are very useful. 'BULLETED-LIST', for instance, automatically formats a paragraph, so that any text inserted appears as a Bulleted List. 'MANYPRINT' prints a list of documents and numbers the pages consecutively. This duplicates the 'Set First Pages' option accessed by pressing F5 from the LocoScript Disc Manager. 'COPY-FILE' moves a document containing graphics to a new destination and makes Word aware that the graphic is in a different location.... Other Macros are responsible for converting Word files into other formats. The Word Macro facility is well known for the ease with which it permits macros to be edited. Word's graphics facility is one of the easiest to operate. Pressing [ALT] + [I] followed by [P] invokes the 'INSERT PIC-TURE' menu. From here, you specify the type of graphic image and select the necessary file. Word translates a variety of graphics formats, although there are some surprising omissions. It won't, for example, translate WordPerfect graphic files. An instance of rivalry? it's necessary, in these cases, to save files externally to formats that Word will recognise.

Word has comprehensive line-drawing facilities. These use the cursor keys rather than a mouse. I find this preferable: I can't use a mouse to draw anything, Lines can be drawn using a vast selection of characters, provided your printer allows this. Different line thicknesses can be used, and shading can also be applied. Again, this is very printer dependent.

#### **Highlighting Method**

Microsoft Word makes much more use of the mouse, if one is fitted, than any other DOS word processor. In particular, it uses the highlighting method for applying a variety of formatting information including fonts, italicisation, emboldening, underlining, alignment, line spacing, margins etc. 'Highlighting' means using either a mouse (or the cursor keys in combination with the shift key) to mark texton the screen. This is a very easy way to apply to host of information to text or graphics; it's much

less confusing than adding embedded codes to text, which is the method that all the PCW word processors employ. Most of the IBM PC DOS word processor set the 'code' method, so Word

is unique.

Automatic hyphenation is a vital element for justified text, especially if justification is applied to columns. Without automatic hyphenation, unacceptable large gaps appear between words. Microsoft Word's automatic hyphenation facility is easier to use than most: you don't have to specify at what point you wish hyphenation to apply. Instead, automatic hyphenation can be applied with a confirmation option. Using this, you can manually veto any instance of hyphenation that you think is undesirable.

crosoft

switch back and forth between the two modes.

All the leading PC word processors have includes the ability to collapse and expand sub-headings. This is one of the most vital aspects to an outliner; you need to be able to achieve a highly specific overview. You want, at time, to see the wood, not the trees. In this way, a mass of text can be shrunk, temporarily, into a series of sub-headings.

Microsoft Word has one of the most extensive Macro facilities. Macros are al-



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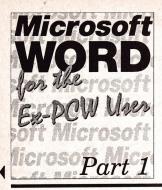
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You can also insert special characters into words to prevent Word from hyphenating them - flexible user control.

#### Simple Indexing

Indexing and Tables of Contents are features all the top PC word processors share. Indexing, with Word, is simply a question of inserting codes against entries in text that you wish to appear in an index, and then using the 'Insert Index' command from the [Insert] menu. Because of Word's reliance on menus, this is simplicity itself.

The Table of Contents facility is essentially very similar. The only real difference is that Word compiles the information in a slightly different format. A 'Bookmark' is a method of marking text. This can be carried out for the purpose of locating text

very easily - Word allocates a name to all text marked. Additionally, the Bookmark facility can be used for cross-referencing. This can be very useful if you are producing large quantities of text and need to draw the reader's attention to specific sections.

Last, but not least, the humble Undo facility. 'Undo' can be invoked from the edit menu or by pressing [Alt] + Backspace. Undo applies to a variety of different situations: just about any editing command can be undone, if necessary. In addition, there are two special macros that can extend this facility in so far as it applies to text. Three-delete is used to delete text; the macro Three-Undelete reverses up to three errors.

In the next instalment, Stephen Copestake takes a more detailed look at some of MicroSofts Word's editing functions

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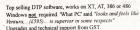
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Video Interface	VGA Monitor Port	VGA Monitor Port	VGA Monitor Port	VGA Monitor Port	VGA Monitor Port
Battery-	Removable NICAD	Removable NICAD	Removable NICAD	NICAD Removable	NICAD Removable
batter y-	Battery	Battery	Battery	& Standard Alkaline	
Operation Time	2.5 Hours	2.5 Hours	2.5-3.5 Hours	3.5 Hours - NICAD	2 Hours
Power Management	Auto Power Shutdown	Auto Power Shutdown	Auto Power Shutdown Suspend/Resume	Auto Power Shutdown Suspend/Resume	Auto Power Shutdown
Power Supply Adapter	Auto-Sensing 90/240 Volt	Auto-Sensing 90/240 Volt	Auto-Sensing 90/240 Volt	Auto-Sensing 90/240 Volt	Auto-Sensing 90/240 Volt
Operating Systems	DR-DOS	DR-DOS	DR-DOS 6.0	DR-DOS 6.0	DR-DOS 6.0
Dimensions	308W x 265D x 49H	308W x 265D x 49H	280W x 220D x 53H	297W x 210D x 50H	280W x 220D x 54H
Weight	7 lb (3.2 kg)	7 lb (3.2 kg)	7.1 lb	6.6 lb	6 lb Without Battery 8 lb With Battery
Other Features	Lotus Works     Numeric Keypad     Interface     External Floppy     Port     Carry Case	Lotus Works     Numeric Keypad Interface     External Floppy Port     Carry Case	Keyboard Interface     Carry Case     Battery Back Up	SCSI Interface     Keymouse     Windows 3.0     Leather Case	Keyboard Interfact     Carry Case     At Bus Connector     External Drive     Port
OUR PRICE  MODEM  Se Microlin FX	20Mb HD VOR220 £449 + VAT  CALL VS FOR GWOTES FOR GWOTES FOR WE'LL OF OIR WE'LL OF OIR	16MHz 20Mb	80Mb £949	VOR160 £699 4Mb Memory VOR162 £799	40Mb VOR334 £759 + VA' 60Mb VOR336 £799 + VA' 80Mb VOR338 £849 + VA'

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BJ10E

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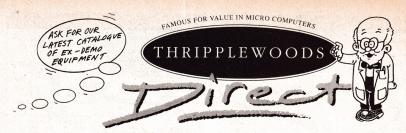
Note: This machine gives strong solid colours - not the pale pastel colours of a passive matrix machine. AMM 060

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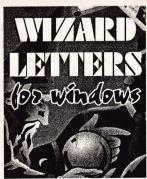
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Having problems writing letters? Perhaps this will solve them for you?

I wonder how many people realise that every installation of Microsoft Windows furnishes the owner with a superb quality wordprocessor as well as state of the art graphical user interface?

Windows is supplied with a program called Write, a very good program too, imbued with many of the features that go to make a word-processor great. The only feature Write seems to lack is a spelling checker, a hindrance to some, but of no great consequence to many.

The majority of Write users will be working with "boilerplate" documents - precomposed letters that only require a minimum of customisation to fit user requirements.

The shareware and Public Domain world has spawned many "boilerplate" compilations, fo the most part they contain useful documents that can be adapted for a wide number of uses. Unfortunately the stamp of the "amateur" is written upon many of them, and the correspondence gen-

erated, tends to lack a certain something!
Now it seem this situation has been put
to rights with the release of BUSINESS
LETTERS FOR WINDOWS FROM
WIZARDWORKS (A Minneapolis based
company.), in the UK sales of this new
product are handled by GST Software Partners.

Supplied on dual media (5.25 and 3.5" floppy disks) Business Letters contains 105 letters that you can use for your own business and personal correspondence. These letters can serve as "ready to use" correspondence or they can be edited within the Windows Write word-processor and the Business Letters interface.

#### Structure

Each of the 105 letters is divided into three paragraphs. These are categorised as Intro-

ductory paragraph, Main body and Closing paragraph. Users can effectively "mix and match" the various sections/paragraphs, the letters are broken into and can generate up to 840 additional letters. This is achieved simply enough in Write by combining a section of one letter with section/s of another.

Obviously these letters must be regarded as "templates" only, unless the user
is prepared to tailor them to his/her own
tastes/applications, output mightbe unsatisfactory. You must not expect that Business Letters will provide you with 105/
840/945 perfect letters. Each letter selecte/
will require some modification, each new
letter created from selecting various paragraphs will also require modification. These
modifications for the most part will be confined to adding names and addresses, salutations, subject matters and signature.

#### Ease of Use

Once installed the programs are remarkably easy to use, I note that the package was originally put together for Windows version 3.0 users. There should be no reason why these will not be fully compatible with Windows 3.1.

The letters are supplied in the form of \*TXT files which can be written and read directly to and from Write. Write will also offer the option of converting these letters to \*.WRI format for greater compatibility. One problem I had with installation

One problem I had with installation concerned the transfer of these files to a temporary directory and the assignment of a program group in Windows. The installation program supplied, was not able to accomplish this task, and this may have been due to using Windows version 3.1 as op-

posed to Windows version 3.0. The letters live in a self extracting file which is usually activated by the install procedure. In practice found it much easier to simply create a directory on my hard disk drive and call it letters, then transfer the self extracting file, run it and delete it. This left me with all the business letters resident in the newly created letters direc-

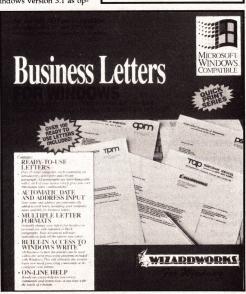
Business letters has a program supplied which can be run in Windows. This will allow you to create a standard name and address that will appear in all your letters, this program automatically adds this information when you are creating a letter for someone.

You will be able to select from 35 categories of letters available and rapidly call them into play. Complaints, Appointments, Schedules, messages of thanks, acknowledgements etc., are all contained within these categories. In all fairness the American origin of these letters was obvious in several incidences, but minor amendments quickly brought these in order.

This program also simplifies "mix and match" selections of various pieces of text. It seems quite happy to run alongside Write, and no compatibility problems were encountered. All of these actions are "button-driven" and the user can even have a choice of signature at the bottom of his/her letter. Personally I preferred to use the 105 letters as part of a letter database - this did not involve using the selection software. I simply read through all of the letters and renamed them according to my own criteria. For my own part, this was more useful than having to load the program.

Whichever way you decide to use the letters contained on the Business Letters disk, there is no escaping the fact they will be useful. Just as long as you remember to personalise them according to your requirements. This product costs only £29.95, and for those who hate composing letters or find writing difficult Business Letters for Windows will prove a worthwhile addition to the system.

For more information please contact GST Software Partners on 0480-497-622



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Evelyn Mills, puts Supercharged Easydraw 2 under the microscope.

This updated product from Migraph Inc. is not new on the scene but offers excellent value for money as a professional drawing program which links well with DTP. Indeed, for leaflets etc. it is a most efficient DTP package combining the best in GEM graphics with text.

Easydraw was 'one of the first vector graphic packages on the market', although the Manual consistently refers to the GEM graphics as 'bit-mapped' - another term for raster graphics -so I think it can be assumed that it is essentially a vector drawing program/system.

Effectively, raster graphics are drawn pixel by pixel as in Neo, Degas etc. For CAD work the 'rough edges' that are often encountered are hardly acceptable. In professional CAD/DTP work fine line, proportional drawing is required and vector graphics are essentially geometric shapes made up of mathematical points and calculations. Such graphics do not lose any of their quality when resized, and take up less memory than an equivalent raster image. Of even greater importance is the fact that a graphic can be built up from many independent pieces, layered one on top of each other to produce complex drawings; such layers may be peeled off as required to reveal the structure of the drawing. There are many other features of vector graphics which could be detailed and would constitute a dedicated article, in itself.

The Image Converter on the supercharger disk is capable of importing bitmapped images from Degas, Degas Elite, Neochrome MacPaint and IMG files. Once loaded they can be edited and saved in compressed monochrome. IMG format. The Image Convertor will load any bit-image irrespective of resolution (low, medium, high) even those differing from the resolution which is currently in use. The Snapshot accessory allows Easydraw images to be saved as bit mapped graphics but it should be remembered that Easydraw can only IMPORT. GEM drawings....!!

#### **MONO** is Best

While mono is the best resolution for fine graphics, Easydraw boots into medium resolution to produce excellent graphics. Drop-down Menus are there for varying facilities while the hidden graphic tool box is brought up anywhere on the screen with a right button mouse clock. A well written introduction is given within the Manual on the general handling sizing and placing of drawings, pasting same, pattern filling colouring, text handling, storing drawings on the clipboard, saving the drawing and printing same. This part on the basics of Easydraw should be explored first of all before moving along to the more advanced features within the program.

Easydraw has two working windowsone as a sketch pad or store partial
drawings there as objects may be moved
freely between the two. The RGB sliding
scale allows alteration of the four available
colours while a pattern style screen is available (40 patterns). A new pattern may be
created but only ONE user pattern is allowed per drawing.

Obviously it is important to work with multiple drawings and this procedure is described in full. A drawing is usually a combination of many objects which may be grouped together. Easydraw allows the grouping of multiple objects to be converted to a single object. This single object group may then be an object within another group - so here we move along to multi-level grouping referred to in vector graphics. Ease of sizing and rotating of group objects is obviously more simple that multiple individual ones.

Changes may be made to the drawing surface by adjusting a ruler and grid, by scrolling or by zooming. Incidentally all group objects may be 'explored or dissolved' to the original single objects.

Full directions are given in the well written manual for sizing, copying and



printing of your final graphic. Printing options are available for scaling while all drawings may be cycled on screen using variable times intervals (1-20 seconds). Flipping and rotation of objects is easily accomplished and the editing requirements of graphics and/or text are written in plain English - no nonsense in this Manual. Concerning text. this is imported as ASCII files so there is no conflict with differing word processors. Labels may be created in either vertical or horizontal form. Concerning fonts, these must be in GEM format - search the PD catalogue for extra fonts to import should you wish to make full use of the text/graphics capabilities of the program.

#### **Clear Explanation**

Easy-Draw has facilities for merging text and graphics which are clearly explained. A demo is provided for practise in resizing and pasting of text blocks and logos. Altogether this is a package which can be recommended for quality and ease of use. A quick reference summary which is well supplemented with screen shots and descriptions of all the menu commands. Techniques are summarised in a similar manner. As one would expect a large number of commands may be handled from the keyboard.

Now on to the SUPERCHARGER. Consider first of all the IMAGE CONVERTER which is combined with a snapshot facility. While most bit-images (Degas, Neo. etc.) are created in colour, the Converter changes each colour to shades of grey to give the best possible print-out. Images may be imported in four different modes; these are related to printer resolution, the size and complexity of the image and the desired size of the final image. When converting, colours are changed to varying shades of black via an option screen, such images may be edited dot by dot and reverse coloured as required. Clipping is possible and all images are saved in .IMG format. Read the Manual carefully here concerning the saving and printing of images as a small GEM file is automatically saved which is used for printing images, while the compression of files is handled via the converter.

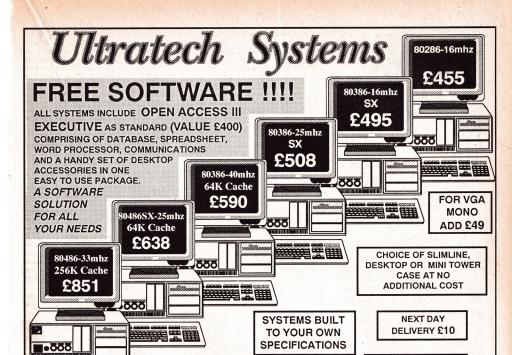
#### **Snapshot Facility**

A Snapshot facility is available as an accessory to capture Easydraw pictures-as would be expected these are saved in .IMG format. perhaps you may care to stick your own screen grabber on screen to save in your favourite format - there are so many interchanges available since Easydraw became readily available.

Overall this is a well documented and highly satisfactory DTP/graphics package. Text is easily handled but preference must be given to the drawing features which should prove invaluable for designers, and planners alike.

Easy-Draw can be obtained from:

GST Software, Electric Distribution, Meadow Lane, St. Ives, Cambridgeshire (Tel: 0480-496666). Enquire concerning cost.



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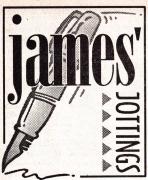
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James Sheet ponders over the I.T. industry.

Anybody who has worked in computers for longer than five minutes takes typing for granted. I would suggest that if you cannot type, it might be worth spending sometime, getting to know the keyboard.

It is gradually changing. The mouse cuts out a certain amount of keyboard activity, but there are instances where only the keyboard will do. For example, when keying in an article or the chapter of a novel, you do not normally have a choice. You have to use the keyboard. No doubt programs could be developed that allowed all text to be entered via the mouse, but I reckon it would take at least twice as long to key in the same amount of data. There are othertypes of input device that try to make the user less dependent on the keyboard.

OCR (Optical Character Recognition) is probably the most useful; at least it is for copying text into the computer. Scanning and digitising are other ways of getting information into the computer, but these are not really designed to take over from the keyboard. There are more additions to allow other types of information to be put into the computer.

Another alternative is to actually write directly onto the screen of a computer and for it to convert our scribbles into text, that the computer can understand. Apple, apparently, are in the process of making such a machine. It will be interesting to see how it performs in the market place. Talking to a computer is probably the easiest way to communicate with the things, but I think that is still a long way off. Having said that I am sure we all talk (or swear) at our machines at some point in time. The missing link is that they do not understand us at the moment - maybe this is a good thing.

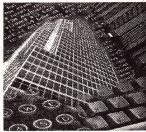
So, until something better comes along, we are going to have to live with the fact that the keyboard is still the most popular way of communicating with a computer and anybody who does not know how to

use one is at a distinct disadvantage. Therefore J. find it a little strange that most people who entercomputing are not taught to type. They are simply thrown in at the deep end and left to get on with it. My own experience probably demonstrates this as well as anything else.

I entered computing straight from school. Aged sixteen, I had never seen a computer before in my life (micros simply weren't made in those days) so the first I saw of a computer was a bank of flashing lights (I later learnt it was a processor) and a thing that look a bit like a typewriter. My shift leader explained how the typewriter thing worked. "You first of all have to get the computers attention by pressing the input button. When the light comes on, the computer is ready to receive your instructions. The problem is that whilst you are typing, the computer cannot type anything itself. This means that any programs running in the machine which need to communicate with the outside world (ie type on the console) stop running until they can output their message. To stop operators pressing input and going on a tea break (effectively stopping the whole machine) the computer only allows thirty seconds before it cancels the input and continues with its own proc-

This all sounded pretty clear and the shift leader pressed the input button and said "Just type `GI SCRA 21'".

It was at this point I realised that I had never touched a typewriter keyboard in my life and here I was looking at an array of keys that seemed to be in no sort of order. The thirty seconds had passed before I had



even got to the second letter. I could feel the shift leader breathing over my shoulder, waiting to get on the keyboard himself. When he did, his fingers flew. The input button, instructions to the computer and the return button were pressed in quick succession and the computer and shift leader seemed to have some understanding as to who was allowed to type when.

#### Passed in an Instant

Once he had moved some work through the machine, he let me have another go. Again, the thirty seconds I was allowed seem to pass in an instant and the "cancel" message appeared before I had even typed the third letter - I felt very small at this point.

As time went on, I got better at typing. It was only a two fingered approach, but I gradually got faster and faster as I learnt where each of the keys were. Within three

months the "cancel" message (which appeared at the end of thirty seconds) was distant memory. In fact, thirty seconds now seemed like an age and you could almost press input, have a coffee and still have enough time to type your command.

After a year, I was adept with the keyboard. No longer did I marvel at people who seemed to operate the computer with fingers that seemed to fly. I was now one of the club and if a trainee started, I would sit on his/her shoulder frustrated knowing I could do in thirty seconds what would take them an hour to do. It is strange how your views change once you have learnt how to do something.

I now consider myself a competent typist. I use three or four fingers and in full flow, I reckon I hold my own against most people. I have never worked out my words per minute, but I do not think I would be embarrassed.

As for comparing myself to a professional typist or secretary, I do not think I even come close. Just to look at one of these professionals in full flow fills me with a sense of wonderment.

But this brings me back to my original point. Should I have typing lessons so that I can type properly? Or more importantly, should I have been taught to type when I was a trainee computer operator? Bear in mind that I spend fifty percent of my day at a keyboard which maybe more than some sceretaries or personal assistants who can; claim they have a good words per minute as well as other skills such as shorthand and audio typing.

#### Other Advantages

It is not just the speed of my typing that I might be able to improve. There may be other advantages/disadvantages in being able to type properly. By using the two fingered approach, am I doing myself any long term damage. We here so much about RSI (Repetitive Straining Injury) that I often wonder whether I am more likely to be effected by this ailment using my two fingered approach which involves lots of movement of my hands over the keyboard. As I understand touch typing the aim is to keep certain fingers on certain keys and move them as little as possible to get to the other keys. Does this reduce the risk of RSI?

#### **Question Time**

Could anybody touch type before they entered computing and did they find it of benefit?

Did anybody enter computing without being able to type and later learn to touch type. If so, did you find touch typing a benefit?

Does anybody know if the risk of RSI is increased if "two fingered" typing is used in preference to touch typing.

Has anybody learnt to touch type and did you find it difficult?

Let me know the answers to the above questions plus any other views you have. James Sheet, c/o Micro Mart,

24 Richmond Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7RP.

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Matthew Holbrook concludes his examination of the Lex repeat function

Word processing is undoubtedly the most popular computer application around. You might consider that once you've seen one word processor, you've probably seen them all. Well, I can assure you that this is far from the case.

There are many things to consider when choosing a word processor and the products that are the most popular are not always the best.

Last week we looked at some of the basics of the Lex repeat command. This week I want to examine five other powerful options that can be used with the command which go to provide some very powerful results. I also want to look at how it is possible to repeat some of the Lex routines that we created in earlier parts of this series.

#### And there's more

If B is found at the start of the command then Lex will carry on repeating that command until it reaches a blank line. This would be useful on something like a table where you want a block of rows to be dealt with in a certain way but nothing after the table has completed. For example, you might want to delete the first five characters of each line. This would be achieved with <Esc> X (to repeat) and then B\'D'D'D'D\. This command performs five lots of <Ctrl> D (the Lex function for deleting the current character) and then a <Return> to the next line. The repeat command will carry on until it meets a blank line, as default.

A similar function is provided by R. This tells the repeat command to carry on until a ruler is reached. As rulers are literally lines of full stops with a few special characters, it is very easy to forget about them in repeat commands. Before the introduction of this facility, it was quite normal to ruin a whole series of carefully prepared rulers with an innocent repeat statement.

The B in the above example could be changed to an R to make the command repeat until the next ruler.

The E function is used to repeat until an error is encountered. There aren't many things that can go wrong when performing repeats but two of the most common things that stop a repeat from continuing are an invalid action being performed under a specific ruler and reaching the end of a document. Nothing is more frustrating than having to stand over a Lex session watching out for any occasions when you might have to press <Return> to clear an error when you have just produced a procedure that is supposed to automate a process. This code gets around this problem. As before, the example given previously would work with the first character substituted.

The two final codes restrict the repeat command to working until it reaches the top or the bottom of the current screen is reached. The codes are T for the top of the screen and S for the bottom of the screen. Once again, the example given above is compatible with these two codes. I'm not entirely sure where these functions might get used. Presumably somebody has asked for them as they have only been introduced relatively recently.

# Repeating Lex sequences

I hinted last week that it was possible to get Lex to repeat standard paragraphs and ab-

breviations. This is easily achieved. As an abbreviation is accessed by pressing Esc> and its number, it's just a matter of using \$ (the visible equivalent of Esc> and a number
So to repeat abbreviation 1 five times, the code would be \$\$1. To repeat abbreviation 5 while Lex is on a space, the code would be W\\$5. Repeating a standard paragraph is just as easy and there are two ways to achieve it.

You can either use <Esc> RK and the paragraph name (this escape code is the one used to run any Lex program). Alternatively, you could enclose the paragraph name in brackets. However, you cannot use the [ and ] symbols because the

paragraph would run as soon as you pressed the J. Instead, you need to use the visible equivalents - < and >. Lex will convert these to the correct symbols when it comes to run the particular code.

The drawback of repeating standard paragraphs using the latter method is that Lex needs an area of the screen to place the brackets and paragraph name. Unless you specifically do this on a blank area of the screen, you could lose part of your document.

## Examples

Here are some examples of repeats for standard paragraphs - W \<\*MATT>, Uend\\$RK\*MATT, 100<\*MATT>. The first of these repea(s) the code contained in \*MATT while the cursor is on a space. The

second repeats the same code until the cursor finds itself on the word 'end'. Finally, the last example repeats the code contained in \*MATT 100 times - regardless of what is under the cursor.

Just to complete this week's instalment, take a look at the screenshot. This is a DOS directory listing being edited under Lex. The idea is to turn the listing into a batch file for copying a group of files to a floppy disk. An abbreviation is used to turn individual lines into copy statements.

A repeat code is embedded inside the deprevation. If you look closely, you should be able to see it, although it may not be in a format that is instantly recognisable. The repeat is used to take out the spaces in the middle of the filename.

The logic of the complete process is: insertifive spaces and the word 'copy', move to the space after the next word and repeat 'delete character' while on a space, insert another space and a full stop, move to the space after the next word, delete everything remaining on the line, insert 'A:' and, finally, move to the start of the next line. Each time <Esc> 1 is pressed, the current line is reformatted. Of course, this code could be used inside any sort of repeat function - until a ruler, until a blank, a specific number of times , until the end of the document etc.

Just in case you were wondering, the repeat code contains double quotes so that it only repeats the codes intended. Without these, it would attempt to repeat the rest of the line. Also, <Ctrl> E is the Lex code for inserting a character, <Esc> QV is the func-



Turning a directory listing into a batch file with clever use of the Lex repeat function

tion for moving to the space after the next word and <Ctrl> V is the code for deleting to the end of the line.

That completes repeating in Lex. You will now see that repeating is an incredibly useful function and hopefully the more you think about it, the more uses for it will spring to mind. Both word processing users and application builders will find many uses for this feature.

Part sixteen of this series continues in the next issue

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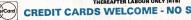
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Matthew Holbrook boots up his PC to find a new friend waiting for him

It never fails to amaze me how software manufacturers are able to search out new areas in PC usage for utility software. Clearly, much needed operating system features such as better back-up and housekeeping routines are ideal for third party utilities. However, more and more, we are finding totally new areas that are being covered by such products.

The software under a review here is called Daily Features and is another offering from Power Up Software. Power Up has taken the view that the process of booting a PC is rather mundane to say the least. Even though hardware is getting ever faster, if anything, the process of booting is taking longer and longer. The reason for this is that as software gets more advanced, more device drivers need to be loaded through the Config. sys configuration file.

Additionally, extra features such as ram disks, caching and compression software are being set up at this stage. These things were almost unheard of a few years ago. To make this obligatory process a bit more pleasant, Daily Features displays interesting information for each day of the year. There are already offerings similar to Daily Features in the public domain and shareware worlds. In saying this, the ones that I have seen simply take the system date and display a list of events that happened

on this day in the past.

For example, for the 12 September, such a utility might display '1991 - Micro Computer Mart goes weekly'. Daily Features takes this a stage further. It offers three categories of information and then invites yout offind out more about them. The topics offered are trivia, words and quotes.

When the product is loaded (normally from your Autoexec bat startup file), it will bring up a screen that contains the information about one of the three categories. Key [F5] can then be used to find out more about it. I did this review on 31 August and I'll give examples of what Daily Features came up with on that day. The trivia section brought up "How many people would you need in a room to have at least a 50-50 chance of two people having the same birth-day (month and day, but not year]?" Pressing [F5] revealed the answer to be 24. The words part brought up "obsequious". Pressing [F5] revealed its meaning as "adj.

Full of or exhibiting servile compliance, fawning." Words are displayed with their phonetic equivalent. At first glance, this looks to be a foreign language, but key [F7] brings up a window that gives examples of each of the special symbols in use. Finally, the quote for the day was "I shall make electricity so cheap that only the rich can afford to burn candles." [F5] revealed the person behind this to be Thomas Edison.

The up and down arrow keys are used to roll through the three available categories. It is also possible to use the left arrow key to scroll back through previous day's data. However, you cannot scroll to the next day. Daily Features will intercept such an action and will inform you that you have to wait until tomorrow to find out what's coming. I'm not quite sure why it does this. Indeed, if you really wanted to find out what was coming, you would change the system date and then reload Daily Features.

When you attempt to call the next day from the package, you get some clever quote at the top. For example, when I tried it I got "The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time" by Abraham Lincoln. A second attempt brought "I never

think of the future. It comes soon enough." by Albert Einstein. There seemed to be five quotes that can occur at this stage.

### TSR or not TSR?

Daily Features can be loaded straight from Dos by typing its filename. Additionally, if it is run with the /R switch, it will be installed as a TSR (terminate and stay resident) program. Daily Features is then just a keystrokes away. [Alt] D is the default hotkey for calling up Daily Features. This might cause a conflict with some software and so it can be changed to one of a number of other keystrokes at the time of loading. This is done in a rather bizarre way. A /H switch is used at the time of loading Daily Features.

This is followed by a special number. For example, [CITI] D is 81% and [Shift] [F8] is 23296! The only way of getting Daily Features out of memory is to reboot the PC. This is a bit of an oversight as the product does take up around 64K of memory - which is quite a lot for a TSR. I attempted to load the program into upper memory under MSDOS 5, but Daily Features still loaded into conventional memory.

Three data files are supplied with Daily Features and it is capable of holding 12 such files. Daily Features allows you to build your own data files to supplement the three is has already. You simply create a text file of your data (in a special format). A Convert exe program is then used to convert your data into a form acceptable to Daily Features. An example template is supplied for this task.

Daily Features comes on a single 3.5" or 5.25" disk and is at home on floppy disk or

hard disk systems. The files as supplied take up just under 250K of disk space. There is no installation routine. You either have to make a back-up copy of the disk or manually copy the individual files to another disk.

The brief paperbased documentation is simply a guide to installation and the license terms. Rooting around in Daily Features' files will reveal a read.me file. This is the manual and it runs to nine pages. This is a budget way of doing things, but it's just about acceptable.



Daily Features certainly achieves what it sets out to do. It is an interesting thing to have running on your PC and is educational at the same time. It will last at least a ayear -as after then the data will start repeating itself. Even so, with the ability to add your own data, Daily Features could have a very long life indeed. Sorry, don't know product details.



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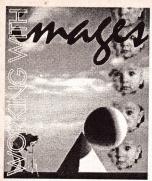
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Stephen Copestake, continues his look at WordPerfect for the ex-PCW user.

This series looks at WordPerfect from the point of view of the ex-Amstrad PCW user upgrading to the PC environment. In the previous instalment, we examined WordPerfect's styles...

Styles are almost non existent on the PCW. The nearest approach is probably LocoScript's TEMPLATE facility, but this is very basic compared to what is on offer in the PC World. Interestingly, LocoScript Pro-fessional, the new PC incarnation of Locoscript, does have comprehensive style features, built in.

But it still lacks graphics. Most of the leading PC word processors support graphics: pictures can be incorporated into text in a way that rivals the performance of a Desk Top Publishing package. In fact, the distinction between a DTP package and a word processor is rapidly becoming vague in the extreme, especially with WINDOWS applications. Both have spell checkers and thesauruses, both allow the manipulation of a bewildering variety of graphic images. All that can be said, really, is that DTP packages will have even more typographical features, and will also allow you to redraw images directly without having to import them initially into a drawing package such as DrawPerfect...

Not every word processor user needs Graphics capabilities, of course, although they are tremendously useful for adding professional impact to documents. How does WordPerfect handle graphics? The answer is, very easily: there are a variety of formats that can be imported directly into WordPerfect without conversion. These are translated internally WordPerfect's own format; WordPerfect graphics have a [.WPG] suffix when stored on disk. A few formats (these are used relatively infrequently) have to be converted using separate program

GRAPHCNV.EXE - which is normally installed along with the program files. If you want to convert more than one file at a time, or if you want to customise the process in any way, then GRAPHCNV.EXE has to be used. But normally, you simply tell WordPerfect to load a graphics file, and it happily complies.

As an experiment, I've just used the program to load up the accompanying image from a clip-art package: The Operator's Revenge! It took me around half a minute. Here's how it's done, although itemising the process - as ever - makes it sound much more involved than it really is.

#### .CGN Suffix

The image I used has a [.CGM] suffix -Computer Graphics Metafile: one of several standard formats. Don't ask me what the name means: luckily, you don't need to know this. Typing [ALT] + [F9] invokes WordPerfect's graphics menus. You now have the following options:

- **Figure**
- Table box
- Text box
- User box
- Line (solely for drawing horizontal and vertical lines)
  - Equation

Every graphic in WordPerfect has to be placed in a box, whether or not the box actually shows on screen or on paper (in a DTP package, they'd be known as frames). It doesn't much matter which type of box -Figure, Table, Text, User and Equation you choose. The only real differences lie in the preset options, and these can be amended very easily. Additionally, the equation editor (WordPerfect has one of the most elegant) has special caption options. There are now four further choices:

- Create
- Edit
- New numbers
- Options

You might need to go into [Options], first, to customise the appearance of the graphic. Here, for illustration purposes, is a list of the Figure options:

### Wealth of Features

You'll see that these provide a wealth of features, and a high level of 'customiseability'. To customise the box around the graphic (border options), for instance, you can choose from:

None, single, double, dashed, dotted, thick, extra thick.

Many of the available options are usually left at the default values. As an illustration, it's possible to have different levels of caption numbering - Figure 1a, for instance, instead of just Figure 1 - but this is only required for very complex documents. Another example is the [Minimum Offset from Paragraph] option. Normally, when a graphic within a file would be split by a page break, WordPerfect moves it up so that its top border is flush with the top line of the paragraph to which it's attached. If it can't do this, it moves it to the next page. This option specifies how far below the top of the paragraph a graphic can be situated.

More often used is the [Grey Shading] option. On a printer that supports this feature, graphic boxes can be printed (although the shading doesn't appear on screen) with tints. A setting of between 5-10% gives an excellent effect; we used WordPerfect, and in particular the tinting option, to good effect in a recent issue of XENOS.

Once the options are set, we can opt for [Create]. We now have a further series of choices:

Empty

Paragraph

- 1 Filename
- 2 Contents
- 3 Caption 4 - Anchor Type
- 5 Vertical Position
- 6 Horizontal Position Right 3.01" wide x
- 3.01" (high) 8 - Wrap Text Around Box Yes
- 9 Edit

The size and position options are selfexplanatory. FILENAME applies if you're

1 - Border Style	
Left	Single
Right	Single
Top	Single
Bottom	Single
2 - Outside Border Space	
Left	0.167"
Right	0.167"
Top	0.167"
Bottom	0.167"
3 - Inside Border Space	
Left	0"
Right	0"
Top	0"
Bottom	0"
4 - First Level Numbering Method	Numbers
5 - Second Level Numbering Method	Off
6 - Caption Number Style	[BOLD] Figure 1 [bold]
7 - Position of Caption	Below box, Out side borders
8 - Minimum Offset from Paragraph	.0"
9 - Grey Shading (% of black)	0%



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loading an image from disk. CONTENTS can be either graphics, text or equations. Here you do have to be specific about the type of image you're concerned with: they each have their own editing screen. Graphics, for instance, have a non-text editing screen that permits re-sizing, rotation and

other special effects. 'Text' allows codes to be applied (formatting, fonts and so on).

CAPTION is straightforward. AN-CHOR TYPE is more important. This determines whether the graphics box moves with the text that wraps around it (paragraph type), remains placed at a fixed position on a page (page type), or is treated as part of the text on a line (character type).

WRAP TEXT AROUND BOX is normally 'Yes'. If set to 'No', however, it can be used to produce superimposed graphics boxes for special effects.

### Auto C.G.M.

In the case of our illustration, WordPerfect processes C.G.M. automatically. This means that incorporating our image is essentially very simple. Press [ALT] + [F9] followed by [1] and [1] (if no alterations are required to preset defaults); specify the drive and filename; select size and position details; then press [F7] or [ENTER]. The process can be rather more complicated sometimes, but in essence it's quite uncomplicated.

WordPerfect graphics normally appear on screen as a dashed box. To see the image itself, there are two options. Pictures can be viewed on the standard print preview screen [SHIFT] [F7] + [V]) and in the graphics editor (option 9 in the preceding sample menu). Text-based graphics can also be previewed from the Print menu.

The Text Graphics editor also permits editing. There is only one element the program lacks: the ability to move graphics boxes with the use of a mouse. For this, you need WordPerfect for Windows!

In the next instalment in this series, Stephen Copestake investigates WordPerfect's mail merging facilities. For further information, contact WordPerfect U.K.; address shown below:

> WordPerfect 5. available from : WordPerfect UK, Weybridge Business Park, Addlestone Rd, Addlestone, Surrey, KY15 2UU. Tel: 0932-850-505.

Image from the TASK FORCE clip art collection, courtesy of New Vision Technologies Inc and Regency Computer Software.

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Evelyn Mills examines some software for the younger generation.

Youngsters around 5 years old are well acquainted with the Shoestring booklets according to my junior informant. Perhaps you may not realise that Gremlin Software also produce an 'Early Learning' computer series for this age group built around the esteemed TRAMPY and the Shoe People who delight children so much in the books. This review is based on the program 'FIRST CLASS' as distributed for the Atari series of computers.

The package comes with two disks, instruction Manual, a Shoestring book and a badge - a bit of added frivolity? Not so, as this series is equivalent to Thomas the Tank Engine series in the popularity charts; this being so the review is based on a combined analysis by myself and my 6 year old critic. If youngsters enjoy the learning process then the program is O.K. All too often we academics are inclined to dismiss many teaching aids for the young as trivia - well some are, some aren't and First Class is definitely in the OK category.

Boot disk one to get to the initial screen.

The program here is divided into three parts. The first is where 'Trampy Visits his Friends' (6 in number). Selection is controlled via space bar and return - no mouse, no oystick, no problem. Choosing the visits in a logical manner we find Trampy marching

along the scenic path in each separate unit until he comes to a series of around 6 objects and, eventually, meets his friends. The one complaint here is the monotony of a 15 second march to get to each object - long for an adult, longer for a child.

Working logically through each visit, various objects are shown on the screen to be matched or found. Moving along to words, the variety of visits is structured to find a correct word using increasingly different methods (matching, similar beginnings, similar endings and first letter prompts). In the last two visits, word spelling is highlighted. Initially the word is briefly shown, while the second visit requires spelling from pictures shown.

Following on sequentially, how about relating to matching shapes, patterns and colour? Sgt. Major raises the flag with your help if correct. All is related to the SCIENCE section of the National Curricu-

lum (ho hum). In any event education links fairly well with entertainment.

The Magic colouring book is simple in context and suited to the 5 year old group-drawing and filling with colours in essence. There are several predrawn pictures of the Shoestring people which are available for colour fill and printing. This, of course can be all important to the kids but the function is NOT compatible with any printer other than the IBM series; here the user will require to revert to PD for a grab facility which is reset proof and take it from there. In the event that pics are saved, a disk, formatted by the program is required.

# **Spelling Exercise**

Disk 2 proceeds in the same manner as Disk 1 and contains a spelling exercise related graphically to the stealing of words and a

rescue of the alphabet by PC Boot. A selection of small, medium and large words is there plus 'big and small letters' (upper case/ lower case). Moving along to Wellington visiting the park we have an entertaining see-saw matching

numbers on blocks (dice type). Count up the correct value and the seesaw will balance. Here, again, there are a number of options ranging from easy to difficult.

Charlie's Big day is a circus act where various items are permanently on screen.



The clown does sequential acts with these items (plate spinning, drum banging and so forth). As the difficulty levels progress od the number of acts - the user must choose the sequence correctly - this is the most active screen in terms of graphics and requires considerable concentration from the child in question.

# [ESC] Life Line

All through the series, a return to the MAIN MENU is made possible via the ESCAPE key. Should the attention of l'enfant deteriorate, just press this key. This is good for interaction and nothing crashes en route. Overall the package is good in terms of learning at the 4-6 level; the escape key allows interest to be sustained by quick changes from program to program.

# Multi-platform

The Manual is written for the Amiga, Commodore 64, Atari ST, IBM PC, Spectrum 48/ 128/+2 and +3 and the Amstrad. While the program can certainly be recommended the cost is disproportionate to the state of the economy -£25.99. None the less there is plenty of variety and entertainment on the two disks. The package is available from:

Gremlin Graphics Software House Ltd. Carver House, 2-4 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS (Tel: 0742 - 753-423).





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# macintosh

# **MATTERS**

Following on from last week's coverage of the new additions to the PowerBook range, we now learn that Apple have introduced a remarkable new duo system. A system designed to offer the best of both of the worlds afforded by desktop and portable computers

The new Macintosh DuoTM System lets

users insert—ordock—a Macintosh PowerBookTM Duo computer into a desktop station that connects to a variety of peripherals and network resources. As a result, Macintosh Duo System users can have a complete desktop system at their office, including a large colour display, fullsize keyboard, and expansion capabilities; and, at the same time, have a powerful notebook computer to take with them for working away from the office.

"With the Duo System, customers get the best of both worlds," said Nigel Turner, Apple UK product marketing manager. "Users get a Macintosh desktop computer and a Macintosh PowerBook computer—in a single system. They can keep all their files with them all the time and eliminate the file management problems that come from working on two separate computers. And un-

like other docking stations, the Duo System allows users to go from desktop computer to notebook computer in one simple step that protects the user from accidentally losing data or having to reconfigure start-up files and cables."

The Macintosh Duo System comprises three main components: a PowerBook Duo notebook computer, the Macintosh Duo DockTM, and PowerLatchTM docking technology, which delivers a smooth transition between the worlds of desktop computing and notebook computing.

At the heart of the Macintosh Duo System is a high-performance Macintosh PowerBook Duo computer.

There are two models—the PowerBook Duo 210 and the PowerBook Duo 230. Both models weigh just 4.2 pounds (with battery) and measure just 1.4 inches thick.

### Powerful

Though small and light, PowerBook Duo computers match the speed of powerful desktop computers. They feature the high-performance Motorola 68030 processor, so they can make quick work of complicated computing tasks, such as financial analysis and desktop publishing.

The PowerBook Duo 230 runs at 33 megahertz (MHz) and can be configured with either an 80 megabyte (MB) or a 120MB hard disk. The 210 runs at 25MHz and has an 80MB hard disk. Both come with 4MB of memory (expandable to 24MB) and a bright, backlit supertwist LCD display that supports 16 levels of grey.

Like all Macintosh computers, PowerBook Duo computers come with System 7TM nab Apple Talk(R) networking software. This makes them easy to connect to a network and share files with other Macintosh computers. With optional Apple Talk Remote Access software, users can connect their PowerBook Duo to a network of other Macintosh computers—even when they're away from the office.

### Macintosh Duo Dock

When users return to their desk, they can



insert the PowerBook Duo into the Macintosh Duo Dock, which can be connected to a large colour display (up to the Macintosh 16-inch Colour Display), a full-size keyboard, a mouse, and available printers and servers. The Duo Dock offers two NuBus expansion slots for adding features and capabilities such as multiple or larger displays, high-speed networking, video capturing, or CPU acceleration. It also features an internal floppy disk drive, and a bay for an internal 3.5-inch hard disk.

Together, the PowerBook Duo 230 and the Macintosh Duo Dock deliver performance that is second only to the Macintosh QuadraTM line of computers. This makes the Macintosh Duo System a perfect midrange solution for any customer who de-

sires strong performance and the freedom to take their work anywhere. For example, customers such as desktop publishers who need a powerful portable computer to use away from the office, yet back at their desk need access to a fully equipped desktop system that can be customised with a large colour display, a second hard disk for extra storage or file back up, or specialised networking capabilities.

#### PowerLatch?

The key to enabling Macintosh Duo System users to go from notebook computing to desktop computing easily is Apple's new PowerLatch docking technology.

Other docking systems require users to reconnect cumbersome cables and reconfigure start-up files very time they want to use their notebook in the docking station. These systems also feature mechanical docking, which requires the user to determine whether the notebook computer is properly connected to the docking station. If the connection is broken—or if a user accidentally ejects their notebook while they're working—they'll lose their data.

But with PowerLatch docking technology, Duo system users simply insert the PowerBook Duo into the Duo Dock and press the start button-no other set-up is necessary to resume access to networks, large displays or other peripherals.

PowerLatch also enables the Macintosh Duo System to take advantage of a single-point docking connection between the Powerbook Duo and the Macintosh Duo Dock, so users don't need to connect any cables when switching from desktop computing to notebook computing, even when using a modem.

They simply insert the PowerBook Duo into the Macintosh Duo Dock. The PowerBook Duo is then automatically pulled into the correct position and securely connected to the Duo Dock, which prevents data loss. Users are also reminded with an on-screen message not to remove the PowerBook Duo from the Duo Dock until all the documents they've been working on are saved, which further protects them from losing information.

The Macintosh Duo System offers a

particularly attractive computing solution for professionals who divide their time between two or more offices and always want their most current files with them. And because the Duo System lets multiple PowerBook Duo owners share the same Duo Dock, it's cost effective solution for field sales representatives and other individuals who spend a small portion of their time at the office. The Macintosh Duo System is also a practical solution for colleges and universities where the Duo Dock stations can be installed in campus computing labs. This allows students to share stations with large displays, printers, and access to the campus mainframe computeryet individually own their own personal PowerBook Duo computer to use in the dorm, library or other locations.

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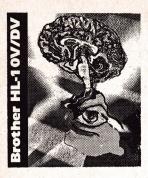
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Andrew Shorter takes a look at the Brother HL-10V/DV laser printer -"In a class of it's own."

Time for some truth now, we've had this printer for the last three months now, and do you know what-I don't want to let it go back. The machine is excellent, looks good, the output is of the highest quality, the expandability is optimal; looks like a great deal of time has been spent on the ergonomics of the machine, what a positive step for the Brother people.

Moving swiftly on, in the following dissertation, I hope to cover several topic areas, primary concerned with the following; is there any real equivalent machine on the market; the good and the bad points; ease of use; manual design and presentation, (an area of great interest to myself); machine specification; overall analysis and conclusion; and of course the FINAL PARA-GRAPH, where, if your impressed, to get the product from.

As a starting point, lets look at the tech-



nical specifications of the machine, hopefully outlining the "pro's and con's". If we swiftly turn to page 1.3, in the user's guide, we get an array of functions, and special features. This page covers, in a very short and concise manner, everything from, print methodology to interface slots. In the following table I have tried to summarise this topic area:

PRINT TYPE: Electrophotography by laser beam scanning PRINT SPEED: 10 pages/minute RESOLUTION: 300 dots/inch + high res'

control
C.P.U.: The famous MC68000 -

TONER: 16 MHz 4000 pages/cartridge

R.A.M.: 1 Mbyte

(expandable to 3 or 5Mb)
FONTS: 12 scalable fonts,
and 18 bitmapped

FONT SLOTS: 2 slots - 1 font cartridge, 1 font card

INTERFACE : Automatic interface selection - centronics

parallel, RS-232C serial EMULATION: Automatic emulation

selection
- HP LaserJet III
(PCL level 5)
- Diablo 630

- EPSON FX-850 - IBM Proprinter XL

- BROTHER Twinwriter PAPER INPUT: Auto paper loading from

the universal type paper cassette or manual paper

PAPER TRAY: Upper paper cassette (250 sheets)

Lower paper cassette (250 sheets)

In addition to the highlighted information, I have to say this printer is altogether, quiet, the registered noise level is noted at 50dB A, when printing and 40 dB A when on stand-by, this makes life, in the small editorial office, a tad better.

### Auto Emulation.

Running down, the specification list, nothing special pops, out and shouts at you; unless you examine some details closer. I am talking now, of the automatic emulation selection, this is a great plus for the product.

Users, who only really want to plug a printer in, and be under way, (namely Micro Computer Mart's editorial department), need not worry, about software installation procedures, because the printer deals, with it-isn't this branch of the Brother supposed to be what all peripherals are like, "... almost intelligent, in use....????" Of course you still have the option to pre-set the emulation needed, but never the less it's a very positive a rea.

Looking forward slightly here, I have to note, the fact that the Liquid Crystal Display, and the associated control panel is movable. Yes, you can move the control panel to the desired angle, so you can easily read the displayed messages. For the book, to adjust the angle of the control panel, hold both the tabs down, located at either side of the panel, and move the panel, up and down. Easy, yet very, very considerate. A simple addition, to the hardware design, has given the machine a very smooth and friendly appearance.

As promised, I will now take a look at the design of the hardware, the way in which the machine is presented, to the user, and merges with its environment. The machine measures, 12.5" x 13" x 14"; decorated in a light cream colour, with blue flashing, on the paper trays. Quite pleasing to the eye; the Brother fitted into the editorial office, quite neatly. In total, the machine is designed to look and fit into any, or indeed most, office environments.

# **Quality Text**

In previous articles, I have discussed the importance of accompanying documentation. Be it presentation, or indeed quality of information provided, I find this area of paramount importance. Brother, as highlighted in BCN review, have seemingly invested a great deal of money in the presentation, and quality of the textual information provided, with there machines. I am glad to report, this is also the case, with the HL-10D/V laser printer. The book, is paper back based, containing several appendices, giving exact, concise, and crisp information. There are plenty, of referrals, to hardware drawings, giving the user, (me, on this occasion), a sense of security. Being able to see, as well as read, that I am doing the correct thing. The manual is a great advantage, for Brother; we no-longer have to plough through pages, upon pages, of SYM-BOL/CHARACTER SETS, or indeed PA-PER SPECIFICATION, (though you can if you really, want too - these sections, and alike, are contained rather neatly in the rear of the book, under appendices title).

Taking a slight tangent here, I would just to point out that the error message handling system, is superb. None of these, Computer Talk, jargon brimmed error reports, ie., I/O RECOG NEGATIVE which basically means, cannot detect a input/ouputport. Just very simple, neat, and crisp notation, an example of which is, 15 NO CASSETTE. The 15 denotes, a reference, which can be found in the manual, the error section in the manual gives, a precise meaning to the error, coupled with a solution - a sort of troubleshooting section.

As I draw to the end of this review, I the point that the print quality, is of the highest standard, (as one would expect from the mighty Brother corporation). Finally, I would like to sum up, by giving this a ten out of ten mark, for quality, classic affordability and all round excellence. This machine is a great advertisement for BROTHER.

For further information contact, Brother headquarters, on 061-330-6531, the present list price for this machine is, £1999.00 (plus VAT), - discounts available.



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# Hints on Buying & Selling a 2nd hand computer

# **Buying**

First-Time Buyers

Get hold of a good book to dramilarise yourself with terms available on most machines and topics, so read up on the computer and/or the specific applications are that you are thinking of using. List your requirements in order of priority. Would you perhaps prefer a machine compatible with the computers you use at work or with the computers you use at work or with the computers you use at work or with the computers you children.



use atschool. Checkthatsoftware is readily available and affordable. Find out if there are any computer user groups in your area, speak to the own computers. Most own computers. Most own computers. Most own computers with the work of the own computers with the work own computers with the work own make sure you are clear in your own mind exactly what you own mind exactly what you mequire from your purchase and that what you are about to buy meets those requirements.

Is the price reasonable?

Find out what the cost was when new, look around to see what price others are asking for the same or similar machine. In many cases software, books or even a printer are included with the sale, you will have to decide what they are worth to you in addition to the value of the machine.

Is it fully functional?

A seemingly obvious question, but one well worth asking right at the start of negotiations - just in case the seller forgets to tell you something important!

Why are they selling?

The answer to this question might indicate limited expansion capabilities, poor software support, obsolescence or another limitation of which you were previously unaware. Perhaps the seller needs' cash in a hurry, enabling you to negotiate a lower price. Whatever the answer, consider for a moment will you be selling if for the same reason a

month after purchase?

Test the machine.

If you are fortunate enough to get the opportunity to view the machine make the following tests:

Bootthe system from the hard disk and/or the floppy disk, run some software that you are familiar with, watch and listen for anything unusual, ask the owner to explain anything you're not sure of.

If they are available, run diagnostics programs to determine the state of the machine, bad sectors on the hard disk etc. Test each floppy drive individually, format a disk, copy files to and from it, delete files and check results.

Check the case, monitor, screen, mouse and keyboard for signs of wear and tear or misuse. If there are any peripherals such as a printer or modern included in the price, make sure that they are also in good working order and that all the necessary cables are sunplied.

Making an offer.

If after due consideration you decide to make an offer lower than the asking price, state the price you are prepared to pey and explain to the owner why you think the asking price is too high. If your offer is refused and you are not prepared go higher, ask for your offer and particulars to be noted and leave it at that. If the machine has not been sold after a

few days and there are no prospective buyers on the horizon, the seller is faced with the prospect of re-advertising the machine. Your offer may then look much more attractive.

Be careful.

If you are able to make the transaction in person, you will have to deal in cash or some other guaranteed payment method. Otherwise, you will have to wait for your personal cheque to clean in any event make sure that you get the vendors full details and a written receipt. Remember that goods sold privately are "sold as seen" so you have very little, or no redress once the sale has taken place.

If you can't collect personally and the seller can't deliver, you will most likely have to send a cheque in the post. Make sure that you fill in all the details on the cheque and that it is made out to the person who is selling the computer, but a line through any blank spaces and cross the cheque and "Account Payee-Not Negotiable". This ensures that only the payee can cash the cheque.

If you intend to use a percell carrier, establish who is responsible for the cost and be sure to ring a few companies for the best price, as they do vary considerably. Some companies may be able to arrange to collect the cash or cheque on delivery. Make sure that signatures are always obtained.

# Selling

Placing Your FREE Advertisement

The most difficult decision is to decide how much to ask for your computer. The original purchase price is of no consequence unless it is a very current model. Look through the adverts in this issue, get a feel for the asking prices of machines of similar specification.

If you want a quick sale, price accordingly. If you are including software and peripherals with the sale, value those realistically too. It is often more prudent to individually price or separately advertise expensive add-ons like modems or printers. Otherwise they may make your machine em more expensive than others and you also won't put people off who have already got, or don't want these items

Then the easy bit, post or fax your completed FREE PRIVATE AD FORM to MICRO MART, and wait for the calls.

#### **Groom Your Computer**

Appearance is important, so although your machine may be in perfect working order, if it looks grubby it may put off a prospective purchaser. You don't need to buy a special computer cleaning kit household cleaning products are perfectly adequate. Use a vacuum

cleaner or soft brush to remove dust. Use a glass cleaher sparingly on the screen and a non-scratch detergent on the casing, remembering to remove any stickers.

Prospective Buyers.

If you have priced your machine realistically, you will doubtless get many callers. Try not to be pushy, give the caller time to collect their thoughts. If you are offered less than the asking price, don't dismiss their offer out of hand, take their name and number, it may be the only offer you get. Also, bear in mind that dealers will usually pay less than a private buyer.

Bewarel Don't consider your computer sold on the strength of averbal offer, you may never hear from them again, or they may change their minds. Tell subsequent callers that you have received an offer; but establish if they too are interested, you may even get a better offer, above all take their name and number. Remember, your computer is not sold until you have the money!

#### Payment

Don't part with your machine unless sure you are going to get the money. Bankers drafts, building society cheques (when made out by the society), guaranteed cheques (check the bank card limit) and postal orders are all sensible alternatives to cash. Otherwise wait for the

cheque to clear. It is possible to Express's cheque through the clearing system, ask your bank for details, a charge will almost certainly be made. When using a parcel carrier establish who is responsible for the cost.

Removing Software and Personal Data

Remove all files from your hard disk, including the operating system, if it is not included in the sale. Don't forget to back up your personel date first. Remember that files can often be un-deleted, so



formatting your hard disk is highly recommended.

Copyrighted software that is

Copyrighted software that is included in the price should be supplied to the buyer on original media with all accompanying documentation, any back up copies which you possess must be destroyed. Check your software license agreements for details of registering the transfer of license.

If you retain copies of copyrighted software which you have given away or sold, or pass on copies of software which you still own, you will be BREAKING THE LAW and could be prosecuted.

#### Packing for transit.

With a little care and patience in packing you can greatly minimise the risk of damage in transit.

Park your hard disk head, and remove anything which you aren't selling. Restrain or secure anything that moves. Insert old floppy disks in the drives and close the drive doors. Check that you are including all necessary manuals, cables, etc.

Pack the machine securely in a suitably sized sturdy box or carton. Use polystyrene, newspaper or carboard packing to prevent any movement and provide some protection against knocks. Mark the package "HANDLE WITH CARE" and "FRAGILE" in large letters. Check that it is insured.



Micro Mart continues with its show calendar preview and will be attending the shows that are indicated with an asterisc.

Readers are advised to confirm all show dates before attending any event.

# **November**

THE COMPUTER FAIR Every Saturday Bedford Corner Hotel London. Tel: 0747-838597

November 10th-12th AUTOFACT 92 Detroit USA 0101-313-271-1500

November 10th-12th IMAGE PROCESSING 92 Birmingham NEC Tel: 081-742-2828

November 10th-12th
COMPUTERS IN THE CITY
London Barbican
Tel: 081-742-2828

November 14th
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
Novotel, Hammersmith
London

November 14th
COUNTRY WIDE
COMPUTER MARTS
Cardiff
Tel: 0258-453730

November 13th-15th ELECTRONIC GAMES SHOW Wembley 061-440-9067

November 14th AMS6 (All Micro Show) Bingley Hall, Stafford Tel: 0473-272002

November 15th
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
Brunel Centre
Bristol

November 15th
SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE
PROMOTIONS
Kempton Park, Middlesex
Tel: 44-926-815351

November 16th-20th COMDEX FALL Las Vegas USA Tel: 071-872-6213

November 17th-19th ELECTRONIC DISPLAYS Wembley, London 081-742-2828



November 19th-22nd CHRISTMAS COMPUTER SHOPPER SHOW \* Olympia Tel: 081-742-2828

November 21st
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
East Midlands
De Montfort Hall
Leicester

November 21st COMPUTER AUCTION Birmingham Tel: 021-445-1794

November 21st NORTHERN COMPUTER MARKETS Manchester Tel: 061-681-0569

November 22nd
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
Northumbria Centre
Washington

November 22nd NORTHERN COMPUTER MARKETS Liverpool Tel: 061-681-0569

November 23rd-25th EDI GERMANY CCH Congress Centre, Hamburg Tel: 081-742-2828

November 26th-29th WORLD OF COMMODORE 92 Frankfurt Tel: 01049-8106-33954

November 28th
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
Haydock Park
Racecourse

November 28th COMPUTER AUCTION Bristol Tel: 021-445-1794 November 29th
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
Candleriggs City Hall
Glasgow

November 29th
COUNTRY WIDE
COMPUTER MARTS
Norwich
Tel: 0258-453730

November 29th WORLD OF COMMODORE Frankfurt Tel: 01049-8106-33954

# December

THE COMPUTER FAIR Every Saturday Bedford Corner Hotel London, Tel: 0747-838597

December 4th
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
West Midlands
National Motorcycle Museum

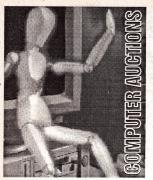
December 5th
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
West Midlands
National Motorcycle Museum

December 5th
COMPUTER AUCTION
Cheltenham
Tel: 021-445-1794

December 4th-5th GAMESMASTER LIVE NEC, Birmingham 0234-212988

December 12th
ALL FORMATS
COMPUTER FAIR
Sandown Park
Surrey

December 12th
COMPUTER AUCTION
Birmingham
Tel: 021-445-1794



Alex Kinch Offers Some Tips On **Buying At Auctions** 

If you look through the pages of Micro Mart, you probably can't help noticing all advertisements and mentions regarding Computer Auctions. These can be the ideal opportunity to pick up a bargain, but on the other side of the coin, they can sometimes cause problems.

If you already know the ins and outs of computer auctions, let me apologise for going over things that you already know. But, if you don't, keep reading!

When you arrive at the auction, you will have to buy a copy of the catalogue. Although this isn't essential, it makes life a lot easier if you do purchase one. They normally cost around £1.00, and can normally be purchased in advance.

The catalogue consists of a list of the items up for auction (in order of being auctioned), rules of the auction, and details of forthcoming auctions.

Each item, or set of items, termed as a "lot", has a number. The lots are normally on display, and always have a lot of numbers on them, which makes life easier for

the buyers to see which lot is which in the catalogue.

### Time to think

Before the auction starts, there is a period of time in which you can examine the lots, ask questions etc. This is usually about an hour to an hour and a half, but can vary from auction to auction.

The next step, after buying the catalogue, is to register yourself as a bidder. Normally you have to produce some identification to prove that you are who you say you are. This makes sure that if you bid for something, and then don't go and collect it, they can get back to you. If you don't, or can't pick your goods up and pay for them on the day, it is the norm to be charged for storage, which can prove costly.

After you have registered, and looked around, making sure that you have made a note of all the lots you are interested in, you go and sit down in front of the stage, where the auction is to take place. When you registered, you would have got a bidder number or code on a piece of paper, which you wave around when you bid for an item.

Having bid for an item, you usually wait to the end of the auction and then go to the collection point, give in your number

and they go and then print you an invoice. You pay for your goods, and then attempt to find

You have to be careful at auctions, because what looks like a good bargain at the time may turn out to be a waste of money when you get home and find out it doesn't work. Unless your lot was classified as "Sold as Seen", "Unclassified", or any similar terms that means that there is no guarantee, you should be able to get your money back on nonworking items.

# Warranty?

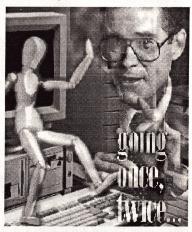
However, if you did purchase something that did have no warranty on it, you are stuck with it, even if it doesn't work. Beware of these types of lots, and unless they are cheap to use as spares, or you want to take a risk, be prepared to stand a chance of wasting your hard earnt money.

When I first went to an auction, I bought a bargain that was at a price which was extremely cheap. Unfortunately, the item didn't work, and it took me quite a few phone calls for the company to agree to give my money back. My advice to you if you are stuck in the same situation as I was, is to double check your contract that you signed with the auctioneers, go over the terms and conditions, and also check that the item was not sold as seen, or sold with no warranty. If you think you still have a case for a refund, contact the company concerned, and if they still refuse to co-operate, take them to the small claims court.

# Fight for your Rights

By now you must be thinking that going through all this to get your money back isn't worth it, but it is. If you have a case for a refund, fight until you get that refund, even if it means taking the company to court. Companies in general will not want to be taken to court, and will usually give in at just the thought of all the hassle.

But anyway, don't let this put you off. 99 percent of the time auctions are great places to get computer equipment, and can be fun, but just be careful!



TANDON PC MANUALS all new £7 includes p&p. 0483-200456.

AT-ONCE PC Emulator for Amiga £100, PC-Speed for Atari STFM £55. phone 0524-732137 Lancaster.

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Colin (0202) 622123 Poole. TORCH MANUALS: Perfect Filer. BBC BITS: ATPL Sidewise expansion card with 16K RAM, Watford 32K RAM card, Viglen Sideways ROM cartridges, BBC Master cartridges, many software in ROM. Ring: (081) 771 0391 for details.

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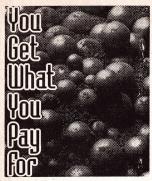
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Matthew Holbrook concludes his story on a friend who bought a bargain 386 PC.

The more articles I write, the more questions I seem to be asked and the more advice I seem to be offering. It's got to the stage where I can't even go out in the street without someone stopping me for a bit of PC advice!

The latest person to request my services was someone I used to go to school with. After quite a bit of looking around, it was decided that an Amstrad 386 in a special bundle was the deal for him. On re-booting we were greeted with the message that this machine did not have a hard disk. On going into setup, it was revealed that there was neither a hard disk on hard disk ontroller.

Moving that plastic cover had not somehow done the trick. We were getting pretty desperate by this stage and so it was decided to open the Amstrad back up again and put things back the way they were. On re-booting we found we were back with a hard disk, but no hard disk controller. At least that was something! We've been setup So, what was the next course of action? As we had already spent three hours trying to get this wretched machine working, I was keen to get off home.

### Suspicions

My last thought was perhaps there was an error in SETUP - making out that the hard disk controller was disabled even though the hard disk was sort of working. As a final test, I told my friend to try FDISK again and leave it running for a lot longer this time. I told him to let it run for at least two hours. I then went home. Three hours later I received a phone call from my friend to tell me that FDISK was still running - and that the PC was making the most dreadful noise.

I told him to turn off the PC and to contact the company that supplied the package. There certainly seemed to be serious hardware errors taking place. The PC was covered by a year's on-site warranty and it seemed like a good idea to make a call on this rather than waste any more of our time. The company (no name I'm afraid) immediately put my friend onto some sort of insurance company. This is the first time I've heard of this practice but we were talking about a box shifter - possibly not geared up for technical support on a large scale.

My friend phoned this other company. From the description it sounded more than just an insurance company. They seemed to have people that knew about PCs anyway. My friend found it rather difficult to get anyone to speak to him. Eventually someone was prepared to listen. After an abridged version of the story had been reeled off, an offer was made to fax some technical support notes through. friend accepted this offer although he was more than a little sceptical (me too). Down the line The notes arrived around four hours later (although I think he had to chase them up before they were squirted down the line). He photocopied the notes and gave me a copy. I took one look at them and immediately spotted a very interesting piece of advice. The hard disk number should have been set to 4 and not 1! No wonder the B\*\*\*\*Y thing was sounding like a constipated mule, or alike.

I told him to try changing this number and to ignore the rest of the instructions. A telephone call came through that evening. It had worked and the hard disk was running like a dream. I thanked him for the call and said that I would see him the next day. Although I was glad that the PC was now working, I was more than a little perplexed about this hard disk number. Where did the 'I' setting come from? All was revealed the next day. When my friend was told to run setup all those weeks before, he did so but followed the example given in the Amstrad user manual.

Although following the manual is normally very good advice it seemed that this manual was perhaps meant for several different types of PC. The instructions for SETUP clearly showed that the hard disk should betype 1. I also noted that its aid that a maths co-processor was installed - ah that's where that setting came from. So, what's the moral of this tale? Well, I'm not really sure to be honest. I'll tell, you one thing though, it's certainly not 'read the ever so helpful user manual?'.

### **Problem Solver**

I suppose I'm thinking really of problem solving skills here. In solving any problem (particularly one which involves aging PCs obtained from box shifters) you must make sure that you leave no stone unturned. Although we both assumed that the hard disk number was correct, we had no real way of telling as our main work took place on a saturday. After this little episode was over with, my friend came to me to say that he found a sticker on top of the main casing telling us that the hard disk was of type 4. We had to laugh. What definitely comes out of this is that Amstrad kit is not a pile of old bricks. The fact that I've got more than just a few hundred shares in Amstrad should go to prove this. I've had an Amstrad since 1987 and have processed close to a million words on it. I've never had a single word of complaint about this machine and I expect it to serve me for some years to come. I must admit though that I was beginning to come round to a change of mind. When I saw this huge Amstrad 2386 and listened to the noise it was making, I wondered what kind of monstrosity I had recommended. Of course my friend has a working 386DX PC and some excellent software. We knew that this wasn't the best PC in the world - but then the money was not available to purchase the best PC in the world.

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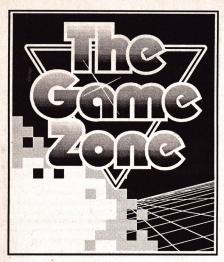
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# 21st CENTURY ENTERTAINMENT

One of the biggest surprises this year has been the success of Pinball Dream from a team of Swedish programmers. It is now regarded as the definitive game of its type. It was out on the Amiga but a PC version will follow shortly.

In the near future we will see many more tables plus also a construction kit.

# WORD OF TROLLS -AMIGA/PC/ST

Based on the cute troll character figures, that you can now buy in local toy shops. The game comprises of many fun, enjoyable and graphically pleasing levels that include: CANDYLAND, FAIRYTALE LAND, CARTOON LAND, FAIRGROUND LAND, NEVER NEVER LAND, ETC. The player selects his starting point from the many varied levels depending on which shelf is chosen. Unlike most games of this type, the player is not forced to play the game in a set sequence of levels but is able to

start anywhere and progress in his own way. Thus all levels are available for play virtually from the start. The movement of the trolls comprises over 100 frames of detailed animation in a skipping/running action which appears realistic and humorous. As the troll progresses he acquires various novel tools to assist along the way. For example a Yo Yo is used to climb and swing up and down, span gaps and demolish solid walls. If you are a Sonic fan and like arcade games then this is one for you.

# METAMORPHOSIS

Metamorphosis is a totally different type of game from anything else that has been produced (maybe silly putty) on home computer. The game is unique like Tetris and Populous were. The game allows you to transform yourself into different states of matter to solve the levels. You can become one of four physical states - gas, liquid, rubber ball, metal ball. Each of these possible states have their own unique strengths and weaknesses, for example. Liquid cannot travel uphill but can seep through cracks and extin-guish flames. You have to try to complete each level within a

time limit and to only use a certain number of transformations between states as you have a limited amount of energy. The game will allow you to transform as often as you like to complete a level but you may only progress to the next stages when you beat the target percentage needed for that level. This allows you to explore the landscape and experiment with different solutions until you work out how to beat the level and progress further into the game.

The game's emphasis is on experiment and discovery in the way states interact with their

environment.

# PINBALL FANTASIES

This is the same as Pinball dream except the design of the table has changed with 4 new scenarios each with their own graphic design, theme, music and effects.

PARTYLAND, ride the rides and keep your lunch down. BIL-LIONDOLLAR GAMESHOW, will allow you to grab money prizes and a big score. SPEED DEVIL, reach pole position in the race presentation screen and lastly SKULL AND BONES with skull and cross bones sprites and treasure zipping around the table. Up to 8 players can take part with saveable high score. The action is still fast and it still presents a great deal of fund and gameplay even

though nothing has changed.

The difficulty factor will be slightly harder but the ball will respond in perfect fashion to all the onscreen mayhem. Visually it is looking good. Out in October. Micro Computer Mart brings you the low down on the computer industry.

# GEORGE - A Sisphean Drama AMIGA/ST/PC

The main Game: Sisyphus, having offended the gods was condemned to an eternity of rolling rocks to the top of a mountain only for them to roll back down so that he might begin the task once more. Millenia passed and man forgot Sisyphus and the warning for which he had served. This angered the Gods who decided that an example should be made of one man, they would have a new Sisyphus and in so doing remind man of

his place in the universe. George, our unsuspecting and hitherto typical hero was

The Gods, being completely out of rocks and mountains, designed "The Dial". And you as George must go from level to level filling the dial with coloured balls to match the pattern on the mini dial set in the panel. This becomes ever more difficult as you proceed through the levels. You have a limited

number of balls of the key colours and any which fall through holes in the dial must be collected and placed back in the appropriate dispenser. Periodically function balls will be dispensed, these have various uses some good, most bad- such as to clear the dial, change ball colour, randomize ball colours. provide bonuses, etc. Should a bomb function ball fall through a hole in the dial you must quickly dispose of the bomb

down a bomb hole. Should the bomb explode or your time limit run out the hand of God will appear and squash or, shoot you, and your time with George will end. Pickups will sprout up every now and then providing extra time, bonuses and SuperKicks, which can be used to dispose of bombs and key balls quickly.

At present the programmer, Marcus Hamilton, is looking around for a publisher for this game but is at present working for Thalmus but having worked for many of the leading software house and having already had chart success he is picking the company he works with with great care!

POSTSCRIPT BOOKS BY KDobe: Language Reference manual 315, Tutorial Cookbook £10, Currant Editions as new, (bookshop price together £42.90) buyer collects or + p&p, 0272-736237

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ATARI SOFTWARE: Calligrapher Junior V2.25, £25, Turbo ST V1.84 £10. PC hardware 256K VGA card 800x600 £20, p&p extra, after 7pm Tel: Garry, 081-337-4329.

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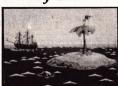
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through the year with special storylines linked to the dates like Valentines and Christmas day. Over 2000 frames of animation are bound together in a unique way to play out a variety of humorous stories.

Complete icon, multi tasking and window sizing support - a big plus.

#### AMERICAN FOOT BALL (DYNAMIX) PC

The first sports simulation from Sierra/Dynamix. Options range from the ability to choose commands and watch the action to the more expert levels where you can design your own specialized plays, trade players, draft rookies, break tackles, kick, punt or dive for interceptions or catches. One of the best features is the PLAY EDITOR which allows you to design cus-

tom plays as well as modifying over 200 stock plays that come with the game. You can play as a quarterback, coach or general manager.

Plus you can participate in

the action on the field by controlling an individual player and change plays using audibles. Replay facilities are also on hand to watch the best segments of play.

# **TURBO SCIENCE - PC** OCTOBER



You are Quarky and Quaysoo 2.2 loveable aliens racing through an environmentally active world. This is a fun come education game with lots of

puzzles and devious designs. You will travel through over 200 locations, each posing a whole variety of science questions and puzzles. The game is aimed at the young, but even adults will find this a great challenge. A 120 page reference comic book giving tips and hints will come with the

package! This game is full of fun and antics with really colourful animation. Take this chance to test your luck and logic in an introduction to science.

# **BETRAYAL AT** KRONDOR (DYNAMIX) **NOVEMBER**

Following the success of Aces of the Pacific, Dynamix brings you a fantasy role playing game based on Raymond E Fiets critically acclaimed Riftwar novels which have sold over a million copies worldwide. Roam the world of Midkemia in a variety of roles, untangle the mysteries of the many sub plots and mini adventures as you stroll through the most comprehensive role playing to date, boasts

Dynamix. Using some of the most advanced techniques you will have the smoothest, most realistic animation available in any fantasy game. It will pro-vide the ultimate challenge, as advanced combat intelligence is programmed within the game. Multi player paths provide a whole selection of different events and varied conclusions. A truly variable, and interesting experience.

# KINGS OUEST 6 PC

The wait is still on for the eagerly awaited instalment of Kings Quest. It will appear in November, but a few new screen shots that have been hand painted will show that the wait will be worth it.

# ACES OF THE PACIFIC

The year is 1941 and you will be placed within the scenario. You can fly either Japanese or American planes with over 30 meticulously researched vintage craft on hand. You can go into a full campaign or go on a single mission. A powerful mission recorder lets you save an

entire mission and then jump back into the simulation and begin at any point. 3d textured presentation with all the real effects, weapons and instrumentation to learn turns this into a mixture of flying and strategy. This should appeal to a wide range of players.

# MICHEL JORDAN IN **FLIGHT**



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# The Come Zone



# LEMMINGS II - PSYGNOSIS PC/AMIGA

Ohno no more Lemmings I hear you say. It comes as a great surprise and can you believe that Lemmings II should make a bigger impact than the original. How can this be? Is the presentation different? No not really!!! Are the sprites larger? No! Lemmings II offers some of the cleverest challenges you will find. Now Lemmings has more interaction between the characters. The puzzles are so devious it is amazing how DMA have come up with more ideas to make Lemmings II even more playable - YES it's true.

layable - YES it's true. There are subtle differences but the control method and presentation is the same. You still control the Lemmings via the panel below the playarea but now you have many more tools and objects to manipulate. Also there is nos time limit. In effect the more Lemmings you get through to the next stages the longer you can continue. The game will have more than 5 different scenes reached with some really funny and humorous touches. One of the many actions required is that you must get as many Lemmings over to a certain point on the screen. This may sound familiar but

the way you achieve this is nothing short of ingenious. You have lots of balloons and you place the icon over the balloon panel then over a Lemming. He will then float up into the sky. To make the Lemming land in the correct spot you can use a fan icon, this will push it in the correct direction and also ensure the Lemmings will not float off the screen if you place the fan correctly. Once you have the Lemming over the platform you must then use another Lemming to shoot at the balloon so he drops down at the correct location

This simple procedure will have you screaming for it may appear easy but it is not. Shooting Lemmings from a cannon and jumping onto swinging chains and anticipating both the timing to grab the chain and letting go requires great skill. LEMMINGS II is the best thing since sliced bread. TO DMA, David Jones, Psygnosis, and even Nik Wild congratulations, you have done it again. Even though Lemmings II may not : appear until Christmas, I can hardly wait to hear III is on its way! I will be reporting on this as soon as possible.

# THE WALKER - PSYGNOSIS (DMA) AMIGA

DMA having already nearly finished Lemmings II also have two other products-Hired Guns which you read about first in Joystick 3 months ago is a role playing action game. The other game is called THE WALKER and they have been working on

this on and off for nearly 2 years. It was inspired by a famous demo of a large robot walking and they have turned this simple theme into a very clever

Yet again from a basic concept comes a very addictive game. You control this walker in a horizontally moving game. The robot is extremely flexible and can shoot in a number of directions. All around the scenario are snipers and little fighters. The enemy sprites are the size of Lemmings but the Walker is about the size of an Amiga mouse. 100's of the little critters fire at the Walker and it must shoot or take a constant barrage and die. It may sound a bitbanal; plenty of pick-ups, and fluid movement, makes it look

# DIGITAL INTEGRATION

The is company are at present not only finishing off their own flight simulation that will give Microprose a run for its money but they also represent 2 French software houses. INCA, FASCINATION AND GOBLINS II were being displayed on this stand and looked as good as any programmes at the show. COCKTEL also had their own stand and Emmanual Kruez was giving a splendid tutorial about the merits of this French software house. KI's own product TORNADO will be out before Christmas.

# TORNADO - PC/AMIGA/ST

The personnel at DI have vast experience in writing sims and many of the staff have actually flown aircraft including the boss of the company, Mr.Marshall. Attention to detail in both the plane and the surrounding flight path will ensure you get one of the most accurate flight sims to date. It offers revolutionary 3d modelling with rolling landscapes and extensive man made features. Specs from the programme include: authentic handling qualities, full scenic details, set cockpit - pilot and navigator, ground attack, air interception and reconnaissance, night flying and low visbility conditions, terrain following and navigation/attack systems, training, combat and multi mission campaigns plus more...

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# The Come Zone

# THE CHAOS ENGINE - AMIGA/ST OCT/NOVEMBER

It has been a lengthy wait for the latest offering from the famous trio but at long last the final touches are being put together by Simon Knight (designer) and Eric Matthews ( a full member of the Bitmap's). The scenario to the game is a devious and cryptic little plot about strange goings on in towns around the UK and throughout Europe in the year 1884. Apocalyptic events had occurred in many towns leaving city dwellers fearing for their lives. Somehow these events had something to do with "THE CHAOS ENGINE".

What you may ask is this machine? It really is for to find out and eventually confront in the last phase of the Bitmaps game. Before that final experience you must venture through

4 worlds (forest, industrial, inside amansion, hall of the machine, which is underground) with each world having a further 4 long levels of their own.

The game is described by head of Renegade, Tom Watson, as a multiplayer action role playing game. The role

playing aspect is only liberally used. For as you play your players attributes can be supplemented to and customised. What we have here is a top notch walking puzzle solving shootem-up with interactive elements with more that a few pleasant surprises!!

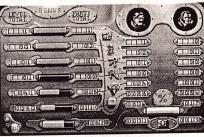
Before you start the game to play against a friend. If you choose to play on your own the computer will generate a player to accompany you through your quest. The computer player will act as your guardian and will fight with you and assistance your to its full abilities. A friend as the opposition will challenge you to fight for rewards that include, money, power-ups and lots of goodles. You commence

by choosing your player and each has their own skills: health,

speed and intelligence all of which increases as the game progresses. These attributes are constantly displayed onscreen. If you choose a computer counterpart with high intelligence it will fend off monsters and attack with cunning but other facets like their speed will not be so good and this will balance things out.

The artificial intelligence within the game is of a very high standard and this is where the Chaos Engine become more than a nice shoot-em-up.

player has in their inventory a number of items and if you



choose the player with a map you will then be able to display a portion of the surrounding terrain and see not only where

the enemy are lurking but where the nodes are positioned. Puzzles galore give the game a wider spectrum so more than shooting is required. When you are walking through the forest and find the pathway blocked you will then realise that you have not completed a certain chain of events. Shooting an inanimate object may

seem pointless but this may hold the key to advancement especially as you inspect a large stone and see it has a face facet of the game is that when you kill a series of baddies and backtrack they

will NOT appear again! Although the sprite formations are set and are the same each time if you change the seof quence events then these will alter. There are kevs to collect, jewels to pocket plus save positions where if you die you can restart

at this spot. Two sets of keys gold and silver have different effects. The gold keys will change events and this could be instantly visible or at a latter stage of the game. The keys are also part of the sequential play and will also open up special bonus areas. At the end of each level a full breakdown in percentages of all the action: how many jewels you collected, monsters killed, hits made, will be displayed onscreen. You will see how much of the terrain you have covered plus which of the player deserves the biggest reward. All the coins and jewels are stored and the player who has fought the best will receive the greatest percentage of goodies to spend in the shop to upgrade his attributes. This means that when fighting if you tend to stay away from the action and only move in when the jew-

> guarded, you will be found out and not receive much of the bounty. The "nodes" are the main objects of the game and finding these become more difficult as you would suspect as you progress. Some are hidden and

are

finding these become more difficult asyou would suspect as you progress. Some are hidden and will not appear until you have gone through a certain sequences of milestones. If things are go

As you move through the highly detailed landscapes full of ogres, your main objective is to make it to the end of the level fit and

well with a large collection of pickups. To achieve this you must find and activate (shoot at them) a set number of special icons, "nodes". Fending off large creatures with your gun whilst evading their own projectiles requires limited skill at the start but after just 3 phases of the first level you will have to elude and attack

with astuteness and speed. Each

marked on it. Another clever



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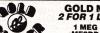
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ing right you will also note that you will not be able to backtrack as paths will block. On level one the scenery is flat but layers begin to build up as 3D interactive scenes become a part of the game. Moving up and down ladders, throwing bombs down into pits and having to look above to make sure a rock is not coming your way are all part of the devious master plan set by the famous team. Interaction between the two players is a must for success and when you have the computer as your friend and you move off the screen leaving it behind, if it is out of sight for more than 3 seconds it transforms back into the play area. With two players the screen is shared and balanced. Each level has a diverse set of graphics and monsters that react differently. Also more



than one way to solve a problem. Movement and shooting is 8 ways and speed of the characters when walking and all the interactive animation is fast. What game from the Bitmap's would be complete without the customary professional top rave group supplying the backing track? - A modern approach?



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Its tough in the streets as you will no doubt discover. Take on the awesome might of the worlds greatest street fighters in this arcade action beat-emup. Ten different sparring partners with varying moves and abilities and an assortment of locations make Body Blow the game Amiga fans have been waiting for. Team 17 have already given the public what they want, all out action with the best shoot-em-up of the year in Project X. The technical specifications for this game include: 32 colours, full screen, smooth scrolling, many challenging opponents, digitized sound, high quality speech, huge backdrops and sprites, parallax scrolling on the background with animation at the same time and 100 colours on screen in some parts. If you want something near to Street Fighter II written specially for the Amiga this could be it.

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In this issue, Andrew Shorter starts a short serial, looking at the positive side of gambling, using your computer as a tool to financial success.

In reply to the many enquiries, concerning computer gambling, we at Micro Computer Mart, have decided to highlight the otherside of the gambling coin. Recently MCM, have printed a series, of articles, dedicated to computer users, who wish to use their machines as prediction platforms. In this short series, we hope to take that theme just one step further, by naming names, and examining products.

As a start, lets look at the area of gambling tools. This area is varied, we have the bookmakers - giving there predictions both positive and negative, the television commentators - not always giving the best advice admittedly, the various textual publications - including guides, highlighters, and suggestions, and last, but most definitely not least, Joe Bloggs, the public punter. As I've brought up Joe, the general gambling

populous, let me tell you a little story - yes I know it's a bit corny, buts it's applicable.

A certain associate of mine, spends the majority of his sparetime, doing deals with the local bookmaker. I wouldn't be far wrong, if I said he spends all of his time there, spare time, work time, and indeed family time. What this chap does, is develop, gambling systems, which, as he hopes, will finally give him the big break into financial success. Not not putting the chap down, or anything, I feel he's going about it in the wrong way.

He spends hours, with pencil and pafrootball pools, and alike. He uses Boolean algebra, on some systems, predicate calculus on others, and shear luck on most. I have to say, yes you know who you are out there, your wasting your time. There are people out there, in the computer industry, who have spent more than just a long night, developing systems, to beat the bookmaker, pools man, and alike.

## Does it Really Work?

Well thats, an interesting and difficult question. In that the majority of time, I have to admit, the systems, do not work - I am one of those, people who are unfortunately gifted with the ability to see, and think only in two states, that is, your dead or alive, winner or loser, and indeed it's works or doesn't. Now, hopefully I do not sound too contradicting, by saying, if a system doesn't work every time, it doesn't mean that the system will never work. Let me enlighten, as any decent system gambler knows, a system needs accurate data, or indeed information to work upon.

Accurate data, can only really be gathered, after a series of tests, practises, or indeed, expeditions, into the unknown and variable area of data have been undertaken. So if you think that a computer, with an applicable system will, as soon as you turn it on churn out accurate, pools predictions, you are quite wrong.

Not being a gambler myself, I have to say, I feel there are a number of variants impredictable circumstances, which any system will not be able to handle. A number jump to mind straight away, such as wind velocity on a foot ball pitch, or air temperature at a race course, where the sun is in the say, or indeed whether a jockey has had an argument with his/her wife/husband.

Unless you've some, direct link to these variants, a way of monitoring these circumstances, I really do not think, any system

could compute these erratic points - for they are truly random.

#### Valid Point

Yes, maybe this is it - RANDOM. We know computers, can generate random numbers, within a fairly vague set of parameters, so could a computer system take into account these variants, by producing random statistics. Infact, for the great majority of goad prediction systems, this is the way they get round that particular problem. So if I could, draw upon all of my previous computer experience, and whatI'velearntabout gambling recently, add all these ingredients, together to produce a prediction conocction

As many solid state options -NOT VARIABLES Randomize variable options Uses previous experiences Use averages to give best possible prediction

Right, so we've got our formula, our jeful key to financial security, lets apply it. Make sure you've got several hours, days, weeks, or maybe years to turn our formula into a working system. If you ask me, the amount of time you have to spend on producing this automated, or indeed manual system, is horrendous. This is where the people, who produce this kind of prediction software come into their own.

#### **Prediction Producers**

The idea of repetitive testing, statistical analysis, randomizing variables and alike, tends to lend itself to a computer specification. What, are computers and programs used for, if not to take the monotony out of tasks, and procedures. What a perfect answer to an imperfect question.

In the next article in this series, I will focus in on an extremely viable product produced by 4th Dimension, namely FOOT-BALL FORECAST. This product has been proved to be an extremely popular pools prediction program for P.C's. If your interested in football forecasting tools, you can get extra information from:

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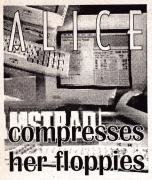


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Stephen Copestake continues compressing floppies.

In this instalment of our examination of Stacker, the onthe-fly data compression utility, we look at some further aspects of its operation.

The user is normally completely unaware of Stacker. It operates in the background with no perceptible delay, compressing and decompressing files automatically. Yet we haven't, so far, touched on the question of Stacking floppy discs. Stacker will compress floppy drives. It will also work with Bernoulli discs, and other popular removable disc cartridges. Incidentally, Stacker will also compress Ram drives.

As a result of being Stacked, a 1.4 megabyte floppy disc will, for instance, offer around 2.8 megabytes of storage space. It doesn't, normally quite reach the ratio of two to one.

The process for all removable discs in the same. There are three stages. As an illustration, let's look at the procedure for stacking a floppy disc.

The first step is to insert the formatted disc into the drive. If, during installation of

Stacker, you allowed the set-up program to modify your AUTOEXEC BAT file, now simply type SCREATE A: (or B:) followed by [RETURN]. If not, see below. The SCREATE function creates the standard large Stacker DOS file on the disc. This file - STACVOL.DSK - is the basis for everything Stacker does. SCREATE, by the way, applies to blank floppy disks... For disks already containing data, read on.

As an alternative to typing [SCREATE] discretely, type [STAC] from the DOSprompt. The [STAC] command calls up Stacker's 'Command Assistant'. This offers a menu from which the various separate commands can be run. See insert, for these commands.

There is a strict dichotomy, in the case of RNEATE. In the case of hard disc usage, Stac U.K.'s technical support team advocate running the 'Stack an Existing Disc With Its Data' option on both blank discs and discs that already contain data. In the case of floppy disks, however, there is an extremely rigid division:

For blank floppies, use SCREATE:

For floppies containing data, run INSTALL.

If SCREATE is run on floppy discs that already contain information, it will simply create a Stacker drive from the available space. Your existing files will become, to all intents and purposes, invisible and unreachable. They'll still be there: 'unmounting' the disk (by ejecting it) will make them reappear.

More on this later. Stage Two of the process of stacking a floppy disc involves your CONFIG.SYS file. Stacker's installation routine will insert a line that reads something like this:

Device=C:/Stacker/Stacker.Com C:/STACVOL.DSK

To stack floppy discs, an @symbol needs to be inserted at, or near to, the end of this line. you can do this by using your word processor, as long as it is capable of saving files in ASCII format. An easier method is to use SEDIT, Stacker's own inbuilt editing utility. SEDIT is rather basic when it comes to screen display etc.: its main benefit is ease

of use. To inspectyour CONFIG.SYS file, for instance, type SEDIT C:/CONFIG.SYS followed by [RETURN]. The contents of CONFIG.SYS are then displayed on the screen. Alterations can be made to the file in the ordinary way, and the amended version is saved by typing [Ctrl] plus [Z]. Of course, to implement changes, you'll need to reboot your machine.

## **Updated CONFIG.SYS**

Stacker's installation routine may already have inserted the @symbol in the appropriate line in your CONFIG.SYS file. If it hasn't, you should be aware of the fact that the appropriate line may be rather longer than the sample given. As an illustration, the appropriate line in my CONFIG.SYS file reads as follows:

DEVICE=C:/QEMM/LOADHI.SYS /R:1 C:/STACKER/STACKER.COM /EMS /B-280 E:/STAVOL.DSK @ D:/STACVOL.DSK

This is longer for a variety of reasons. Part of it involves a memory manager, QEMM (more on this in the next instalment); part of it is due to the fact that I have two stacked drives...

This completes the first two stages of stacking a floppy disc. The third stage is a lot simpler. Type STACKER A: (or B:) from the DOS prompt with the disk in the drive. This 'mounts' the disc, and makes the STACVOL.DSK file available for use.

## Stacking Snag

There is one snag to stacking floppy discs: when you eject the disk from the disk drive, it is automatically 'unmounted'. To re-access it as a Stacker floppy disc, you have to run the STACKER A: command again.

There is, incidentally, a way of stacking floppy discs, Benoulli cartridges and so on in such a way that they can be read by machines on which Stacker is not installed. Lack of space prevents elaboration here: anyone interested in doing this should contact Stac for the appropriate technote. Basically, the user produces a self-booting floppy disc containing the necessary data. This is then used to boot the machine that doesn't have Stacker installed.

In the next instalment, we look at running Stacker with Qemm. Stacker is available from Stac UK Ltd, Kingswood House, 12 Shute End, Wokingham, Berks., RGI1 IBJ. Tel: 0734-776-484. This is also the number for Technical Support.

Prices are £99 for the software only version and £159 for the AT/16 version (suitable for 386 machines) with co-processor. The MC/16 version (for the IBM MCA-Micro Channel Architecture) costs £189.

An OS/2 version should appear towards the end of this year.

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MS-DOS WINDOWS VER.3.0 Commodore £45, brand new, Microsoft Excel for windows CSD 2.01 IBM PC's and compatibles £45, brand new, Tel: 081-203-8382 Hendon, NW.4.

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AMSTRAD 464 COMPUTER colour monitor plus television adapter (turns monitor into television) only £100. Richard (Wokingham) 0734-793388. PC GAMES FOR SALE: Shuttle, 31/2" £20, Heart of China, 514" £15, Supremacy, 51/4" £12, plus £1 p&p, per game, Tel: (081) 599-1987.

ATARI STE AS MUCH memory as you require fitted Hi Res monitor external drive hand scanner software magazines sell together or separate phone Alan 021-430-6959.

AMIGA 500 2.5MB 1Mb chip Ram including software £300. Techno Sound Turbo Sampler £15, Master Midi£15, contact Illva, Guildford, 0483-235745.

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BARGAIN, GOODMANS portable CD player, headphones, mains adaptor and hifi leads, £60, including carriage, ring 0245-31-357 after 6pm, ideal Xmas

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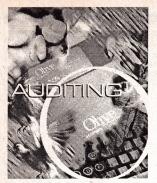
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PC EMULATOR FOR ATARI ST Supercharger 1.41 with DOS 4.1 £60, 061-427-5616.

USE CHEAPER 51/4" floppy disks with your Amiga by buying my power computing drive, just connect it & go only £69 including delivery, call (0925) 755316



In this weeks issue, Andrew Shorter audits Olive Account Controller.

Having had a brief encounter with the issues of representing, funds, assets, liabilities and alike. I have to say, I am very interested in any form, of automated accounting, automated account sentations, or indeed computer aided ledgering-to be quite honest anything which makes, the accountants life easier.

As way of an introduction, let me explain just exactly what 'Olive Accounts Controller' is. As described in the textual information, accompanying the software: 'Olive Accounts Controller, is widely acknowledged as the no nonsense accounting package, written to serve all types of com-pany, large and small.' OK, thats pretty well standard blurb, except for the interesting point they make, large or small company. Hmmm, we will investigate this fur-

ther, later in this article. The associated text's continue 'Olive Ac-

counts Controller, is a fully integrated, program, which is adaptable, to suitindividual needs and requirements. This enables companies to expand in the knowledge that the Olive system will grow with them, allowing them to retain full con-

trol over their business systems.' Well we have yet to see

Speaking to Paul (managing director), from NDS this afternoon, we discussed the area of product market - who the product is aimed at. Having read the blurb, the product tends to be aimed at, 'not the accountant', but the business manager, or indeed business administrator. Paul, has explained that the object of the, package is to be all things (account applicable), to all organisations. If the package doesn't match the particular operation, it can be altered, updated, changed and tailored, to suit. This kind of flexibility, is a great asset to the company.

#### **Examination Procedure**

Moving swiftly on, lets take a look, at the package itself. Installation, is a short no-hassel process, taking only a few minutes of your time. When finished, you can start the package, from the C:\> prompt, by simply typing AC, and pressing return. On start up we, are presented with a logging screen, outlining the dealer information and of course registration number. We continue, by pressing any key, and are greeted with a friendly, bright and colourful opening card, giving us the opening user support information. Again pressing any of the keys, will get you into the menu carousel, obviously starting off with the main menu.

From this menu arena, we have the choice, of starting at various points in the accounting procedures, ie., Nominal Ledger, Purchase, Sales Ledger, Stock Control, System Procedures, Quotes Controller - Not actually available on this version, Sales and Purchase - Not actually available on this version, and of course the user panic button [Q] for QUIT!!

I think you'll agree with me, when I say this is quite an array of functions, available on this relatively inexpensive system. We have all the requirements, that a business manager, and alike, would need, within this system - no you don't agree, well in the following articles, I hope to explain, in more detail, the report generating facilities, and of course, the availability of end-of-period accounting processes, which I think will clinch the argument.

The state of the state of	: LEDGER	: MEN	IU No.	: REPORT :
	: [1] NOMINAL	: [6] :	[1] [2]	: Account Transactions : : Journal List
	: [2] PURCHASE	: [6] : :	[1] [2] [3]	: List of Invoices : List of Credit Notes : List of payments
	: [3] SALES	: [6] :	[2]	: List of Invoices : List of Credit Notes : List of payments :
	: [4] STOCK	: [4]	[3]	: Movement Report

## **Nominal Ledger**

As one does, in similar situations to this, lets start off at the beginning - Nominal Ledger. The nominal ledger, can be described as the heart of any accountancy system. As with other, more obvious systems, the nominal ledger uses information, and indeed data, from a variety of sources. The infrastructure of the system, is the profit and loss account, and balance sheet. It's muscle can be described as the double entry book keeping system, and its life blood is, as always, accurate data.

Being side tracked a little, hear, it is worth noting, for those who don't know, or indeed don't understand, that there is a fairly standard agreement with all computer users, both professional and other, that GARBAGE IN - GARBAGE OUT, simply equates to, inaccurate data in inaccurate information out.

The nominal/general ledger utilised in this package, is broken up into personal accounts, real (property accounts), and of course nominal accounts. These have been sectioned off by lines and titles for ease of use. For flexibility, you are not restricted to this layout, the ledger could be set out using your current nominal codes.

When selecting the nominal ledger procedure, from the main menu, you are asked to input a password - this is optional, and entirely reliant on you setting the pass-word, when first using the system. Within the nominal ledger menu system, you have a variety of options available to you, this includes, adding a new entry, editing, deleting records. Journaling system, and also a report generator, including period end reports. As with all the accounting, options, on the main menu, you have the choice of updating the password. On the whole, the design of this section is very pleasing to the eye, offers some concise information, and is simple to use.

Moving onto the subject area of the sales ledger. This again is picked from the main menu carousel. As with the nominal ledger menu, you have to enter a password to gain access to this module of the accountancy system. A primary use for this section, is to maintain the customer database. The details of the customer represented by the account number are shown. Alterable details are the customer name, address, telephone and FAX number, invoice message, representative code and name, VAT rate codes, notes, area, data trading commenced, invoice discount, settlement discount percentage, term, customer price option, head office account and credit limit applied. As highlighted, a great deal of information can be stored, and of course edited, using this module of the system.

## **Obvious Points**

Other, more obvious points dealt within this option are as follows: customer reports, dealing with listing and manipulation of various data items to produce management information, allocation of payment and credit notes, sales ledger defaults, customer statements, customer payment facilities, and of course transaction lists. In addition to

C64 STUFF, Dolphin Dos, No manuals, £15 inc p&p, Trilogic expert cartridge £20 inc p&p, phone Simon, 041-776-6422.

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MICROSOFT WORD for Windows version 2.0 disks only 3.5ins £40, Tel: 0734-791436.

AMSTRAD 1640 ECD 32MHz 31/2" 51/4" floppies mouse joy-stick 80 col printer software games business utilities will split cost £375, Sambrook, 0782-659854

IBM CGA COLOUR monitor £40, mono £8, amber £15, all perfect working order, buyer collects, will deliver locally, ring (Stevenage 0438-359183. All three for £58.

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C64 WITH GAMES, joy-stick only £55 also Casiotone CT-370 keyboard £180, new only £65, or swap both for Atari ST. call Telford 680249.

COMPAQ SLT 286 3Meg Ram 40Meg harddisk £650 or swap for 17" Multisync monitor or HP Laserjet III, Steve 0252-546398.

3" DISK DRIVE FOR BBC B, £25, 70 BBC B cassette games worth over £300, will sell for only £60 + p&p, phone (0633) 880854.

MOTHERBOARD 386SX 16MHz with 1Meg Ramcan be seen working, £100, 081-715-4054

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SPECTRUM SOFTWARE going cheap, send S.A.E. for list to: 109 St. Davids Grove, St, Annes, Lancs. FY8

DEC RAINBOW PC, no monitor or keyboard £60 or offers. Tel: Mark (0705) 265276 (Portsmouth).

MICROSOFT WORD V.5.5 £30. Microsoft Word V.2 for windows £45 Norton Antivirus V.2 £18, Stacker double your hard disk £15, all disks only 081-360-1991

MICROSOFT VISUAL basic version 1.0 discs only 5.25ins £30. Tel: 0734-791436.

IBM 24XL PROPRINTER LQ/DP, including manual, font set installed, 10/ 12 17/prop CPI ideal business machine, light domestic use, phone 081-505-4754, East London, evenings, £140 only.

WINDOWS VERSION 3.0 manuals, £15, discs 3.5ins £15, discs, 5,25ins £15. Tel: 0734-791436.

TOKEN RING Network cards, Madge Smarl 16/4 ringnode, brandnew, boxed and still sealed with manuals, drivers and registration card 1/2 price £275, 0225-766393.

ADORE TYPE MANAGER Version 2.02 (1992). Includes additional fonts. Unregistered, Mint, Disk, manual and postage included. £29 Tel. (081) 785

WORD FOR WINDOWS V2.0 original disks (5.25) and manuals £75. Redditch 0527 545836

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68010P8 AMIGA ACCELERATOR. Boost the performance of your Amiga by upto 50% just replaces 68000P8. Fitting instructions supplied, £39.95 + £1 P&P Contact Illva, Guildford 0483

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HP DESKJET 500 INK jet printer. Light home use. Excellent condition. £235, Borland Quattro Pro £30, Tel. 051 334 1883

AMIGA CUMANA CAX254 external 2nd disk drive, features include connecting cable, throughport, enable and disable switch. hardly used. £40 Tel. (Potters Bar) 0707 54939



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these options, we have facilities to deal with, creditnotes, invoicing, important data integrity checks, correct payment made, auto data checks, and finally direct sales journal. I think you will agree with me, when I say that so far, so good. Indeed, having looked at this selection area in detail I find it to be an excellent information service and system.

In this, nearly the end of the article section, lets take a look at the purchase ledger setup - for uniformities sake. As in previous, paragraphs lets look at the aspects of this section, firstly the maintenance of the suppliers file, as with the sales ledger, suppliers reports, statements, payment analysis (including allocation of payments and credit notes), defaults, automatic data integrity checks, there are a great deal more

options available, from this menu system, to many to cover in this short article. On the whole, NDS have standardised the input and menuing systems, for this accounting package. The screen dialogues, are of course standard and pleasing to the eye. Not offering to much information, so not to confuse the user. This point is worth noting, especially when purchasing systems - more often than not the first time user or indeed the inexperienced user, will find this standardised screen dialogues, and the general rule, of not overflowing the user with information of great comfort.

Moving on now, I will take a look at the accompanying manual; 148 pages bound in a plastic clip case. The manual is split up into various sections, covering, as I have, the different options available. The front page, of each section will give a summary of whatis covered within, assigning a number to each sub-section, then exploding the sub-ject matter within. There are various, textual and software user conventions, applied throughout, such as the function key assignment for help, or the search key sequences; I would suggest you read the introduction to the manual.

I find it interesting that there are no included, or indeed alternative forms of information appraisal, ie., diagrams, etc. Though I will say, you have the appearance of the odd table, here and there, designed using the '.' and '!' characters, I really think this lets the package down on the whole. If I was pushed to give the documentation a score I feel it would have to be six out of ten. As a final note in this section, all the information is there, but it lacks a certain crisp, concise or indeed

pleasant look - this maybe off putting to some users (inexperienced users?).

#### In Conclusion

As one does, we have to bring this review to an end now, but before I go let me sum up this package, as a whole. On the good side, I find the flexibility and simplicity in use, a great plus, coupled with the password protection, excellent screen dialogues, and the overall design of the menuing, and control functions; a superb use of software technology. But, as all packages have, there are a few negative areas within the system, the biggest has to be the presentation; the apparent unfriendly, textual information provided. Something which has stuck in my mind throughout the review is the lack of search and retrieval facilities within the editing and amending, utilities. Questioning Paul (managing director), with reference to this point, his answer was simply security - indeed this would be a valid point if there were no password systems enabled - this is only a small criticism. Overall a quality package, with only a few negative dimensions.

Northern Data Services, produce Olive Accounts Controller, for more information you can contact the mon 0535-609-456. The present price of this package is £149.95 plus VAT (single user version), alternatively £450.00 plus VAT for the unlimited user version. Free updates, and newsletters available, for an additional cost of £50.00, at the initial purchase stage.

HEWLETT PACKARD Laserjet IIIP, less than 1yr old, immaculate condition, only 800 Page Count, produces superb quality text and graphics £550, including manuals, Tel: (021) 420-

AMSTRAD 6128 with colour monitor, manual, lots of software, faulty disc drive, open to reasonable offers, 081-894-6107 (Twickenham).

COMPAQ DESKPRO 386S3½5¼HD FD 42MHD tape streamer 8Meg memory Co-Procolour monitor, Fujitsu RX7100 laser printer £750 ovno, call 081-304-5587.

INTEL 386DX computer 387 co-processor, 4Mb Ram, 40Mb hard disk Wyse 1280 x 800 high quality paper white screen for DTP CAD £525, 081-451-0520

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ANYBODY AT ALL! buy my Wordsworth (word publisher) original for Amiga, excellent condition, bought in March for £99, Quick sale, needed, offers? Sukie (081) 476-1508 eves.

AMIGA 3000 25MHz 6Mb Ram 42Mb HD inc software £1100 phone 081-892-6687 evenings. MEGALITH 4MB Memory expansion board; fully populated; EXT/EMS LIM 4.0; suitable PC-AT 286/386, manual; Software (includes printer spooler) £115 ono, Tel: 0489-572119 eves/ weekends.

COMPUTER 386SX16, 40Mb hard disk, 1Mb Ram, keyboard, 5.25 floppy drive, mono monitor, MS DOS 4, hardly used: £299, Tel: 0934-513438.

HPD COLORPRO 8 PEN Plotter plus supplies cost new over £600 will accept £275, excellent value phone 051-334-1883.

ATARI 520 STFM Discovery pack including joy-stick, mouse, 100 blank disks, all manuals, and cables, VGC 5150 upgrading to PC, call Matt 071-386-7237 eve's (Fulham).

ATARI STE 4MEG with colour monitor £450. B'Ham 021-453-8769.

MFM/RLL CABLES -5 sets, new only £10! IDE cables, 6 for only £10! SCSI hard disk controller £12 Amstrad printheads, DMP4000/3000 £25 all inc p&p. (0273) 565100.

BUSTEC 286 16MHZ PC 40Mb C84 compressed hard drive, SVGA display, mouse, manuals + citizen 120D+ printer with manuals, Tel: Raj 0322-220293. ATARI 520 STFM. 2 ½ meg Ram, colour monitor. 2 zipsticks, 2 wireless joysticks 2 games packs and lots of PD etc. etc. disk box, mags. mouse £350. No offers. 0253 891517.

AVIATOR £20 +P&P. Amas plus midi leads £15 +P&P. Phone Tim after 4 pm. 0953 603000.

AMIGA A5001.3 boxed instructions 1 meg 2 x joystick Phillips monitor second drive sampler, loads software leisure, pro £450, excellent xmas gift. 021 449 6430. Ask for Richard.

CANON TYPESTAR+, portable typewriter/printer 2 Ram cartridges, 2 extra fonts, parallel interface, case & adaptor, spare ribbons £120 ono. Tel: 081 998 9469.

AMIGA 1.3 Kickstart (Romchip), suitable for Romsharer. Brandnew £20.00 o.n.o. Tel: 0279 432214 evenings. STAR LC24/20 24 pin printer, still boxed 2 months old, £170. (Multifont), PSU £10, Photo gear (on-10-

EPSÓN EX800/1000 colour conversion kit. Brand new with full instructions £25. LQ1000 ribbons 5 off for £15. Tel: 0702 549800 after 7 pm or weekends.

lens etc.) sell swap after 6.30pm Mel

(0533) 419742.

BBC VIEW Sheet manual £5+ postage basic language (30 hrs) £5+ postage 043871 5892 (Herts) any time.
S.C.S.I. FUTURE Domain TMC1680 controller supports 4 floppys H disks tapes CD Roms Dos unix novell full DNKsoftware pack £145.00 new, costs £235.00. Andy. Call p.m. 0428 712 789 N.E. Herts.

MONITOR: Philips 12" green screen for IBM compatible. Boxed as new C/ W cables £30. Phone (0349) 883414 anytime.

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Guest writer, Nick David examines the Ricoh LP1200 laser printer.

Ricoh are very well known in the field of photocopying machines and also laser printer devices. Indeed, they are synonymous with quality and value for money. With this in mind, we take a look at their new LP1200 laser printer set to rival the Hewlett Packard LaserJet IIIp machines.

The LP1200 is pleasantly small and remarkably light, making it an ideal workhorse for the domestic environment as well as the office. No matter how small the actual machine is, there is all too often a large proportion of space required for the overhang and clearance of such things as paper trays at the front and rear of the printing device. This makes heavy demands on space, especially at home where space for computer equipment usually comes low down on the list making the siting of industry standard equipment difficult. On the LP1200, however, the paper out tray is mounted at an extremely sharp angle making it much easier to site near walls or other such obstructions.

## 400dpi Boast

The machine itself boasts an excellent 400dpi resolution when used with the 4Mb option. 2Mb is standard, and the upgrade to this excellent standard will cost you just

£150. This seems most reasonable and acceptable for and extra 100dpi resolution. The maximum resolution with the 2Mb version is a very good 300dpi. The cost of each individual copy is also of a competitive standard, just 1.65 pence for each sheet of A4 with average toner coverage. This makes the LP1200's costs per sheet as cheap, or cheaper, than the cost per sheet of an average photocopier. This has great attractions. It means that a teacher with the school's laser printer at home, could work on a document and run off the total number of sheets required, immediately, without the need to take a camera-ready copy to school and then run off a few hundred on the old photocopier.

The print speed of this particular laser printer is fast indeed for the modest price. Six pages per minute may be printed (6ppm) with a fast front to back paper path. This is 2ppm faster than the HP LJHIp. The warm up time of the machine is an average 45 seconds, once again considerably faster than the HP. The standard paper bin holds 100 sheets which is perfectly adequate for most uses but is not one of the biggest sizes on the market today. The tray clips neatly into the front of the machine and is the covered type, as on most photocopiers. It is attractive in design, with a pleasing smoked brown plastic lid which flips up to afford access to the paper holding area.

Most laser printers generate a quantity of ozone. This chemical is essential to our well being, in the form of the much talked of



ozone layer. It is, ironically, a danger to our health if inhaled in great quantities. Don't get me wrong, a laser printer isn't another potential Bophal, but the emissions need to be controlled. On the Ricoh, this is achieved by means of an ozone filter which slots very neatly into the left hand side of the machine, by means of a flip out hatch. It should always be present in the machine when in use. There was no safety cut out on the machine to prevent operation when the filter was removed, I would have liked to have seen this included.

Contact with the outside world is permitted via both serial and parallel ports. I

used standard Centronics parallel link-up to my Archimedes, although a whole host of other options could have been used beside the popular Centronics standard. The machine worked well with the LJ printer driver, but can emulate two other formats, FX-850, and the IBM Proprinter XL24. This gives cross-platform-compatibility augmenting use on many different types of computer format.

#### 10 Decibel Variation

The sound which is generated by the machine is surprisingly, and refreshingly low! It can seem like you've got the whole Fleet Street printing brigade hooked up to your computer with some laser printers. But this one is very quiet. Just 38Db or less is produced on standby, and less than 48Db when working. Just ten decibels between working and standby noise level is something which Ricoh can be proud of.

Many options can be changed on the printer. Amendment is achieved via a neal little LCD display mounted on the front panel of the machine. This method of amendment of options has for a long time mainly replaced the outdated, and unfriendly, DIP switch routine, these very wuser friendly interfaces have become very much the norm on all lasers, and certainly many dot matrix printers at both the top and lower ends of the market.

The toner and drum are two separate with the machine, and the other "under the bonnet". This was a rather clumy arrangement, meaning that it was easier than usual to expose the drum to strong light or dust. If this did happen, then there would be a great deal of damage incurred by the drum, costing a great deal to put right. Otherwise, consumables were handled very well indeed, the inside of the machine was spotless even after prolonged and heavy use.

#### In Conclusion...

This is undoubtedly one of the best laser printers which I have come across. It outshines the Hewlett Packard somewhat. Its 400dpi standard speaks for itself. The price is low, the size small, and the appeal great. I am sure that the home user will find the price to his liking, as will the education purchaser; just £699 is the average street price of the base model. This machine was a pleasure to review, and I can recommend it whole-heartedly to all readers.

Contact Silica Systems the main distributors, on 081-309-1111 for more information, not forgetting to mention Micro Computer Mart.

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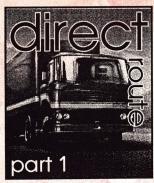
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Matthew Holbrook is fed up with buying direct. In the first of three articles he tells us why.

Most of you will be aware that direct buying of computer equipment has become immensely popular over the last few years. This has been made possible by the wide range of magazines created for this market place. Indeed, there would be no Micro Computer Mart if there was no direct buyer's computer market.

The principle behind direct selling is great. You cut out the distributor and relailer and get your kit a lot cheaper. The downside of course is that you generally need to know exactly what you want. It's relatively unusual to find a direct seller that is also willing to offerbuying advice and technical support. They are to be found - but are still few and far between.

The benefit of direct buying is now widely recognised. Indeed it has spread far outside of the computer field. Many people are saving £4.00 on each music CD they buy - simply by buying from a mail order company. This article is not about direct buying as such - it is about the way you are treated as a customer. It is very much a tale of my personal experiences of buying by mail order and so I'll try not to get too carried away.

Virtually all direct sellers use couriers to get goods to customers. This has the benefit that the goods often arrive in good time - often the next day if the goods are in stock. The problem with this is that couriers always need a signature for goods. Many readers of Micro Computer Mart will be non-business buyers and will therefore be buying equipment for the home.

Nowadays many houses are empty during the day and it is quite the norm for couriers to meet with no reply at a private house. Although it is sometimes possible to get neighbours to sign for packages, this situation is not always desirable. Couriers are often unhappy about leaving consignments at any place other than that specified. Also, some people are not willing to take responsibility for someone else's deliveries - this causes problems.

Another thing to bear in mind is that you should not play on the good will of your neighbours. There's no great problem in them receiving a small parcel on your behalf - but when it comes to a PC in three or four giant boxes, that's another matter altogether - a great friction creator.

Some companies appreciate that people are in this situation and will go out of their way to help. Unfortunately, these companies are also few and far between. The purpose of this article is to explain some of the problems that I've had with direct buying. Most, but not all of these are to do with deliveries -as you will see. I won't be dealing out the names of the companies concerned - just major hints.

#### Always late

One of the first computer manufacturers I dealt with sounded as though it should have a major part in the BBC's Only Fools and Horses. I bought my first PC from this



company. I also had three in for review over a period of 18 months. Every single one of these PCs was late arriving. Despite how much notice I gave, no delivery was made. For example, I gave four weeks notice for my 286 PC. I ordered it over the telephone and followed the order up with a letter and cheque. Despite the agreed delivery date being one month from that day, the date was not met. In the letter I explained the importance of me knowing when the delivery was to be made in order that I would be at home to receive it. A telephone call arrived the evening before delivery was due informing me that my PC was still being tested and would probably be another day or two. This was okay except that I'd already committed myself to a day off work by this point.

The day off was solely to receive this delivery. This was by no means an isolated incident. The other three shipments I received from this company had a similar problem. It seemed that no matter how much notice you gave this company, it only started on the order just before the delivery date was due. After four such episodes I was fairly sure that if I gave a year's notice for a PC of basic configuration, delivery would still be late!

#### Late furniture

The next little story is to do with a supplier that sounds as though it's housed inside of one of Apple's computers. I was looking around for a new chair and decided to order one from this company. You had to pay a delivery charge for the type of delivery you wanted - same day, next day am, next day pm and 3-5 days. I placed the order on a Monday and asked for next day morning service as I was going off to London for a trade show the day after. I believe that this cost around £10.00.

As you might have expected, the delivery was not made -either in the morning or the afternoon. I telephoned to complain at the end of the day but was told that nothing could be done. However, in the small print on the back of the catalogue there was a note saying that all deliveries were guaranteed to be made on time - or you got £55.00 flyour next purchase. I phoned back and asked about this. I was given a reference number and exercised this right a bit later in the year.

Unfortunately, this delivery was also late but the guarantee had been done away with by this time.

Anyway, back to the chair. I proceeded to London the next, feeling pretty cheesed off about this business. The chair came that day and luckily a neighbour was around and was willing to sign for it. Would you believe that the chair arrived in a taxi? It's alright for some!

The second part of this series will be published in the next issue of Micro Computer Mart.

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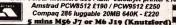
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By the time you read this, the world will know who the new President of the United States is. I for one hope the Democrats have not succeeded in their endeavours. If they have, and Mr Clinton is the new "Boss", I think we can see quite a rise in the cost of computing technology from the United States.

It seems Mr Clinton is none too happy about European firms setting up in and around Silicon Valley, and making a mint out of producing hardware and software for a world market from a US base. If he has his way, tax levies will be unfavourable to say the least.

British companies are in enough trouble already without having a lucrative US sidearm lopped off at the shoulder. Lets keep our fingers crossed this does not hap-

pen. Let us also keep our fingers crossed in the hope that the embargoes and export restrictions are not brought into play across the States.

Admittedly Mr Clinton has spoke of his love for Great Britain, he has said he would build a new relationship with the UK if he won the presidential election. He claims his first views about England were forged in Oxford - not exactly the most typical of UK settlements, what with the Dreaming Spires and ever flowing Isis!

At the moment, Britain enjoys the very latest developments. In the bad old days, computer technology released for sale on the US market

took a year or more to cross the Atlantic. The late 80's and early 90's has seen simultaneous release of new products either side of the great divide. I for one would very much like to get my hands on the new Pentium chip in 1993, not 1994!

## Pentium Chip?

Forgive the spelling, I write this from scribbled notes culled from a CNN transmission. We are all familiar with the family of 8086, 8088. 80286, 80386 and 80486 processors. Are we ever likely to see an 80586 chips? The answer is probably no. Calling chips by numbers rather than names, causes some interesting copyright problems. Interesting copyright problems are never happy about up and coming hardware firms, and no doubt they have no intention of seeing an 80586SLC being produced by anyone!

After all we have seen AMD and Cyrix bring out their own versions of 80486 processors, the names of which have been uncomfortably close to Intel's original. Calling the new 80586 chip, the Pentium will allow a greater degree of control over Intel's competition. Although I would not be surprised to see the competition bring out their own 80586 chips and further complicating the issues. After all if Intel do not have an 80586 chip available, but choose to call it a Pentium. Any other manufacturer bringing out an 80586 designated processor is likely to have a considerable marketing advantage. Only time will tell of course.

At any rate whoever brings it out, and whatever it is called, the new processor will be running at 2-3 times the speed of a standard 80486DX processor.

## Servicing

It never ceases to amaze me the attitude people adopt when their computer develops a fault or breaks down. Computers are seen as some form of foolproof machine, a demigod to technology. When the integrity falters and the machine is reduced to a lifeless hulk, we seem to have nothing but scorn for the manufacturers. Manufacturers who are, after all, only humans like ourselves. Although the time will probably come when computers will design and build even better computers than themselves the dawning of Silicon life perhaps?

When we buy a car, it is an accepted fact that servicing will have to take place at regular intervals, whether it be 1000, 3,000,



6,000 or 12,000 mile intervals, there is no escaping the inevitable - fail to service and your car will grind to a hall! This analogises to computers quite satisfactorily, on the road toward the "grinding halt" due to lack of servicing, a car will become progressively unreliable. This is also true of your computer. Believe me a service contract to extend the validity of a guarantee is definitely a sensible option.

I know such recommendations will fall on some deaf ears. The deaf ears in question being the "Computer Equipment Snobs"

who buy the latest models at inflated prices as soon a they are available.

This is the type of idiot who is the marketing team's best friend, by taking his money now, the company will eventually be able to charge a much lower rate for the same item of equipment to a wider audience. What price coming first?

The really irritating thing about computer snobs, is the fact that most of them seem to be computer illiterate. They spend so much time swapping machine and operating systems around that they never get to know any one machine or operating system satisfactorily.

I digress however, and so I shall return to the topic of servicing - how much do you care for your machine? It seems that the majority of computer users only consider servicing when their machines actually break down. These are the users who fail to see tell tale signs of deterioration in their systems. Personally I believe in taking preventative measures.

#### Prevention

Preventive measures come in many different forms, some will exist as utilities, other as common sense and others as observation. A computer is woefully inequipped if it does not possess at least one of the following: disk repair utility, virus checker, disk defragmentiser, backup system and system information software. These utilities do not need to cost a fortune. The public domain seems to be replete with many and varied programs offering these facilities. If money is no object, you really should consider a package like PCTOOLS, particularly the latest version 8.

Costing less than £150, this package has got the lot, be warned though, full installation will swallow around 8 megabytes of hard disk space. But you do get a very comprehensive virus scanner and deletion

package capable of dealing with at least 1300 viruses.

You also get some pretty sophisticated file and disk repair utilities. A superb desktop interface, a positive and fast acting backup (essential), sophisticated yet simple to operate communication applications, a really useful system information program and a lot more besides.

## **Eyes Open**

Keep your eyes open for tell tale signs of hardware wear too. Monitors for example, if their brilliance or sharpness begin to fail, eye-strain could result. If the image appears skewed or

there is a colour change this too could cause eyesight problems, it is also a sign the monitor may be about to fail. If any of these symptoms appear - please DON'T grin and bear them, get the monitor fixed before it damages you and your output.

Unusually long search and retrieval times for data from your hard disk drive may also indicate fragmentation effects building up on your hard disk. You MUST use a disk defragmenter regularly, as your disk will eventually fail without such maintenance and you will lose all your data.

WANTED: AMSTRAD 2386 or 3386. Tel: (0767) 315390.

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WANTED: DISC DRIVE for C64 1541 orsimilar, preferably under £50. Please Tel: Stuart on (0387) 73252 Scotland. WANTED CHEAP: Amiga DOS Command Book for WB2 plus Battle Chess, can only pay small fee. Contact: Jon on (0752) 366939 after 6pm please. WANTED FOR COMMODORE C64: Disk/drive model 1541, not too pricey OAP. Please ring or write: W.Pooley (051) 933 1342, Flat 1, 46 Exeter Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 7BL. WANTED: DRAM CHIPS 411000-10 for old 386 board, Also, need MFM 40Mb or 80Mb hard disks. Call: Middx (081) 991 9427

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31/2" discs. Also, Windows 3.1 on 31/2" discs. Tel: Mansfield (0623) 795745. WANTED: CANON "Starwriter 70" word processor, must be in perfect condition at an attractive price. Tel: (0462) 895448 after 7.30pm.

I AM DESPERATE to build a PC or obtain a cheap one and parts to upgrade for Christmas, all parts needed. Call: (0933) 318532 evenings.

AMIGA 500+ hard disc wanted, anything working considered, pref SCSI. Also wanted: Electronics board for IBM X24E printer and Rodime 5090 drive. Tel: (0423) 872045 evenings. WANTED URGENTLY: PCW8256/ PCW8512 printer and/or keyboard, good price paid, faulty items considered. Also, Epson FX1000 NLQ printer for sale, bargain £95 inc P&P. Tel: (0273) 565100

WANTED: LOAN of a laser printer, must be Amiga compatible. Please ring: Lincoln (0522) 794539. Prefer local to Lincoln if possible.

TANDY WP-2 owner having difficulty communicating/transferring files to Amiga, does a dedicated transfer program exist or has anyone succeeded without using one? Tel: (0773) 749630. WANTED: 4MB X 9 Simms, four required, pay £40 each. Contact: P.C.Lam, Ranmoor House, Shore Lane, Sheffield, S10 3AY enclosing details. Cheap 240Mb+ hard drive also wanted (IDE).

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WANTED: KINGS QUEST VI (six), must be boxed and unregistered, cash waiting. Ring: Alan on Warwick (0926) 410654.

WANTED: ATARI STE hard drive, will swap for Modern or stereo AMP, tel: (0484) 541357 Hudds.

WANTED: 3.5 HD'S 25p plus P&P. Send to: Pete, 25 Park Street, Dunstable, Beds., LU6 1NL. And I will send a cheque by return.

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EXCHANGE: MY FRUIT Machine. very modern, VGC, many features, for 386 system with minimum 40Mb hard disk or £450 cash. Tel: (0782) 518127. WANTED: AMIGA 500, must be in good condition, not more than £200. Phone: Plymouth (0752) 367066 or write to: 165 Church Way, Weston Mill, Plymouth, PI5 1AJ.

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Disk fragmentation has been a particular problem with programs that "swap" files. Such repair utilities should be initiated at least once a week.

If much file creation and deletion takes place in any one day, it would probably a good idea to defragmentise on a daily basis. If you fail to use this simple utility, you could end up with a completely inaccessible hard disk and a corresponding loss of very valuable data!

Accidents do happen, and how many of us take a cup of coffee to the computer during a particularly long session?

If you spill a cup of this beverage into the keyboard, the initial effects may not be too obvious.

If you do spill a drink into your keyboard, you will need to do rather more than wipe the keys over. As the beverage including milk and possibly sugar dries, your keys will develop a "stickiness" which will eventually make typing well nigh impossible. To avoid this, why not buy a keyboard splash protector. Numerous advertiser in Micro Mart stock these.

You should also make sure you cannot trip over or accidentally snag power, monitor, modem and printer cables. If these cables are left untidy, not only do you risk damaging yourself, but you can also seriously damage your computer hardware.

Check your floppies too, if they become inaccurate or noisy, they will eventually damage your disks, sometimes irretriev-

Check your printer too, fanfold paper sometimes fills the innards with confetti like shreds of paper - a potential cause of platen blockage and even fires! Always look for trouble, please, please, please resist the desire to be complacent...

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WANTED: INSTRUCTIONS for eight socket ROMbox with super power ROM card inside, expenses refunded. Tel: Aberdeen (0224) 643131.

WANTED: DIAGNOSTICS/Setup disk or info, Tulip AT386SX, have plenty info to trade. Tulip will not help! Can you? Tel: Trevor (0745) 591660 please. WANTED: 386DX25 and DX33 processor chips. Also, parts for Mannesman Tally MT904 laser printer + faulty monitors, printer systems etc. Ring: Robert (021) 771 3744 anytime. WANTED: 386 Motherboard, VGA monitor, 1Mbx9 simms, 70n VGA card, 387 Co-Processor (laser printer working or faulty). Tel: Derby (0332) 764730 evenings or weekends.

HELP! DO YOU have the latest version of Checkit and Anti Virus Program? Can swap Corel Draw 3 or PageMaker 4. Ring: Lincoln (0522)

WANTED: AMSTRAD ALT 286 portable memory or h/disk, size unimportant, must be mint and fairly priced, cash waiting. Tel: Cheshire (051) 424 0586 after 6pm.

HELP! I'VE got an Atari 800XL: A Juki printer, anyone got an interface and lead? Help out a student. Phone: Ash on Darlington (0325) 466324.

WANTED: ALL BITS and hard disk to build a PC Plus Book and cheap software, ie: Windows, DOS 5, WordPerfect etc. Phone: (0933) 318532 evenings only.

WANTED: WANG Software for my PC2 word processor DTP, any extra boards or hard disk with controller. Write: Andy Bruce, 32 Antonine Street, Camelon, Falkirk, FK1 4NU.

HELP! MULLARD RGB and Sharp MZ1D10 composite Monochrome monitors failed, registered disabled person (non-driver) needs spares or cheap replacements for both. Tel: Stockport (061) 477 5303.

PLEASE HELP! If you own "Racing Destruction Set" by Ariolasoft for the CBM64 on disk, then I want it! Phone: Richard on (0667) 52718 NOW!

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MICROSOFT WORKS V.2.0A integrated programme 31/2" master disks only £25, including postage, Tel: 021-353-3882.

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HARD DISK DATA heads, cylinders, tracks, etc., also controller cards floppy disks, optical drives, masses of information on floppy disks, £5.95, Tel: 0242-676672.

WANTED: SEGA Megadrive and Nintendo Super NES, Famicom and Nintendo NES games, large or small collection wanted with or without Consoles. Please tel: (0527) 32230.

WANTED: 486 Motherboard in good working order with manual. Tel: Paul on Erith (0322) 337185.

WANTED: ZX81 ULA or dead ZX81 for parts, Tel: Leicester (0533) 353929. WANTED: ARCHIMEDES 310 keyboard, preferably cheap and working. Also wanted: Cheap hard disk for Archi, 20Mb+(working). Call: Paul on (0480) 217701:

WANTED: PACCOMM 'Tiny 2', TNC for packet radio. Contact: Peter Murdoch, 30 Shaw Lane, Albrighton, Near W'Ton, W.Mids. Tel: (0902) 374423

WANTED: PANASONIC QuietWriter. state model and price. Also, interested in buying A500+, preferably with hard disc and monitor. Tel: Chesterfield (0246) 811519 anytime before 10pm. AMIGA GRAPHIX Artist coders musicians wanted to form new demo group. Please send examples to: 24 Morleys Hill, Burton on Trent, Staffs., DE13

WANTED: HARD DISK drive for Atari STE. Tel: Newcastle (0782) 628823. WANTED: MEMORY CARDS suitable Palmtops, 1Mb Palmtop, G5LX, would offer 286 Laptop against 386/ 486 Laptop, CD ROM/Card for PC read/write preferred. Realistic prices for cash. Ring: (0820) 662481 evenings

after 9pm.

WANTED: COMMODORE 1570 or 1571 disk drive, will swap for Apricot XI/PC with some software. Please phone: (081) 968 9722. Thanks. Some one must be able to help?

WANTED FOR Amiga: PageSetter 2 and Deluxe Music Construction Set. must be originals with manuals. Tel: Stamford (0780) 783533.

Software Author needed to develop a Business Simulation/Strategy Game to model company's business, i.e. a commodity chemical business.

Simulation/Strategy Game will be simple but interesting to be used as an induction training device not a true analytical business module. Will operate on market forces on both sales and materials supply sides. Should also have a manufacturing component. Would like it playable on different levels.

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I HAVE an Amiga and a Tandy WP-2 portable word processor, but cannot find a supplier of dedicated software for data transfer, anyone advise? Tel: 0773 749630.

AMIGA COMPUTER wanted, must be cheap, base unit or with extras (500/+, 1500/1200). Also, 3½" disks wanted (reasonable prices only). Tel: (0709) 888580.

L.C.D. PROJECTOR or panel wanted, any type, must be reasonable price as for college student. Tel: 0527 24654. WANTED, GAMEBOY with games, cash waiting for right offer or would consider swap for Atari software. Tel: 0904 791067.

PSION SOLID state discs and portable printer wanted to suit MC400 computer. Wigmore Cottage, Thruxton, Allensmore, Hereford. HR2 9BD. Phone 0981 21409.

CP/M ENTHUSIAST (Kaypro) seeks others, can read/write most 5½ "systems, have many programs, will swap/give. Doug 0862 842231. 32 Oldmill Road, Milton, Invergordon, Ross-shire. ATARI STE TOS 1.62 ROMs wanted, reasonable price. Tel: (0204) 796489.

SCALA 500 FOR Amiga video titling as new unregistered £50, Tel: Chris 0272-781178

BBC 'B' SINGLE DISK drive, Microvitec Cub colour monitor, some software, books, lots of magazines, £180 will haggle or swap for PC Gear W H Y? 0436-831551.

TIMEWORK 2 DTP for Atari ST Boxed as new £45 Various ST software for sale, ring Nic Waites (0377) 42453 after 6pm for details.

AMIGA 1500 WITH ECS and 1Mb chip Ram, also 8Mb Ram board populated with 4Mb plus software will split, £600, phone Paul after 6pm 0792-369901.

ATARI ST, Mb Ram, 1Mb FDD, 8" file of discs, equivalent pile of books and magazines, mouse and joy-sticks, £300 (0503) 70351 after 6pm.

AMIGA £185, One Meg-works with everything-or part exchange for A500+ - phone Loughborough 231140.

AST RAMPAGE 286+ memory card unused C/W 2Mb Ram £75, 4x1Meg Simms £12 each, (due to upgrade) phone 0602-305514.

AMIGA 2000, £380, includes keyboard, leads, manuals, Kickstart 1.3 and 2.04 + Romsharer. Needs new DFI:1Mb, Workbench disks, TeI:0792-404422 ask for Mike, Jason. WANTED: IDE drive Western digital WD 93028 or 93048. Also, conners drive for Zenith Supersport CP 323 etc, cash or swap modern drive. Tel: (0429) 264011.

WANTED: PROGRAMS and expander for Amstrad PCW9256, particularly LocoScript 2 and Datafile. Phone: Hull (0482) 802137 after 5pm most days. WANTED: COMPAQ Manual and start up disks for Compaqportable III. Phone: Paul (071) 377 1632 London.

WANTED: PHILIPS P2000, C.TO-H PF1500-25P or FP1500 Daisywheel printer parts, must be cheap. Phone: Basingstoke (0256) 476554 after 4pm. WANTED: MEMORY Upgrade board for Tandon LT386 Laptop, cash waiting. Tel: (051) 493 2124 Liverpool.

WANTED: GRAVIS mouse stick and instructions for Atari ST, urgently required. Please ring: Lincoln (0522) 533426.

AMIGA A500 wanted with or without monitor, printer, disc drive etc, any condition considered, cash waiting. Tel: Sutton (081) 643 5875.

HELP PLEASE: Desperate to locate instructions and drivers for VGA card: ZYMOS type XYVGA-16 uses Poach-51 chip set, Quantel VGA BIOS V2.2. Tel: Mostyn (0923) 243216.

WANTED: CARTRIDGE fonts for IBM QuietWriter model 5201-001. Tel: George on (0895) 254497 Uxbridge. WANTED: HPLX95 memory cards,

HPII/Peripherals manuals, hard disk, suitable Toshiba T5200, HPLX951Mb RAM, 2120 tapes, Telmar Minivault stamen/BU + leads. Also, RAM T5200, sensible prices/cash. Phone: (0820) 662481 evenings after 9pm.

WANTED: AUTOCAD V11 with Dongal and original discs & manuals etc. Phone: Nick (0494) 714353 anytime.

WANTED: AMIGA contacts, no beginners, no lamers, latest wares fast and reliable. Send disk or list to: Dom, 7 Crossmay Street, Newcastle, Staffs., ST5 2TP. Thanx.

WANTED: SHEETFEEDER for Epson LQ-860, single bin partno, C806141 or dual C806151, will pay reasonable price, good condition. Call: (081) 946 9384 evenings.

HELP! Can anyone copy my Windows three from HD to DD disks so that I can install it into my system?? Phone: (0788) 817473.

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anything, must be cheap, thank you. Phone Reading (0734) 263609. WANTED: IDE hard disk drive from 40Mb to 210Mb. Tel: Paul on Erith (0322) 337185.

WANTED: ANY DEAD/unused Amstrad CPC software/hardware. Also wanted: Dead Amstrad DMP2100/ 3160, will pay P&P. Contact: Raj (0255) 502575 after 4pm Mon-Fri.

WANTED: CITIZEN 120D or 120D+ printer, would consider Swift or Prodot colour. (60 miles radius Sheffield). Phone: Chesterfield (0246) 811519. Must be seen working.

WANTED: NONE working Spectrum Plus 2 casing, outs cracked £££5's if good condition. Phone: (0246) 411186 after 6pm.

SWAP FOR PCLaptop: Mouse, Amiga 200watt power supply, Dr T's Mrs, Sonix, DOS 2 DOS, Abacus Amiga DOS Inside Out. Phone: Parwy (021) 520 0840

WANTED FOR UNDER-funded village school: Disks: 3½ or 5½. Write to: David Hall, Markyate School, Cavendish Road, Markyate, Herts., AL 3 RPT

WANTED: 'CIE Terminals' model No. CIT224, VDU, stand and keyboard. Contact: P.Murdoch, 30 Shaw Lane, Albrighton, W.Midlands. Tel: (0902) 374423.

G.W. BASIC Programdisk(3½"1.44Mb or 5½" 1.2Mb) with manual wanted for 80486 IBM compatible computer. Phone/Fax: Wigan (0942) 216541 (answerphone) anytime.

WANTED: PC contacts interested in games. Also, graphics programming, any help with 3D Techniques etc. Please write, 100% reply to: Paul, 39 Acacia Avenue, Dogsthorpe, Peter-borouch

WANTED: 3 DISK Drive for Commodore 64/128, will swap Apricot XVPC twin 720K drives and some software. Please phone: Stevens on (081) 968 9722. Thanks.,

WANTED: USER MANUAL, circuits ete for Toshiba Word Processor EW100 Mod no. SYS5353F. Tel: Tony on Folkestone (0303) 242140 after 6pm. WANTED: EPSON TLQ4800 48pin printer, must be in perfect condition and sensible price. Also, A4 scanner. Tel: Cleveland (0642) 551977.

AMSTRAD PCW's wanted, any condition. Also, spares, accessories & software etc. We are a voluntary group training disabled persons, good prices offered. Tel: Bootstrap, Nottingham (0602) 603696/857273.

WANTED: CLIPPER Programmers
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WANTED PORTABLE 286 battery/ mains, must be good condition, around £200. Tel: Gus on 04618366 (Gretna). WANTED: BBC B handbooks, ROMS,

WANTED: BBC Bhandbooks, NOWS, DDFS with books and floppy chip, Master cartridge and RGB lead, sheet feeder for LC10. Tel: Essex (0268) 680906 after 6pm please.

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expansion unit for Commodore 128D, cash waiting. Software also wanted for C128D and CP/M. Tel: (0752) 833438 (office) or (0752) 790248 (home). WANTED: MONITOR for Amstrad

WANTED: MONITOR for Amstrad PC1640 colour or mono, around £50 to £80 paid. Tel: Nick on North Wales (0248) 852367 or 450848.

WANTED: C64 printer and other peripherals, must be cheap, condition not important. Lists to: lan, 507 Hylton Road, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, SR4 8DS.

WANTED: FINAL CONFLICT for Atari, swap Kick Off 2 World Cup 90 Edition, help offered on Legend. Phone: Paul on Northumberland (0670) 730129.

WANTED: SYSTEM disk and manual for IBM PS/2 55. Also, 2Mb Simm for motherboard, mouse, keyboard, internal cables for drives, cradle for HD. Tel: (0449) 767130.

WANTED: AMSTRAD PCW9512, 3"/
3½" word processor, in non-working condition, £100 cash paid for complete system. Parts also required. Tel: (0624) 844277.

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