

More on Penguin Graphics in Ovation and

by Richard Hallas

he much-acclaimed new features of PipeDream 4 include what Colton Software terms Penguin Graphics, whereby your own Draw files can be used to fill the rows or columns of a graph, and give an attractive pictorial representation of what might otherwise be a rather uninteresting bar chart. Being an

integrated package, PipeDream can produce such graphs with the minimum of fuss, but

Using Penguin Graphics similarly impressive results can also be achieved in dedicated DTP packages quite easily without recourse to any other packages such as Draw.

In the explanations below I shall refer to the columns of the graph, but of course you could equally well be creating a horizontal graph with rows instead. This article leads on from Pictographs in Ovation and Impression which appeared in RISC User 5:4, and which explained how to make a Penguin Graphic chart where each column consists of several repetitions of the same individual graphic.

ELASTIC PENGUINS

Instead of the pictograph considered in

the previous article, a common alternative is for a single picture to be stretched to make up a complete column, and this kind of graph is rather easier to create. It also benefits from a more precisely labelled axis, with numbers at intervals along it. It is this which I want to discuss now from the viewpoint of both Impression and Ovation users.

USING OVATION

Create a parent frame as before, and within it create a frame for the first column. All column frames should be of the same width. If you do not want your picture to touch the edges of the frame, remember to enter a value in the Inset box in the Modify Picture Frame dialogue box.

Now import your graphic into the frame and then duplicate the frame enough times to make all the columns of your graph. Next, select each of the frames in turn and make sure it is the right size, either by dragging the centre handle of the edge you need to adjust or by using the Modify Picture Frame box. The page rulers will probably be a help here. For each column, choose Fill Pict Frame from the Object sub-menu. Finally, create axes with lines and labels with text frames as described in the previous article.

USING IMPRESSION

As in the previous article, create a frame the same size as your final graph and give it

two borders for the axes. Add labels to these axes using text frames. Now create a null frame the correct width for one of the columns. If you do not wish the imported graphic to touch the edges of the frame, call up the Alter frame box and enter a figure into the Inset V or Inset H box. You could also consider adding a thin border to three sides of the frame to outline its rectangular shape and give a more accurate reading against the axis (you don't need a border, of course, for the side of the frame which sits on the axis).

Now copy the frame however many times you need to make up the columns of your graph. The Snap to guides feature will not help much here, since it only snaps the cursor to the top and left edges of existing frames, not their bottom and right edges. Now import your graphic into the first null frame, and click on all the others with Adjust as described before.

Go through each of your columns in turn and make them the correct size, either by dragging the centre handle of the edge you need to adjust or by using the Modify frame box. For each column, call up the Alter graphic box, deselect the Lock aspect switch, and then click on the Fit to frame icon.

When your graph is complete, you

might like to group all the frames which make it up, so that you can move and copy it (or even embed it) easily.

FURTHER IDEAS

You could consider adding a background colour to either the whole graph or to the columns themselves. If you use a coloured background (or even one with a graphic in it) you should make the individual column frames transparent. The colours you choose should be picked carefully, since on most monochrome printers all shades of grey come out rather heavily, far more so than the monitor screen might suggest, and these could easily obscure the graph itself.

In my experience, the two best colours in the standard palette to use as general background shades are colours 12 (cream) and 1 (very light grey). Using these alternately in the columns

would differentiate the columns from each other and provide an accurate reading against the axes. However, such effects should be used with discretion, as they can easily look cheap and gaudy. Beware also that coloured backgrounds could have an adverse effect on the graphics you are using, as Draw files sometimes contain objects which you may expect to be filled with white, but which are in fact not filled at all. In these cases the background would show through.
