Write-Back... Write-Back...

Compiled by Mike Williams

Comment, appeals, help and information by readers for readers rounded up by Mike Williams. If you want to contribute to these pages in any way then please address all your letters to Write-Back at the usual editorial address.

Spontaneous Combustion

Following Tom Wallers account of how his monitor was engulfed in flames when cleaning the screen with an aerosol foam cleanser, we have received details of correspondence between the Fire Research Station in Hertfordshire and RS Components Ltd., suppliers of the foam cleanser used. It appears that current versions of this product have more detailed and explicit instructions regarding safety. In particular, users are urged to switch off any equipment before use. The possible fire hazard derives from the propellant, which is stated in RS s catalogue as being flammable, and not from the foam itself.

RS Components also stated that the cleanser had a recommended shelf life of 52 weeks from time of purchase, although this is not marked on the can, and the current catalogue gives a figure of two years.

A5 Folded Pamphlets on A4 Paper
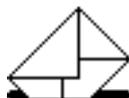
Bill Hensman writes with regard to Peter Merton s review of the book First Impression (see RISC User 5:5):

The review mentions the difficulty of trying to produce a folded A5 pamphlet. Like the reviewer, I found difficulty in working out how to do this, so perhaps my method, though a bit clumsy, will be of interest.

First set up Master page 10 (A4 landscape style). Then drag two frames to this page, side by side to contain the A5 pages you want to print. The sizes of these frames will depend on how much margin you want and guttering for the fold. Text is then typed into these boxes as usual. To print out, set the printer to A4 sideways printing.

It works reasonably well, and I saved a copy of the setup with blank frames so that this can be easily installed. It does seem to me that there must be a better way of doing this - perhaps you can persuade Peter Merton to explain his method.

Reader Participation

Our call for more reader participation has prompted the following response from A.J.Griffon:
Change is inevitable - OK - but please don t let s have too many reviews in RISC User. There are enough other magazines which seem to cater for no other purpose but advertise software, and all seem to cover the same ground.

Your magazine is unique in passing practical information to people who perhaps don t have a professional background in computing, but who want to be more than just users of the machines. Series such as Mastering the Wimp cannot be found elsewhere and are invaluable.

I feel sure it must be very

Pin
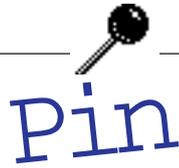
David Symes

Basic Routines for RISC OS Printer Drivers

I have been struggling with two aspects of RISC OS Printer Driver programming:

1. Does anyone have a Basic routine which can replace access to the HardCopy module which is no longer supported by Acorn? This is required so that we can continue to use single-tasking programs originally written under RISC OS.

2. As a variation on the above, does anyone have a Basic routine which can be used to access RISC OS Printer Drivers from within a multi-tasking program?

Any help would be much appreciated.

Greg Herdman

The second point was covered in our series Mastering the Wimp - see RISC User 4:5

Intersheet Files on an Arc

Does anybody out there know of a way to import an Intersheet file into one of the Desktop spreadsheet applications (Intersheet is Computer Concepts spreadsheet application for the 8 bit BBC micro series)?

The people at Clares recently attempted to modify an Intersheet file for me so that it would import into Schema, but without any real success. As the largest of my sheets is in excess of 4000 cells, believe me, I do not want to rewrite it/them again.

PC Emulators

Congratulations to Aleph One for at last offering us a hardware PC podule (see detailed review in this issue). With a co-processor, 4 Mb RAM and a parallel port, this will start to address applications such as Windows and CAD which are beyond the capabilities of the software PC Emulator from Acorn.

However, the 4 Mb limit seems low for such applications, and nowadays one cannot even load them without a high density floppy drive. They are also hungry on hard disc space and access time. I would therefore be more interested in a podule which included sockets for 16 Mb RAM, plus interfaces for high density floppies and IDE drive. Otherwise, I might just buy a complete 486 system for the same price and share the monitor.

Does anyone know how to persuade an Arc to replace the keyboard, mouse and graphics adaptor of a physical PC?

Toby Williams

Monochrome Presentation Graphics

There are many graphics packages for the Archimedes - all it seems producing colour output. This looks fine on the screen, is readily transferable to DTP, and so on.