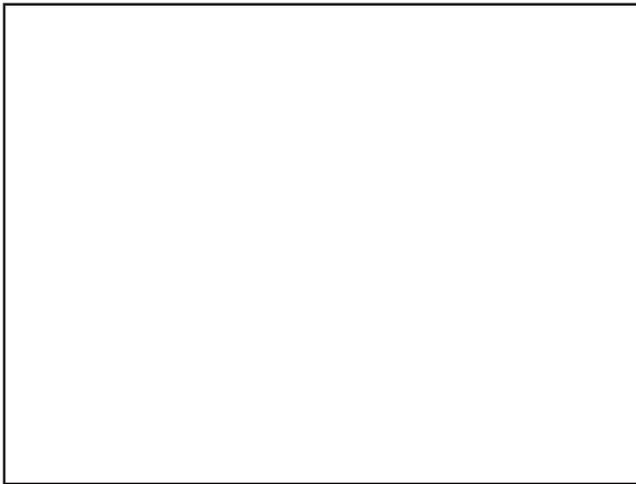# The Canon BJ200 Printer and CC Turbo Driver

Mike Williams assesses the latest printing package likely to seduce the Archimedes user looking for quality.

I n this review we will be looking at two products: the Canon BJ200 bubble jet printer, and Computer Concepts updated Turbo Driver. These are available as one package from Computer Concepts. The printer has some similarities to Canon s BJ10e (reviewed in RISC User 4:4), and I also reviewed CC s Turbo

The new printer, in a warm light grey finish, is a much chunkier beast than its predecessor. It occupies a space 34.7mm wide by 19.3mm deep on you desktop, more from back to front if the paper guides are extended. The height is 17.3mm. Unlike the BJ10e, the BJ200 has a built in power supply, and thus does not offer the portability of its predecessor.

The main control buttons are situated on the top surface of the printer, which also has a flap covering the DIP switches, a convenient location from the user s point of view. A full width flap at the front can be opened for access to the print cartridge. This looks identical to the BJ10e s BC-01, but is designated BC-02.

The sheet feeder will accept up to 100 sheets of A4 paper (or smaller), and there is also a setting for using envelopes (up to 10) and a corresponding envelope mode (set from the top control panel). There is also a lever, above the print cartridge, to control the distance of the printhead from the paper (two settings, for normal or thick paper).

OPERATION

The BJ200 is capable of operating in two main modes: BJ10e or LQ. The choice is determined by one of the DIP switch settings. I used the BJ10e mode, and the corresponding printer driver for this printer under RISC OS 3.1.

The BJ200 offers three print qualities, for text:

    H S   High Speed Draft   248cps
    H Q   High Quality   173cps
    S H Q   Super High Quality 124cps

Using the RISC OS 3 printer driver you can only configure this to operate to Draft (HS) or NLQ (HQ) - it would appear that super high quality text printing is not achievable with the standard drivers. As with the BJ10e, this printer cannot cope with italics, but most other style requirements are there, even if not all easily controllable via the RISC OS printer driver system.

The Canon BJ200 printer as supplied by Computer Concepts

Driver for this printer in RISC User 5:10.

THE CANON BJ200

This latest bubble jet printer from Canon is a most attractive device. Having used a BJ10e for some time now I was familiar with the general concept, but this printer is very appealing. It is a little like taking the BJ10e, standing it on end and fitting the optional sheet feeder, and then gently squashing the printer to about two thirds its original height.

	BJ10e	BJ200
Draft text	53	25
NLQ text	53	25
360x360 graphics	100	90

Table 1. Print times in seconds (Acorn Driver) - one page of text, one page of Draw format graphics in Ovation

I do use text printing (with DeskEdit 2) quite frequently, and the quality from the BJ200 is every bit as good as that of the BJ10e, if not slightly better. As far as speed is concerned, the BJ200 is faster, as Table 1 shows. Graphics printing quality is also noticeably better with the BJ200 compared with the BJ10e, with 360x360dpi, using small half-tones, giving excellent results.

COMPUTER CONCEPTS TURBO DRIVER

The idea behind CC s Turbo Drivers was explained in RISC User 5:9. To recap, CC provides a new cable to connect computer to printer and a new printer driver. This handles all printing in graphics mode (even text printing is converted to an outline

	BJ200	Release time
Draft text	40	20
360x360 graphics	43	15
180x180 graphics	43	15

Table 2. Print times in seconds (Turbo Driver) - same tasks as for table 1

font), rendering any graphics directly. The principal advantage is the built-in buffering/queueing so that your system is available for use after a relatively short period, while printing continues in the background.

The Turbo Driver has now been updated from the original designed for the BJ10e alone to cater for the BJ200 as well. To this end a BJ200 driver is now included on the disc supplied. In use the results much as I would expect (see Table 2).

The release time is the time after which the computer is available for other work.
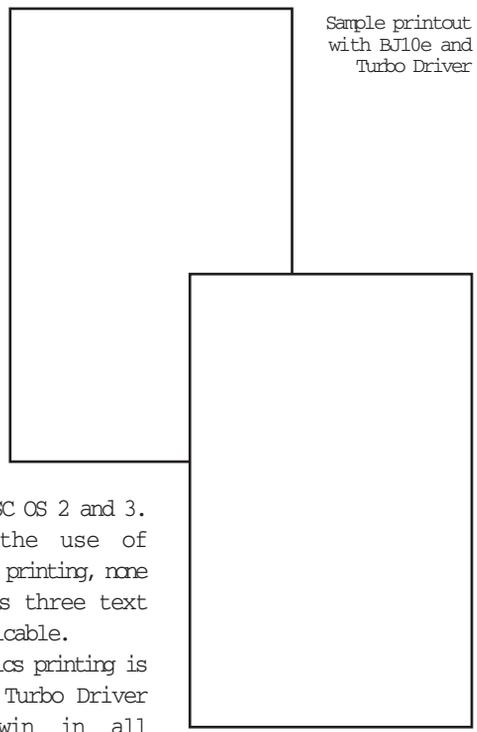
Comparing the use of the Acorn driver against CC s Turbo Driver gives much the same relative results as in my previous assessment. For text printing, print times with the Turbo Driver are actually longer, though the machine is free sooner. More importantly, text printing is not adequately catered for. You can t use the BJ200 s built-in fonts, and the Turbo Driver appears not to recognise any 1st Word Plus codes, which work perfectly well with the Acorn drivers for RISC OS 2 and 3. Because of the use of graphics for all printing, none of the BJ200 s three text modes are applicable.

Sample printout with BJ10e and Turbo Driver

As far as graphics printing is concerned the Turbo Driver appears to win in all respects. It is faster, releases the machine for further work after quite a short period, and the quality of printing seems better. I would say that rendering of colours was more uniform at 180dpi using the Turbo Driver than at 360dpi using the Acorn driver.

Sample printout with BJ200 and Turbo Driver

As far as I am concerned I much prefer the Acorn driver for text work, and the Turbo driver for any graphics work (and that includes anything using outline fonts). Fortunately it is possible to use both with the same Turbo Driver cable - provided CC s Turbo module is loaded first (see The 80 Column in RISC User 6:3). Use the Turbo Driver for all your graphics printing; use the Acorn driver for any text printing.
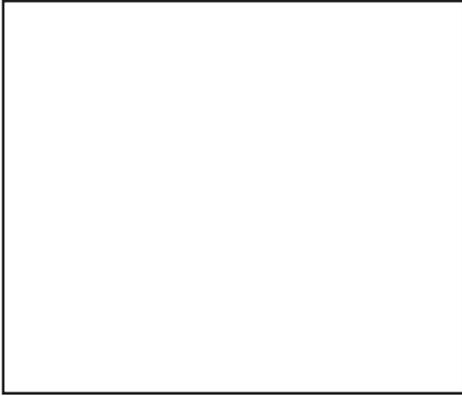
As far as value for money is

concerned, I have few doubts. The BJ200 printer can be purchased for as little as £269 (ex. VAT) and you may need a cable on top of that. Turbo Drivers normally cost £49 ex. VAT on their own. Thus CC s package of £299 ex. VAT for the lot is very attractive, and compares very favourably with the £283 (ex. VAT) it would cost to purchase an equivalent BJ10e with sheet feeder and Turbo Driver. I, for one, will be very sorry when the review model goes back to Computer Concepts.

caption

Product
Canon
BJ200
printer & Turbo Driver
Supplier Computer Concepts Ltd.,
        Gaddesden Place,
        Hemel Hempstead,
        Herts HP2 6EX.
        Tel. 0442 63933
Price   £299 ex. VAT (carriage £10)

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