P ROBLEMS WITH RISC OS 3 PRINTER DRIVERS

A number of readers are reporting what they see as bugs or design faults in the RISC OS 3 printing system. The facilities and flexibility offered by the new drivers are in theory greatly enhanced in relation to their RISC OS 2 counterparts, but in order to provide this flexibility Acorn has apparently discarded much of the original code and started again from scratch. Whereas the earlier drivers had had their teething problems sorted out and were fairly robust, we now have to go through the process once more.

A common problem is that of unwanted extra page feeds. This was highlighted, together with an effective but inelegant solution, in Hints & Tips (RISC User 6:1). Another problem lies with the built-in printer buffer. It seems that this simply doesn t work at all. At present it would appear that the most effective method of freeing up the computer before the end of the print job - at a cost - is to use CC s Turbo drivers.

A problem I have come across myself with the Epson driver is that control codes are now ignored when sending a text file to a printer, even if the Control codes: Standard option is set. This means you can no longer embed your own printer control codes into text files, for example to access facilities such as double-height or alternative typefaces which are not available via the normal fancy text code sequences.

A letter received recently from Paul Draper echoed the frustration of many users on this subject. Paul says he has wasted many hours, and many more sheets of paper, trying to get the RISC OS 3 drivers to work properly, and feels that Acorn

The 80 Column

Our regular round-up of printer-related items, compiled by Alan Wrigley

should not have released them in this state. He refers to two specific problems with the LaserJet driver. Apparently it ignores his re-defined character mappings when printing, with the result that he is unable to print a pound sign, for instance. Also, it completely resets his Panasonic laser printer each time it starts printing, thus overriding the paper bin selection.

Paul also takes Acorn to task over the fact that choosing the Edit paper sizes menu option always brings up an empty window, with all settings shown as zero and no paper size selected. It would seem much more logical for the current paper size to be shown, or if more than one printer is active, the last one selected. In order to find out which paper size you are using before you can edit it, you have to open the printer control window and then the configuration window for the printer - all very time-consuming. Then having edited your paper size, all the data has disappeared from the window the next time you open it.

Paul s drastic but effective solution is to use the RISC OS 2 drivers for printing text. You can t use them for graphics because you will get an Unknown Sprite Op error, but for text it all works fine. The only slight awkwardness with this is that if you want to use a RISC OS 3 driver straight afterwards, you will need to reinstate the later driver module, as follows:

    RMKill PDriver

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RMReinit PDriver
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Please write to RISC User if you have any
constructive comments on this subject.
Perhaps you have found something that
you feel is wrong or could have been done
better, or you can offer a solution to any of
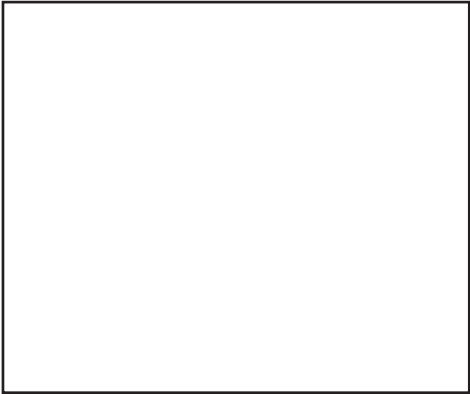the problems. We will return to this topic
as often as
i   s
necessary,
and we will
of course let
you know of
any updates
from Acorn
(which we
hope they
will consider
as a matter
of priority).

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