

HINTS

&

T I P S

Keep sending in your hints on anything relevant to the Archimedes range. And remember, we pay for every hint we publish.

BIGGER DEBUG WINDOW

Ken Cowap

Users of the Debug program in the Wimp Programmer's Toolkit may find themselves a little short of space for report strings in the ten lines of the Wimp Debug window. This is currently limited to 14 characters per line.

For Basic programmers the solution is to amend the file !Debug.B_Funcs as follows:

```
1050 mess$=LEFT$(mess$,56)
```

```
1110 mess$=LEFT$(mess$,56)
```

This will make full use of the size of the Wimp Debug window, allowing 13 digits for each variable value.

CONFLICT BETWEEN DRIVERS

I.D.Buchanan

A problem can arise when using printer drivers which modify the original !Printers printer manager. Computer Concepts Inkjet Turbo Driver modifies the original driver as does the RISC Developments Deskjet colour Printer Driver.

If the Turbo Driver is loaded according to the instructions, and subsequently the Deskjet Driver is loaded, then the Deskjet Driver will not work - it just prints rubbish, though the Turbo Driver is unaffected. The solution to this problem is to keep the two drivers separate. Load the Turbo Driver to modify one copy of the Acorn Printer Manager, and load the Deskjet Driver to modify another.

QUICK DIRECTORY CONTENTS

LISTS

Lee Calcrafft

To get a complete list of all the objects within a particular directory, just open a Filer window on the directory, click Menu, and choose Select All, then drag the whole lot to an open Edit or DeskEdit window with the Shift key held down. The complete list will appear in milliseconds. And you can then do whatever you want with it - including printing it out.

This is based on the very useful fact that an object dragged to an Edit or DeskEdit window with Shift pressed will insert the full pathname of the object at the caret - very handy at times, especially when creating Obey files.

EMBOSSING WITH REVELATION

Michael Cooper

You can create some exciting special effects, including 3D embossing, with Revelation (or Revelation2 or ImagePro), as follows.

Firstly, load a sprite as a 256-colour Revelation Page (i.e. perform a normal load in a 256-colour mode). Then load the sprite again as a Motif by dragging it onto the Revelation main menu window.

Next, translate the image on the Page into a negative by using the Colour Shift dialogue (click on Colour shift on the Page menu, then click on Negative, and then OK). Then select the Blend or Blend:dither option on the Paste tool, and paste the positive Motif onto the negative Page. If the two images are offset by a millimetre or two both vertically and horizontally you will get an embossed effect. Changing the amount and direction of the offset will allow you to refine your work, giving it different light and shade effects. And the same techniques can be applied to text to produce 3D lettering effects in any font.

MORE SLABBED ICON PROBLEMS

James Miskin

When you use outline fonts in slabbled icons there can sometimes be spurious errors. It appears that when the icons are slabbled some SWIs that use the Wimp can complain.

The way around this problem is to create a slabbled icon which contains no text. Then create a non-slabbled

icon over the top of this, which has no border or background and which contains the text. This combination does the business, and neatly avoids the error messages.

A4 WINDOW DROPPING

Jack Lillingston (Castle Technology)

There is a bug on the A4 postable which causes it to occasionally drop windows during a drag, when the window stops moving mid-drag as if the user had released the Select button.

This occurs because the Acorn keyboard can send mouse information faster than the A4 can absorb it. When this happens the A4's mouse channel can become overloaded. To recover from the overload the A4 will perform a resynchronisation event with the keyboard. After such an event the Acorn keyboard does not report the fact that the mouse button is pressed, and the window is consequently dropped. Castle Technology replacement keyboards uniquely send complete data (including mouse button data) when they are resynced by the A4, rendering dropped windows a thing of the past.

MODIFYING STYLE S TIME AND DATE FORMAT

H.Morgan

You can alter the format used by Impression Style for displaying dates and times by altering the program's !Run file as follows.

Drag the !Run file from the !Style directory into a text editor (e.g. Edit), and locate the following line (near the bottom of the file):

```
IF "<Style$TimeFormat>"=""then Set Style
$TimeFormat "%12:%mi:%se %pm"
```

Then alter the last string that is enclosed within quotes to the required format, using the syntax described on page 137 of the RISC OS 3 Applications Guide.

Use the same method for the line:

```
IF "<Style$TimeFormat>"=""then Set Style
$TimeFormat"%dy%st%mo%ce%yr"
```

ChangeFSI VERSION 0.95 ERROR REPORTING

Lee Calcraft

The latest version of ChangeFSI, which incidentally will happily convert Photo-CD images into sprites, adopts a new approach to error handling when used from the command line.

Instead of generating an error to be handled by the current error handler, it behaves more subtly, and more usefully. It sets a system variable to contain the error message. In that way, a program or Obey file calling ChangeFSI can make its own decisions about how to handle any errors which occur. The variable:

ChangeFSI\$ReturnCode

is set to the error message if an error occurs, or is unset otherwise.

WORDPERFECT WITHOUT A HARD DISC

Barry Cartman

WordPerfect is compatible with the PC Emulator, but using it is impractical without a hard disc.

However, floppy-only users can use the lesser-known LetterPerfect, which is simply a scaled down version, providing full file compatibility and all the basic functions of WordPerfect. It has a minimal installation option which fits on a single 720k DOS disc and which will run satisfactorily with just one floppy disc. The snag is that the directory, thesaurus and the help files, are not available, and the program disc needs to be accessed from time to time, which will mean disc swapping if your files are located elsewhere.

It is even possible to avoid the disc swaps if you have 2Mb of RAM and version 1.8 of the PC Emulator by using single-tasking mode, allocating 320K to LIM EMS, and loading the working parts of LetterPerfect into a RAMDRIVE.

DISTINGUISHING RISC OS 3-ONLY PROGRAMS

Richard Hallas

Have you ever written a program that will only work in RISC OS 3, and would like to automatically indicate this fact in its icon in the directory viewer. Well here is a cunning method.

It relies on the little-known fact that under RISC OS 3, !Sprites is actually a shorthand for !Sprites24, and if !Sprites24 is present RISC

