

WRITE - BACK

COLOUR SENSE

I very much enjoyed the article on Colour Sense in the April issue (RISC User 7:5) in the Into the Arc series. As a novice Basic programmer anxious to learn, I found the 'paint brush' analogy very useful in understanding the difference between GCOL and COLOUR. Please, please, please continue with these programmer oriented tutorials - Tutorials being the operative word.

I would like to suggest another topic for explanation: Bit Shifting and Mask Numbers. I, and I suspect many others, have a simple understanding of these concepts. The paragraph 'Bits, Bytes and Binary Numbers' in First Steps in programming RISC OS Computers by Martyn Fox (published by Sigma Press at £14.95) was extremely useful. I cannot recall seeing this sort of information in any of the five Archimedes magazines that I have read for the four years I have had an Arc, and yet it all needs to be understood.

I am currently reading Wimp Programming for All by Lee Calcraft and Alan Wrigley (published by RISC Developments at £12.95) in an effort to learn how to write multi-

tasking programs. I can understand the principles of calls etc., but I am firmly stuck on how to calculate mask numbers for AND/OR operations, in conjunction with bit shifting. I can see parts of it, but the more involved operations are beyond me still.

Andrew Campbell

Wimp programming is a large topic and one which is really beyond the aims of our Into the Arc series of articles. That s not to say we couldn t cover calculating mask numbers etc. at

INTERPRETING HIEROGLYPHICS

all in the magazine. A useful complement to the Wimp programming book referred to is the Wimp Programmer s Toolkit also published by RISC Developments (price £15.28 ex. VAT to subscribers) which contains a number of applications designed to make the calculation of mask numbers and similar much easier.

First may I say how much I enjoy reading your magazine, even if I do not understand some of the more technical articles. I use my new A5000 with 33MHz ARM processor as a tool, but I would like to understand it more, which is where your instructional articles are invaluable.

I read through your Into the Arc

article "Colour Sense" and not only found it interesting, but also tried out the demonstration programs which worked first time!

However, I write about something completely divorced from colour. After all, you do invite queries at the end of your article. Perhaps it would be as well if I offered an example which would serve much better than my trying to explain my query.

Take Impression, which I use and to which I expect you have access. If I Shift-double-click on !Impress, then again on the Auto directory, and again on !Default, then on !DocData, I see what seems to be a page of what appears as hieroglyphics.

Perhaps you would care to explain in a future article how this is done, as it completely baffles me. Some of the characters do not seem to be even on my keyboard, and if that is the case, how can anyone write a program? Perhaps there is even a special keyboard?

I am sure that I am not alone in my understanding, and whilst I am never likely to want to write a program, I am interested in knowing

RIVAL TO SEGA PODULE

how it is done.

Charles Harvey

Many applications, Impression included, store relevant data in a file. The data is not in the usual text format, but often consists of values either in the range 0 to 31, or 128 to 255.

The former have no character equivalent, and usually appear as hexadecimal values enclosed by square brackets. The latter, known as top-bit-set characters, are not directly available from the keyboard, but can be viewed and accessed using the application Chars found in the Apps directory on the icon bar. We will also cover this subject in more detail in a future article in the series *Into the Arc*.

I was very interested to read in RISC User 7:5 (April 1994) that a subsidiary of Sega is developing a podule to run Sega cartridges. This kind of software emulation is not impossible using the awesome power of the Acorn range.

For the last six months I have been developing a Neo Geo emulator for the Arc. I started by ripping a machine apart and seeing how it worked. Once I was quite sure about the signals to and from the media system, I gave my daughter a set of plans for a podule which she built during her school CDT lessons on veroboard.

Although even the Arc didn't have the power to run the emulator on the Desktop, in a single tasking overscan mode the effect is quite impressive. There are still a few bugs and features to be fixed, like a Desktop front end, and also the screen display is upside down, which can be a little annoying.

One thing I was quite intrigued to

PIN BOARD

ARM CLUB WALES

Meetings of the Arm Club Wales have been taking place at the Roath Park Community Hall, Cardiff on Wednesday nights (fortnightly) since 6th April 1994. These meetings are open to non-members of the Arm Club, which hopes to provide various tutorials and help in all Acorn related topics. Various incentives will be offered to people to bring along their computers. For further information contact Derek Rowlands at 9 Harlech Court, Hendredenny, Caerphilly CF8 2TR.

PC CHALLENGE

We are planning to change the format of our PC Emulator pages (*The PC Emulator Survival Guide*) into a forum of hints and tips, questions and answers. If you use the PC Emulator, or a PC card on an Arc (or indeed, are thinking of doing so), then let us have any useful snippets of information, or any queries to which you would like an answer or advice. Please address your replies to Gordon Gilmore c/o RISC User at our normal address.

CONTRIBUTIONS SOUGHT

WHAT'S COOKING?

*find out was that the backing music used in most games could be exported to Tracker or Digital Symphony files without too much trouble. Screen grabs to sprites are also simple to achieve. I have tested the software on various machines. An ARM250 keeps up to about * - * speed; but using an ARM2 machine you'd be lucky to beat the first opponent on Streetfighter II Turbo before the human race becomes extinct, although the software should work on ARM650-7 machines at around double speed.*

I am glad to see developers are

turning to this rather desperate but necessary form of games conversion. I am still looking for a backer for my project, though a few companies have already shown interest, especially a certain successful company manager I can only name as 'Charlie M.'

**Richard Cranium
D.H.Developments**

We await further developments in this interesting area, but the latest news is that progress has been delayed, and a finished product is unlikely to appear before 1st April 1995.

I look forward to receiving RISC User each issue, and I think you have the right mix for both

