

TIPS & HINTS

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

OPENUP on Read-Only Filing Systems

David Spencer

Although you might expect it to fail, most read-only filing systems, such as CDFS, let you open a file for update (that is read and write), only failing with an error if an attempt is made to actually write to the file. Many pieces of software utilise this feature. For example, an application can open up a configuration file and read in the data without worrying about the filing system. Only if the user tries to save a modified configuration does an error result.

However, the read-only Acorn Application Accelerator for networks behaves differently. It still allows you to open up a file, but then perversely gives an error about it being read-only when you try to close it. This feature has been seen to cause a number of commercial applications to fail, and should be borne in mind if you experience problems with the Application Accelerator.

A3020 Amnesia

David Spencer

There has recently been a problem with a batch of A3020 computers shipped by Acorn that can prevent some RAM upgrades from working. The symptoms are that the computer works fine as a 2Mb machine, but fails with various errors or red screens at start-up when the RAM is upgraded to 4Mb.

If you have a computer that appears to be exhibiting this fault then you should contact the dealer from whom it was purchased. They will be able to confirm if the machine is in the affected batch, and if need be arrange for it to be modified free of charge.

Outputting Labels in Impression

Orvin G. Hill

In RISC User 7:8 Richard Grant described how to generate numbered tickets using Style. A similar method can be used to generate mailing labels.

First create a new Master Page with multiple frames of the same size as your fanfold labels, linking the labels to

aid text flow by repeatedly clicking Select in one frame followed by Adjust in the following one. Check the text flow using the Show flow option. Now type in your names and addresses, pressing Return at the end of each address to cause the next one to fall into the next frame. If you have used a Master Frame to create the individual frames, Style will create new pages of label frames as you need them. Now save the entire document. You can then print all or some of your pages onto sticky labels to provide an instant method of label generation.

Alternatively, if you are writing a letter, you could load your label document into Style whilst you are writing, use Find (F4) to find the address you want and then paste it into the letter.

A similar method works just as well with Ovation. I have been using this for several years to generate labels - Ed.

Hard Spaces in Filenames

Peter Howard

Care is needed in the use of hard spaces in filenames (see Hints & Tips, RISC User 7:9). If a Basic program makes reference to such a file - in an OPENIN instruction for example - and the program is later edited with Edit or DeskEdit, the hard space character is interpreted as, and replaced by, the Basic keyword EVAL, for which ASCII 160 is the token. When the edited program is then saved, it will be corrupted.

To avoid this, search for all spurious EVALs, and replace them with the original Alt-Space characters before saving.

Copying Text from Edit

Mike Whiteman

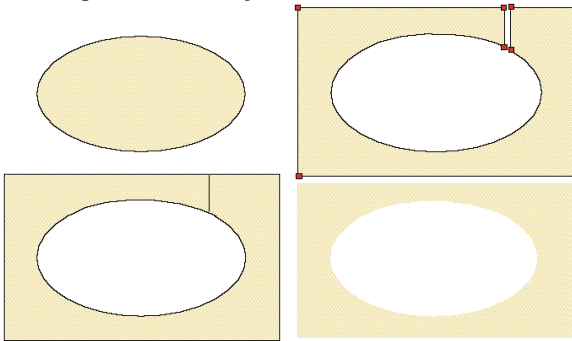
If you want to transfer text from one document in Edit or DeskEdit into another, you do not have to move the caret from the destination document in order to mark the text in the source. Simply leave the cursor at the required destination position, then mark the source text with the Ctrl key held down (i.e. Ctrl-Select-drag, or Ctrl-Select to start and Ctrl-Adjust to end). The cursor will stay where it

was left, and you can now transfer the text using Ctrl-C as normal without needing to reposition it.

More on DTP Masks

Colin Singleton

In *Into the Arc* (RISC User 7:9) Mike Williams described a way of masking a sprite to a non-rectangular shape. I always feel that Paint's Snapshot feature is a rather untidy way of transferring an object from Draw. It has the definite disadvantage that the curve is formed using screen pixels, and the high



resolution
which can
be



achieved

using Draw is lost. This is evident in the jagged outline of the car picture in the article.

It is possible to create a mask using Draw itself, which produces a neater result. This is illustrated in stages in

figures 1-4. First, draw the ellipse, with fill colour pure white (I have shown it as cream in these diagrams so that it can be seen).

Secondly, use the Add point feature to add six points to the four which define the ellipse. These should be arranged as shown in figure 2, to form a rectangle around the ellipse, with a channel linking the ellipse to the outside. The shape now turns inside out, and the fill colour is transferred to the space between the ellipse and the rectangle. It requires some careful manipulation of the control points to restore the ellipse shape in the section where the points were added. It may help to (temporarily) draw a copy of the original ellipse, to which the broken ellipse can be adjusted. The edges of the rectangle and the channel can now be changed to a line using the Change to line option from Draw's Edit submenu.

The channel should now be eliminated by bringing the point on each side together. The channel is still there, but has zero width. The line colour should now be changed to None, so that the channel becomes invisible. If a visible border is required around the inner ellipse, this can be drawn separately and grouped with the mask. Finally the mask should be overlaid on the picture by dragging the sprite into Draw. Two examples are shown, with and without a line border.

A4 Sound Turnoff

V. Oliver

If you are in the habit of using *FX210,1 to turn off your A4's sound, think twice. This method may be satisfactory for non-Wimp programs, but if a multi-tasking program which uses the sound system finds it has been disabled, it may hang, freezing the machine and necessitating a reset. If you want to turn off the sound, it is better to use the Configure application.

Printing Basic

David Spencer

Under RISC OS 3 it is very simple to print out a Basic program listing from within the desktop. All you need to do is to Shift-double-click on the file to load it into Edit and then hit the Print key. You do of course need to have a printer driver loaded first.

Editing Basic

David Spencer

