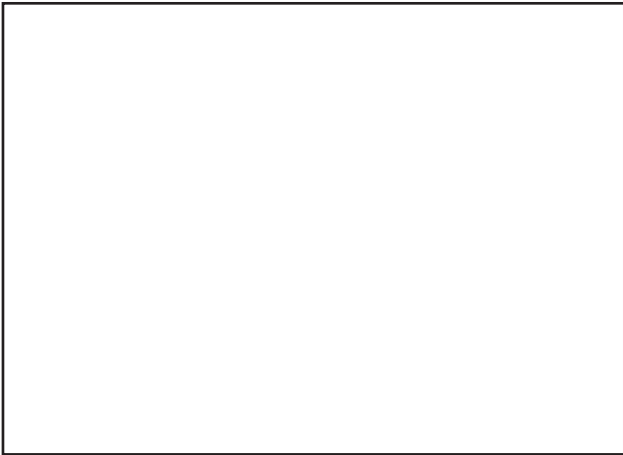


This and further articles are aimed chiefly at parents who want to use their Archimedes computers to help and assist their children in their school work. This may be to provide additional experiences from those gained at school - after all, in a class of 30 with one A3020, the chances are your youngster gets one session once a fortnight! Other motives may include computer assisted learning (CAL) to help the child gain a particular skill, and revision/testing software to help with revision for external examinations.

The problem with any educational work that a parent undertakes at home is that it may pre-empt work done by the school, undermining the development that the teacher is undertaking. The problem becomes more acute with a computer because it relates to specific items of software that may be used both in the home and the school. It is important for parents to work with the school and not in spite of it. Consultation with teachers will often result in savings in money, time and effort when choosing software: software that is being used in the current class topic can be avoided, and alternatives which tackle the same subject(s) in a different way may be purchased instead. Specific subject areas may have pieces of software that relate to them. Whether they fit in with the thinking of the school and/or the



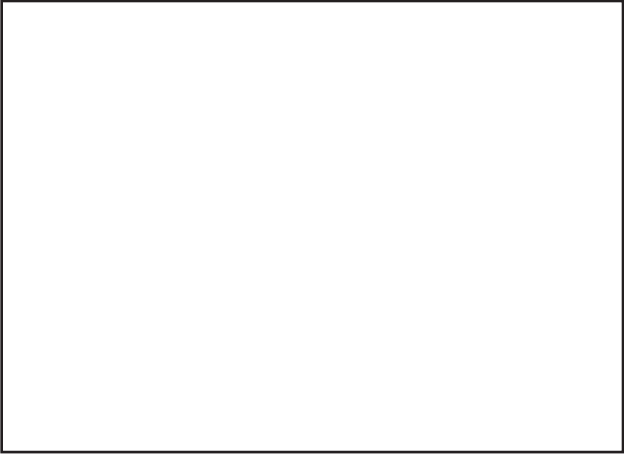
Toby the Troublesome Tractor

examination boards would need checking. At home the more generalised idea of developing thought processes, broad concepts and skills

Educational Software at Home Part 1:

Chris Drage looks at the support that parents can give their children at home.

will pay dividends throughout the child's school career.



Advance word

In terms of language development, the computer provides opportunity to practice word processing, presentation skills, and develop language and computer skills simultaneously. We shall discuss its contribution to other areas of learning in future issues of RISC User. Talking and listening are fundamental to language growth, and the most important contribution a computer makes takes place every time two or more people gather round it for a particular purpose, viz discussion. Thus any computer based activity which involves small groups of children or child with parent will

provide valuable opportunities for talking and listening, and many programs encourage the child to use language. Here are some software suggestions for young children:

PRODUCT INFO

For further information contact:

4Mation Educational Resources,
14 Castle Park Road, Barnstaple,
Devon EX32 8PA.
Tel. 0271 25353

Acorn Computers,
Fulbourn Road, Cherry Hinton,
Cambridge CB1 4JN.
Tel. 0223 254254

Brilliant Computing,
Box 142, Bradford BD9 5NF.
Tel. 0274 578239

Chalksoft,
P.O.Box 49, Spalding, Lincs PE11
1NZ.
Tel. 0775 769518

Computer Concepts,
Gaddesden Place,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 6EX.
Tel. 0442 63933

ESM,
Duke Street, Wisbech,
Cambridge PE13 2AE.
Tel. 0945 587361

H.S.Software,
56 Hendrefoilan Avenue, Sketty,
Swansea SA2 7NB.
Tel. 0792 204519

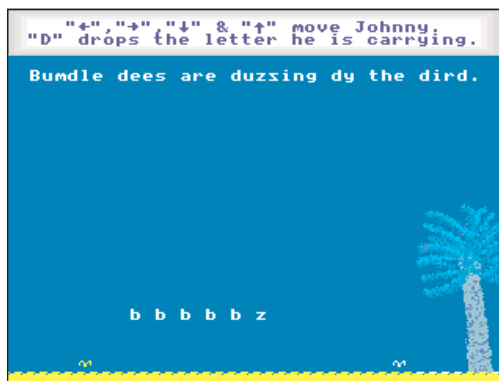
Longman Logotron,
124 Cambridge Science Park,
Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 4ZS.
Te. 0223 425558

Northern Micromedia,
Resources Centre, Coach Lane
Campus, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE7
7XA.
Tel. 091 270 0424

N.W.SEMERC,
Fitton Hill CDC, Rosary Road,
Oldham OL8 2QE.
061 627 4469

RISC Developments,

user questions and even holds a number of strong opinions awaiting discovery!



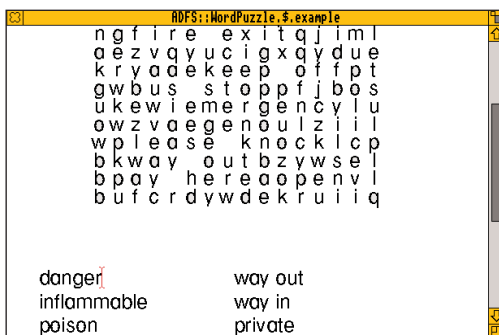
Reversals

Podd (ESM) has earned itself a reputation from the early days of computers in schools. It encourages children to develop their word power and to explore a wide number of verbs. Noot (4Mation) is an animation program which contains an example file containing delightful character called Dweek who can be asked to perform all manner of clever things which young children find highly delightful.

Smart Alex (Brilliant Computing) is a multi-ethnic/ gender character whom children can manipulate, respond to and explore. She/he can pull a number of faces/ expressions to encourage pupils to talk about feelings, expressions and emotions or, alternatively, respond to a number of verbs (represented by

Rebus symbols for non-readers). Alex can even reveal something about him/herself and ask the

Fun & Games and TV Fun & Games (H.S.Software) offer activities which cover a wide range of abilities and skills such as reading, matching, sequencing, auditory and visual memory. Each suite has multiple levels which will challenge both a four year or an eight year. One of my favourites is



TIDY, a game in which children are invited to help Emma tidy up her bedroom by guiding her parrot to put all her toys away. Again, it is a game for practicing a range of skills including early reading, comparing objects of different shape and size but particularly for its use of prepositions. Each program uses smooth animation and makes extensive use of clear digitised speech.

Simple adventure games provide a medium for many communication skills and for language development generally. A good adventure can provide an exciting and stimulating learning environment for children. Often these programs are specific to skills and are not dealing necessarily with specific topics such as spelling. Should that topic arise, it is hidden in the general fun of the package and is learnt or practiced unawares. There are two publishers whose adventure programs enjoy an enviable reputation in education circles: Sherston Software and 4Mation Educational Resources.

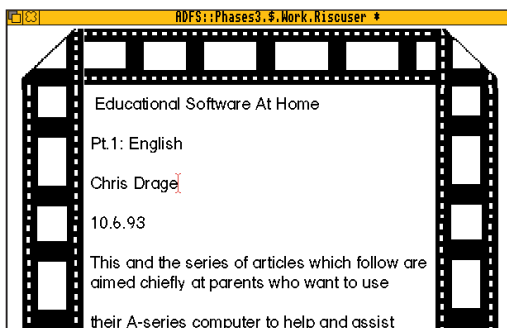
From the former just try Teacher s Cupboard, Nature Park Adventure or the award winning Crystal Rainforest for starters, and from the latter the classic Granny s Garden and Darryl the Dragon.

READING

Although all the aforementioned programs will provide practice in reading skills, Sherston Software markets talking books which specifically aim to boost reading skills. Talking books offer reader interaction in a way that is otherwise impossible. Sherston has limited the first issue to six titles: Billy the Bothersome Bully, Doris the Dotty Dog, Edwina s Energetic Elephant, Terry s Tricky Trainers, Tina s Terrible Trumpet and Toby the Troublesome Tractor. They each feature recorded human speech which the computer will read to the child when commanded. One page of the book is presented at a time, complete with an attractive illustration, and with a phrase or sentence below. The child can either listen to the whole of the text being spoken or click on individual words in order to hear them. The books are very well suited to helping reluctant readers, for apart from being highly motivating, the ability to configure each book to speak only reader-selected words and log them in a file provides clues to the child s progress.

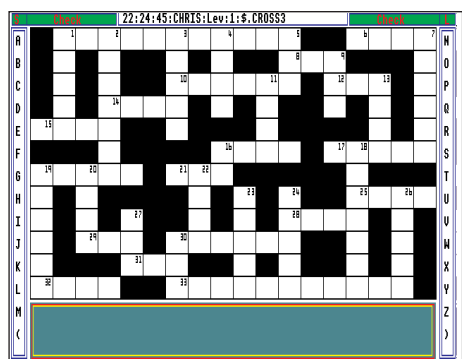
WRITING, SPELLING, PRESENTATION

Word processing offers a means to succeed with the written word, even before writing has become second nature. Packages such as Archimedes Pendown (Longman Logotron) and Desktop Folio (E.S.M.) are ideally suited to school use, but probably will not offer all the facilities demanded in a home-based word processor where both mum, dad and older siblings will all want to use it. However, Advance (Acom - £99.00), an integrated suite comprising a document processor, spreadsheet and database manager, offers a versatile word processor based on the Impression Junior DTP package, but has sufficient features to suit a wide range of requirements. With the National Curriculum emphasis on children at Key Stages 2/3/4 recording and presenting their data, Advance also offers a really useful tool for this purpose. Advance is a very versatile package which is further enhanced by the fact that data can be



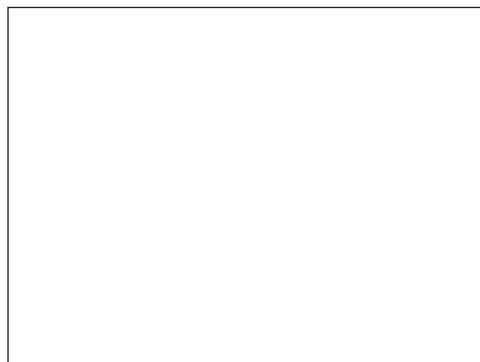
Phases3

shared with virtually any other RISC OS compliant software (see also RISC User 6:6, 6:7, and 6:8). In the home there are not the demands on time that there are in the classroom, and the complexities of such software can be easily explained and perfected.



Crossword Callup

F o r



Magpie

developing spelling skills and punctuation, look out for Crossword Callup (Northern Micromedia - creates and prints crosswords, clues and solutions), Word Puzzle (N.W.SEMERC - creating and printing word squares), Reversals and Puncman 5/6/7 (both Chalksoft). All these programs are enjoyable and ideally suited to home use.

For young children, Phases3 (Northwest SEMERC £15.00) is so affordable and provides such a good introduction to DTP

