

TOP 5
PICTURE
EXCLUSIVE

ATARI ST USER

October 1993
Issue 92
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PRESS
ENTERTAINMENT

Britain's best for ST • STE • TT • Falcon

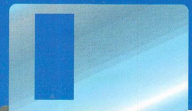
MUSIC MAGIC

Now every ST
user can turn
composer

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GIVEAWAY

October 1993
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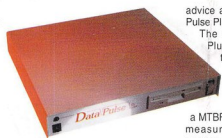
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Data Pulse Plus

Hard
Drives

f
floptical



Data Pulse Plus is a range of High Quality, High Density, Data Storage Devices, developed exclusively by Ladbroke Computing International.

The Data Pulse Plus range consists of various high density, high speed SCSI storage mechanisms based on the Data Pulse Plus Sub-System. This Sub System has been extensively developed to reduce noise and maximise ease of use and reliability.

"Well constructed and designed for ease of use utilising highest quality mechanisms"

Darren Evans, ST User

The Data Pulse Plus Sub System features a custom designed case of dimensions: 300mm x 295mm x 51mm (wdth). The power supply unit is housed internally providing a reliable power source for drive mechanism, host adaptor and Fan (Floptical & Floptical combinations only) without placing extra strain on the ST's PSU. The full metal case fully shields the internals from interference and surrounding equipment from radiation. It is also ideal for use as a monitor stand.

The ON/OFF switch is mounted on the front of the case along with the SCSI device number selector and a bi-colour LED which displays power on and 'Drive Busy' status.

All Data Pulse Plus ST Drives include the acclaimed ICD SCSI host adaptors. Full manuals are also included detailing hardware specification, setup and trouble shooting.

To ensure the highest possible reliability, the drives are tested at every stage of assembly by skilled technicians. We also format, partition and install a bootable driver as part of the test procedure to ensure that the drive is ready to 'Plug in and Go' when you receive it. When your first boot up your hard drive you will find a wealth of Public Domain Utilities which have been selected by our support staff as particularly useful.

All Data Pulse Plus drives include 12 months warranty and free phone

advice and support by genuine Data Pulse Plus users.

The entire range of Data Pulse Plus Hard Drives are based on the highest quality mechanisms available. Quantum, Maxtor, Fujitsu, Insite, mechanisms are used, each of which feature a MTBF (Mean time between failures, measured in Power On Hours) in excess of 30,000 hours. All SCSI mechanisms used are 3.5" wide and just 1" high and are chosen for their performance and low power consumption.

The Low power consumption of these mechanisms means that they can operate well within their safe operational temperature ranges without the need for Fan cooling. This coupled with the design of the case results in probably the quietest Hard Drive range available for the ST.

All Hard drives are Autoparking, reducing the risk of head crash or damage during transit. All drives also come configured to be Autobooting.

All Data Pulse Plus drives for the ST now include the ICD LINK host adaptor. This external adaptor plugs into the SCSI port at the back of the drive. This configuration allows the drive to be used with any computer

you may upgrade to in the future such as the Falcon 030.

Floptical Drives are capable of storing over 20Mb of un-compressed data on a single 3.5" Floptical disk. The Floptical disks store data magnetically just like a normal floppy disk but the positioning of the read/write heads is

far more accurate due to an Optical positioning system. The Floptical Drive positions its heads using ultra fine guide tracks embedded in the Floptical disk surface. Using this positioning system, the Floptical Drive is able to store data on up to 1240 tracks per inch, compared to the 135 tracks per inch of a normal 3.5" floppy disk.

The Floptical Disk Drive combined

"Data Pulse is astonishingly fast"
Andrew Wright, ST User

with specially Up-dated ICD software can access the 21Mb on a Floptical disk and also Read and Write 720K and 144Mb 3.5" Floppy disks.

The Drive has an average access time of 65ms and a data transfer rate of 200K per second (6 times faster than Floppy disk).

The Floptical Drive

is available as a stand alone unit, an upgrade for existing Data Pulse and Data Pulse Plus owners or as a combination unit coupled with any capacity of Data Pulse Plus Hard Drive.

Each Floptical drive includes one 21Mb Floptical disk. As

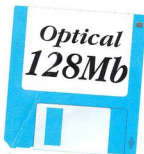
many extra Floptical Disks as you require are available at a very low £ per Mb rate.

The Floptical drive is an ideal backup device for large hard drives. Coupled with a backup utility such as Diamond Back II which features compression you can back up more than 30Mb of data per Floptical Disk.

The Datapulse Plus Re-Writable 128Mb Optical drive is a new addition to the Data Pulse Plus range. This drive features 30ms access time, 600K per second data transfer rate and 128Mb of data stored on one 3.5" Optical disk.

The disk rotates at 3600RPM giving hard drive performance with replaceable media flexibility. As with all Data Pulse Plus drives the mechanism is low power and does not require a fan. Data Pulse Plus Optical is fully compatible with the LINK and the FALCON 030 using ICD PRO utilities (ideal for direct to disk recording). Each Optical disk gives very high £ per Mb value.

All Data Pulse Plus Falcon drives come complete with SCSI 2 cable and cost £50 LESS than the prices quoted below. All Data Pulse Plus hard drive/floptical combinations for the Falcon come complete with SCSI 2 cable and the ICD PRO Utilities and cost £10 LESS than the prices quoted below (Phone for latest prices).



Data Pulse +85Mb	£349.99	85Mb with Floptical	£629.99
SPECIAL OFFER		127Mb with Floptical	£699.99
Data Pulse +170Mb	£399.99	170Mb with Floptical	£769.99
Data Pulse +240Mb	£499.99	240Mb with Floptical	£839.99
Data Pulse +345Mb	£649.99	345Mb with Floptical	£999.99
D/P +21Mb Floptical	£399.99	ICD PRO Utilities	£39.99
D/P +128Mb Optical	£989.99	Falcon SCSI II Cable	£39.99
128Mb Optical Disk	£35.00	ICD LINK	£89.99
5 x 21Mb Floptical Disk	£99.99	21Mb Floptical Disk	£22.00

Falcon 030

- 16MHz 32 bit 68030 Central Processor, 16MHz Blitter, 32MHz 56001 Digital Signal Processor
 - 1.44Mb 3.5" Floppy, up to 14Mb RAM. Displays 65536 colours from 262144 palette at 768 x 480 resolution
 - 8 Channel 16 bit, higher than CD quality. Stereo sound sampling
- FALCON 4Mb No HD £779.00
FALCON 4Mb 120Mb HD £999.00

STE Packs

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| 1Mb STE | £199.99 |
| 2Mb STE | £289.99 |
| 4Mb STE | £349.99 |
| 520 ST/PM Discovery Pack | £149.00 |

Software

- | | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Scanlite Accessory | £20.00 |
| Image CAT | £24.99 |
| 1st WordPlus | £36.99 |
- ST GAMES SOFTWARE IN STOCK - PHONE FOR DETAILS

Midistudio Master

240 PPMidi Standard file format compatible. 100 tracks. Phrase arrangement. Very easy to use.

£19.99

Marpet Upgrades

Marpet upgrades for the ST are "plug in" and require no soldering. They are compatible with most motherboard layouts and come with full fitting instructions. These boards accept SIMM boards and are upgradeable at a later date.

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| ½M STFM | Unpopulated |
| 2Mb STFM | Board |
| 4Mb STFM | £28.00 |

Please phone for further details
See SIMM's upgrades below

Aries Upgrades



- Will fit any ST(F)(M) or Mega ST
- Extremely compact in house designed Multi-layer circuit board smaller than a credit card
- Upgradeable in stages from the base 512K to 2Mb then 4Mb
- Solder in design for greater reliability (requires some technical knowledge)
- Fully tested prior to despatch
- All Aries RAM upgrade boards come packaged in a 10 capacity disk box, complete with full fitting instructions/test disk.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| 512K Board | £39.99 |
| 2Mb Board | £89.99 |
| 4Mb Board | £169.99 |
| 512K SIMM's STE | £6.99 |
| 2Mb SIMM's STE | £89.99 |
| 4Mb SIMM's | £179.99 |
| 2 x SIPP to SIMM adaptors | £3.00 |

Monitors



- Dataview Mono Monitor £139.99
Dataview 14" SVGA Monitor with ST adaptor (includes sound). Fully compatible with all ST Hi-Res Programmes.
- Philips 8833 MkII £199.99
Includes 12 Months on-site warranty (Mainland UK) and free Lotus Turbo Challenge II game.
- Atari SC1435 Col Mon £169.99
Includes tilt/swivel stand and cable for STFM/STE
- Dataview SVGA Col Mon £239.99
High quality Colour SVGA Monitor .28 dot pitch. Includes Falcon adaptor.
- Falcon VGA Adaptor £9.99
Falcon ST Monitor Adaptor £9.99
Philips SCART to ST/STE £9.99
8833 MkII to ST/STE £9.99

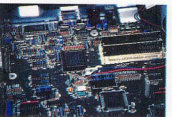
Repair Services

Our Service department can repair ST's in minimum time at competitive rates. We can arrange for fully insured, courier pickup and return delivery of your machine to ensure its safety. We even have a same day service which will ensure your machine is given priority and subject to fault, completed the same day.

We can fit memory upgrades, PC Emulators, Security devices, ROM upgrades, hard drives to Mega STE's etc.

We offer a Quotation service for £15 for which we will examine your machine and report back with an exact price for repair. If you do not wish to go ahead with the repairs then just pay the £15. However if you do go ahead then the charge is included in the minimum charge.

Please note: The minimum charge covers labour, any extra parts are chargeable.



- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| Quotation | £15.00 |
| Minimum repair charge | £35.25 |
| Same day service | £15.00 |
| STFM(E) PSU | £34.99 |
| 1Mb internal drive | £39.99 |
| A/B Boot switch | £4.99 |
| TOS 2.06 + Switch STFM | £65.00 |
| TOS 2.06 + Switch STE | £65.00 |
| Courier Pickup | £11.00 |
| Courier Return | £7.00 |

Phone for price and availability of ST spares

Hand Scanner

- 100,200,300,400 Dpi Resolution
- 1 letter mode, 3 photo modes
- 105mm scanning head
- Includes Cartridge through port with switch box
- Compatible with Touch Up 18
- Supplied with Scanlite Accessory. Compatible with any graphics package which supports accessories. Allows scanning directly into compatible packages, such as Silhouette and Megapoint II.
- Supplied with Silhouette V14. Autotracing vector package (mono monitor only). Scan directly into Silhouette via Scanlite or Import IMG, DEGAS, TINY, MacPaint, GEM and SGF bit image files. Exports IMG, GEM (13), SGF, DXF, EPS (Postscript) vector files.

Hand Scanner + Scanlite/Silhouette
£119.99

DataNet Network



- Datanet Network Hardware**
- Cartridge based high speed network solution
 - Compatible with ST (F)(M), Mega ST, STE, Mega STE
- Powered Network Software**
- MultiTasking Network software allows applications to run on the server while drive and printer accesses take place in the background
 - Allows the mixing of Network types, ie DataNet, LanNet and MidNet devices
 - Full Falcon compatibility using LanNet device
- DataNet with PowerNet** £69.99
LanNet with PowerNet £59.99
MidNet with PowerNet £49.99
- Prices quoted are for 1 Node. Each computer attached to a Network requires 1 Node.

PC Emulators



- Run PC Software on your ST
 - Full installation instructions
 - XT or AT Emulation
- PC Speed STFM or STE (XT) £49.99
AT Speed STFM (8MHz) £139.00
AT Speed C16 STFM £199.00

Printers



- Star**
- | | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Star LC100 Colour | £165.00 |
| Star LC20 | £124.00 |
| Star LC24/100 Mono | £179.00 |
| Starjet SJ48 Bubblejet | £210.00 |
| SJ48 Sheet Feeder | £55.00 |
| SJ48 Ink Cartridge | £19.00 |
- Citizen**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Citizen 124D Special Offer | £149.99 |
| Citizen Swift 240 Colour | £270.00 |
| Citizen Swift 90 Colour | £175.00 |
- HP Hewlett Packard**
- | | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| HP Deskjet 510 | £299.99 |
| HP Deskjet 550 Colour | £599.99 |

- Lasers**
- | | |
|----------------|---------|
| Seikosha OP104 | £549.00 |
|----------------|---------|
- 512K RAM (Exp to 2.5Mb)
 - HP Laserjet IIP emulation
 - 14 resident fonts
 - Centronics/RS232C/RS422
 - 12 months on-site warranty
- Seikosha 512k RAM upgrade £69.00
Seikosha Toner (2 units) £19.00
Seikosha Drum Unit £79.00
Ricoh LP1200 £789.00
- Add £3 for Centronics cable and £7 for next working day courier delivery

Ladbroke Computing

33 Ormskirk Rd, Preston, Lancs, PR1 2QP

Ladbroke Computing International are one of the longest established home computer dealers in the U.K. We have developed an extensive customer service policy which involves testing of all hardware prior to dispatch to ensure that goods arrive in working order, offering free advice and support over the phone and keeping customers informed. Although our prices are not always the cheapest we do endeavour to offer consistently good service and backup.

All prices are correct at copy date 13/8/93 (while stocks last), and are subject to change without prior notice. All prices include VAT but exclude delivery.

How to Pay
You can order by mail Cheques/Postal Orders made payable to Ladbroke Computing. Or give your credit card details over the phone.

Delivery
Postal delivery is available on small items under £40 (Normally £3, phone for details). Add £7 for courier delivery. Next working day delivery on mainland UK subject to stock (£20 for Saturday delivery).

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Contents

**COVER
FEATURE**

MUSIC MAGIC

We round-up
the best
improvisation
programs
around and
say which
will turn you
into a
composer **22**



midi and music ♦ emulation ♦ comms ♦ dtp ♦ business ♦ falcon

Aspects of the ST

Midi and music.....86
Some converters to help with Midi file transfers and the rest of this month's news and reviews

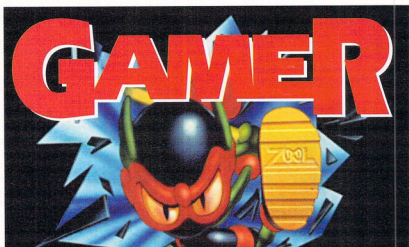
Emulation.....89
Continuing our guide to PC and Mac emulation, we look at basic system software requirements

Communications.....91
Is the Sportster modem cheap enough to open up high speed comms to new users?

DTP.....93
Why public domain libraries with a PC bias offer great opportunities for picking up PostScript fonts

Business.....95
Richard Williams discovers the importance of monthly meetings and says how the ST can help

Falcon.....97
A page dedicated to Falcon launches this month with a look at its video capabilities



Gamer Globe	66	Addams Family	75
Patrician	68	Hardball	75
Nicky 2	70	Pipemania	77
Bart vs the World	71	Formula One	77
Zool	72	Grand Prix	77
Chase HQ II	74	Ishar 2 guide	78
Toki	74	Lemmings 2 guide	80

**Page
65**

**Complete and unrivalled
ST games coverage**

Next
month
on sale
Sept 30th

specials

26 Painless Printing

We show that with a little understanding you and your printer can live together in harmony

30 Get Serious

As Falcon breathes new life into the Atari scene, expansion will benefit users who see computing as more than a game

42 Publishing Perfect

The first in a two-part series for those just past the DTP beginner's stage

47 £3,500 survey

Tell us what you want to read in Atari ST User and be in with a chance of winning one of 600 subscription prizes

reviews

34 Video Titrer

A budget-priced program ideal for anyone wishing to add life to their home videos



36 Falcon Speed

The first emulator for the Falcon is found to be a fast and cheap 286PC alternative

49 View II

A brilliant utility that enables text and picture files to be viewed straight from the ST's desktop

58 Scanning

We test a hand-scanning solution for less than £120 and a scan tray that makes life easy

85 NVDI v2.51 85

Should you upgrade to the latest version of this top screen accelerator? We find the answer

regulars

7 News

Exclusive TOS report and pictures, memory prices rocket, Atari show success and much more

10 Euro News

Hot new products and news from across Europe, including a Falcon graphics card and PostScript breakthrough

14 CoverDisk

Word processing, games, utilities and a whole lot more await you on this month's disk

18 Disk tutorial

Make sure you get the most from Word Writer 2's top wordprocessing features - we show you how

38 Write Now!

Your views on computer pornography, Falcon prices, the taxman and a whole lot more

52 Public Sector

The latest from the public domain, including some niche market programs and Galaxians arcade fun

56 Advice Service

Discover the solutions to problems that have caused many a sleepless night

63 C programming

We look at the significance of local and global variables and say how they can be used in your programs

84 Subscriptions

Guarantee the next 12 issues of Atari ST User at an attractive price and choose a free gift too

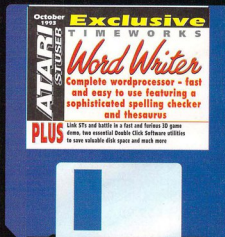
86 Aspects

A Falcon page this month joins our monthly review of key applications for your Atari computer

88 Competition

Win one of four top music making programs in this great £450 giveaway

The CoverDisk



Crammed onto this month's disk we have Timeworks' Word Writer 2, a fast, easy to use and flexible wordprocessor featuring a comprehensive spelling checker and thesaurus

PLUS:

● **Cyberdrome - Link your ST to a friends for multi-player thrills in this fast 3D action game**



● **DC Xtract and DC SEA - Save space on your disks by using these two archiving utilities from Double Click Software**

● **Midi files - Some example guitar riffs from the Midi Buster collection**

The DISK starts on page 14

EDITOR John Butters
ART EDITORS Terry Thiele
Tym Locky
Alan Jones
TECHNICAL EDITOR Darren Evans
PRODUCTION EDITOR Phil Morse
STAFF WRITERS Jonathan Maddock
Simon Clays
Adam Phillips

AD MANAGER Simon Lees
AD PRODUCTION Barbara Newall
MARKETING MANAGER Lucy Oliver
PRODUCTION Sandra Childs
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR David Wren
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Europa House, Adlington Park,
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Tel: 0625 878888 (all enquiries)
Fax: 0625 859662

CHAIRMAN Derek Meakin
MANAGING DIRECTOR Ian Bloomfield

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EUROPEAN
ENTERTAINMENT
PUBLISHERS

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System Solutions

News

Coming Soon...

Kodak Photo CD Software.
32Mhz Falcon Accelerator
for less than £300.
Phone for details.

NEW

Here Now...

Falcon030 Starter Packs:
1Mb, SM14f Monitor Only £689
4Mb, SM14f Monitor £889
ScreenBlaster £79.95

NEW falconWING

The 14Mb memory expansion.
Takes 1Mb or 4Mb SIMM.
Price £59.95

Come to our London Showroom
to see the composer's dream:
a computer system that displays
the FULL score sheet.

FLY LIKE THE WIND...

NVDI replaces the Atari display routines. Screen updates with NVDI are 3-10 times faster. Works with all TOS versions on all Atari ST, MegaST, TT and for the Falcon.

"Scrolling through a long text file in 1st Word Plus took half the time ... Calamus, Calligrapher and Wordflair also showed a marked improvement ... Compatibility is remarkable and we have yet to find a program that is not compatible with NVDI. ... a must for all ST and Falcon owners"

ST Review Issue 16, August 1993.

NVDI Version 2.5 - £49.95

Hard Drives

"Extremely nice looking..." Professional Quality SCSI Hard Drives Systems, 40-2600 Megabytes from £299. "This is the fastest of the drives reviewed and is superbly engineered, not to mention great value for money!" ST User, Issue 90, August 1993.



Special Offer:
127Mb SCSI Drive
with ICD Link
£399 inc.VAT

Falcon SCSI Hard Drives

Ideal for hard-disk recording
1000Mb, 10ms, 5yr warranty - £1099
240Mb plug-in-and-go - £449
For other capacities please phone.

New Price High Density

e!Co doubles Disk space to 1.44Mbi

- ★ Automatic floppy disk detection
- ★ Compatible with your floppy disks
- ★ Software is included. (ACC and CPX)
- ★ Fully supported by TOS 2.06
- ★ PC and Emulator compatible
- ★ A perfect replacement floppy drive!
- ★ Kit price still only £79.95 inc VAT

(August only) Fitted price: £89.95

High Res Monitors

The SM14s is a perfect replacement for the Atari SM124/5 monochrome monitors, exceeding the original specifications. The 14" Phillips high resolution paperwhite FST gives a perfectly centred, crisp and sharp image without blurring at the edges.

On/Off switch, Volume and Brightness at the front; Vertical Size, Horizontal Phase, Contrast and Focus at the back. The tilt and swivel base and a monitor cable with the correct connector are standard.

An amazing 40% extra workspace can be gained with OverScan ST. The SM14 is a totally plug-in-and-go unit.

"Essential Buy, 90%" ST Review, May 93

without audio
SM14 £149.95

with audio
SM14s £169.95

Special Price
when bought with
OverScan ST. See Below

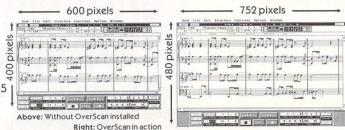


Crossing the Border

EVER fancied the idea of a larger monitor, but not the price that goes with it?? Well now you can, with OverScan ST. This little board fits inside your Atari ST(FM) or Mega ST (not Ste's) allowing you to use the black borders as an extended working area. In practice this means that you will get up to 40% extra screen in high resolution, and up to 60% in colour.

OverScan ST
Kit £39.95
Fitted £69.95

SM14 Monitor and
OverScan - £169.95
SM14, + OverScan
Fitted - £199.95



To order and for further information
telephone or write to:

System Solutions

Windsor Business Centre, Vansittart Road,
Windsor, SL4 1SE Fax: 0753-830344

Mail Order Telephone
0753-832212

or come to our London Showroom at:

The Desktop Centre

17-19 Blackwater Street, London, SE22 8RS

Tel: 081-693 3355 Fax: 081-693 6936

Dealer enquiries are welcome

Summer Madness for August + September

Free fitting on all upgrades supplied with computers that are sent in for repair. Ask for the Upgrade Offer Price List. It covers Memory Upgrades, Floppy Drives, High Density Floppy Drives, TOS 2.06 Operating Systems, PC Emulators, Accelerators, Key Clicks, OverScan ST and more. ONLY £10 for courier collection and delivery (UK Mainland only). **Phone now for your personal quote.**

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Windsor Business Centre, Vansittart Estate, Windsor, SL4 1SE. Tel: 0753-818816

London Service Centre:

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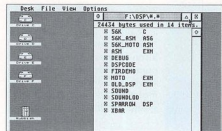
ATARI WORKSHOP

It's fanTOStic!

by John Butters

THE next generation of Atari's TOS operating system containing extra features and bug fixes is in the final stages of development, Atari ST User can exclusively reveal.

TOS 5 will have part of the Falcon's multi-tasking system on chip, although users will not



TOS 5: Click on box and...

Exclusive

be able to have more than one application operating without extra MultiTOS disk-based software.

The change will give users about half a megabyte of extra multitasking



... the window becomes an icon

memory and increase the loading speed of the system.

And a new desktop feature will enable users to shrink windows into small drive or folder icons by clicking the mouse pointer onto their corners.

When their contents need to be viewed, clicking the pointer on the icon will return the window to its original size.

Problems with the serial interface and scroll bar in earlier versions have been cured.

An insider said that the pre-release version of TOS 5 is suitable for 68030-based computers such as the Falcon and appears slightly slower than its predecessors.

It was added that the system could be speeded up before release and the source said changes in TOS 5 hint towards an Atari move to put the complete multi-tasking system onto chip.

Dealers in ST sales boost

A MAJOR trade distributor has slashed ST prices in a bid to stimulate the market and encourage more sales of the machines through specialist computer dealers such as Silica Systems.

The top-selling 1040ST comes down by £100 to £199, and a new model called the 4160ST has been introduced with 4Mb of memory at £299.

Both come with games worth £219, including Asterix, Chess Player, Drivin' Force, Live and Let Die, Onslaught, Pipe Mania, Rick Dangerous, Rock 'n' Roll, Skweek and Trivial Pursuit.

A Music Master bundle containing the 1040STE and Steinberg Pro 24 sequencing software will cost £199.

The 520STFM continues to sell at £159 and the STE Discovery Xtra Pack with a 520STE and games bundle at £249.

"The ST has always been one of the best home computers available," said Silica Systems spokesman Andy Leaning.

"But now with the new low price points and software packs the Atari ST is quite simply unbeatable value for money and will see its market position considerably strengthened."

Atari are expected to announce official price cutting on the ST range within the next few weeks, although they refused to confirm the plan at press time.

Silica Systems can be telephoned on 081-309 1111.



Price cuts: 1040STE down to £199

Arnor give Protex more

WORDPROCESSOR Protex is being improved to include extra features and will be released as v6 within the next few weeks, its makers have announced.

The Arnor (0733 68909) package has for a long time been considered by users as one of the premier programs of its type, with its ease of use and speed being rated highly.

New features will include PostScript and colour printing, scalable fonts, automatic line spacing, and improved help.

The ability to edit the 110,000-word dictionary and macro facilities will also be available in the £152.75 package. Until the end of October it is on offer at £99.

Upgrades prices vary depending on the version being used, but until the end of October v5.6 can be improved for £35.25 and v4.3 or earlier for £58.75.

Games makers agree sex rules

EUROPE'S computer and video games makers have agreed on self regulation aimed at addressing public worries about sexual and violent scenes contained in some software.

Members of ELSPA (European Leisure Software Publishers Association) will consult the Video Standards Council to ensure games do not cause offence.

The move is aimed at showing that the games industry has listened to public and media concerns and is willing to put its house in order without strict laws being forced upon it.

The VSC was formed as a video watchdog in 1989 to administer the industry's own standards in a bid to prevent further law.

With new technology an increasing number of games use film footage or realistic graphics, meaning that developers need to be familiar with video laws.

It will mean that software houses will send some games to the British Board of Film Censors for video-type age ratings which will then be shown on the packaging.

An ELSPA spokesman said: "The use in any game of cinematic scenes of a sexual or violent nature could result in the game being legally required to be classified."

"It is important that the games industry recognises this, so as not to risk either any breach of the law or the current exempt status of most games."

A detailed plan specific to the computer and video games industry will be in place by early next year.

News briefs

Easy move

ZzSoft, the makers of DTP package Easy Text, have moved office. They can now be found at 114 Sparth Road, Clayton Le Moors BB5 5QD and telephoned on 0254 386192.

★★★

Looking at porn

THE Government are to investigate the spread of computer pornography following growing concern about its easy availability on bulletin boards and from public domain libraries.

★★★

Calamus links

CALAMUS users with modems can now access hints, tips and up to 750 fonts on Staffordshire bulletin board Desktop BBS.

It operates at speeds up to 14,400 baud with error correction between 8pm and 8.30am. Telephone 0782 541305.

★★★

Going on sale

THE next issue of *Atari ST User* goes on sale at a newsagent near you on Thursday, September 30.

★★★

Playing pad

A GAMES Pad featuring six fire buttons will soon be launched by Logic 3, the Wembley-based makers of many ST games-playing devices. Logicpad will cost around £17.99.



Logicpad: Six independent and autofire buttons

Disasters send chip prices rocketing

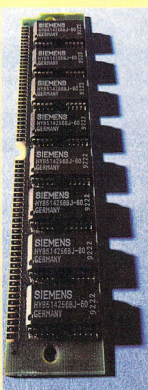
COMPUTER memory prices are soaring following disasters at plants where chips and an important chemical used in their production were made.

The crisis started when an earthquake destroyed a large Japanese assembly factory, and just a few days later an explosion wrecked a second facility in the country.

Panic buying by some large computer manufacturers led to a world shortage of the SIMM chips and sent prices rocketing.

Atari ST and Falcon owners looking to buy extra memory for their computer are being forced to pay about £50 for each megabyte, compared to £25 before the shortage.

And small computer manufacturers, especially in the cut-throat PC market are likely to pass their extra costs on to buyers of new machines.



Atari put their own memory in the Falcon and although STs use SIMM chips a price rise is considered by experts to be very unlikely.

According to Andy Leaning of Silica Systems the situation has not proved as severe as some people in the computer industry first feared.

He said that although the chemical plant destroyed made more than half the world's supply of resin used in memory chips, other firms have stepped up production to meet extra demand.

But some industry pundits expect memory costs to continue rising for some time to come.

Ladbroke Computing's Brian Davies predicts a £70 price tag for each megabyte within the next few weeks and that the crisis could last for several months.

Memory: 8MB jumps from £200 to £400

Show promise follows success

THE success of the recent Le'ST get Serious show in London has encouraged its organisers to arrange a second Atari event for the city and make plans for regional shows.

Many of the firms promoting professional software and hardware in the Atari market attended, and several new ST and Falcon products could be found.

At Compo Software's stand, Screen Blaster and Falcon Speed were on sale and database That's Address 2 and retouching software Studio Photo previewed. Titan Designs showed their new Graffiti genlock, while CGS ComputerBild demonstrated rendering software InShape and other top graphics programs.

Other supporters included public domain libraries Warp Zone and 16/32 PDI, Gamin Image, the Atari UK Helpline and music clubs.

"At last we are starting to see new Falcon products becoming available, not just being talked about," said Compo's Neal O'Nions. "This show came at just the right time for our new products."

OBJECTIVES

David Encill of Titan Designs added: "This show achieved its objectives for Titan. We had the opportunity to show our new video products in the right atmosphere."

And visitors were equally impressed. Peter Davies, 32, of Luton said: "This show is a godsend. I have been able to speak to some of the top people in the Atari world."

"They gave some excellent advice, without the extreme crowds and noise normally associated with this kind of show."

The next show - sponsored by Atari ST User - will be held at the Alexandra Palace, London from 10am to 6pm on September 26.

The three organisers - CGS ComputerBild, Compo Software and Titan Designs - promise Birmingham and Manchester events before the end of the year.

● For ticket orders turn to page 12

MT Software play school

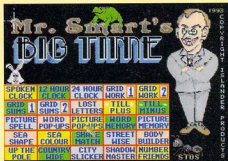
TWENTY-five educational games for children aged between 6 and 12 years old make up Big Time, the latest ST package from Isle of Wight-based MT Software (0983 756056).

They cover a range of subjects including spelling, maths, telling the time, human anatomy, road sense, geography, grid work and colours.

"MT Software have been involved with the ST market for some five years, and we are committed to the future of the Atari," said the firm's boss Mark Thomson.

"Demand for our *Beginners Guide to STOS Basic* continues to exceed all expectations and we have a number of exciting products planned for the future."

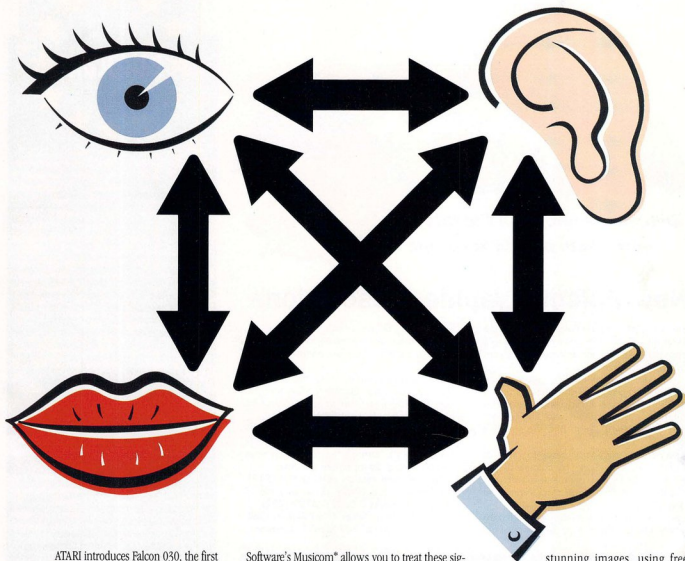
It costs £24.95 and comes with a video which shows how the package is used best.



On sale!

REMEMBER, the next issue of *Atari ST User* hits the news-stand on September 30. Don't miss it!

If you understand this, you understand the Falcon.



ATARI introduces Falcon 030, the first ever micro computer which instantly communicates with all your current and future audio-video equipment. Now, TV, Monitor, HiFi, CD, CDV, R-DAT, DCC, VHS, telephone, synthesizer, photo CD, camcorder, printer, modem, ... communicate with each other, allowing you to get the most out of each piece of equipment. A true technological revolution, Falcon 030 is operated by a 68030 processor working in parallel with a DSP, which is able to treat digital data at a very high speed.

Falcon Audio, the universe of Direct to Disk: Falcon 030[™] offers, as standard, "Direct-to-Disk" recording, from a microphone (voice or instrumentation), a Walkman or a HiFi, via a simple stereo plug and also through its MIDI interface. Compo

Software's Musicom[®] allows you to treat these signals at better than CD quality: equalizer, Digital Delay (echo), harmonizer, flanger or even karaoke.

Falcon Video, manipulating images: Falcon 030 can be connected to almost any

stunning images, using freehand drawing, lines, shapes, patterns, perspective, colours, and even create animations which can be stored on video. **Falcon Photo, a personal computer studio:** Thanks to Studio Photo[®] from

Euro-Soft, the Falcon 030 treats digital photos in all formats, including Kodak CD, allowing special effects and retouching. **Falcon Software:** Falcon 030 already benefits from a wide range of innovative software and now, using

Falcon Speed[™] from Sack Electronics you can run MS-DOS programs on your Falcon 030. For more information write to: ATARI Corp. Ltd, Railway Terrace SLOUGH - BERKSHIRE ENGLAND SL2 5BZ. Software by Compo, Euro-Soft, OverScan Sack Tel.: 0480 891819, by Hisoft Tel.: 0525 718181.

FALCON 030


video source. With OverScan's Overlay[®] and Genlock[®] you can add titles, animations, sound to your videos and generate presentations combining a slide show with sound. **Falcon Graphic, a choice of 65,536 colours per pixel:** With Hisoft's True Paint[™], you can produce

Now, all that communicates communicates.

Euro News

Don Maple relays all the latest news from mainland Europe



New Falcon graphics resolutions

Blow Up 030 is a new Falcon product from Germany which improves the machine's graphic resolutions for anybody using serious applications.

It comes in three configurations: One software and two hardware versions.

The hardware comes between the computer's video output and the monitor plug and a lead plugs into the joystick port.

It contains a 48MHz clock to achieve 1,280 x 960 pixels in 16 colours at just under 70Hz refresh, while the software uses the computer's video clock running at 25 or 32MHz.

A driver program sets various resolutions in real time so there is no need to reboot

when testing different configurations.

The modes are too numerous to list and depend in a large part on the monitor used.

But as an example, using the software-only version even an Atari VGA monitor can display non-interlaced 896 x 544 pixels in 256 colours at 54Hz.

And if you still find the resolutions insufficient a built-in virtual screen gives 5,000 x 5,000 pixels, turning the image on your monitor into a virtual screen window.

The software version costs DM29 (£12), Hardware I costs DM99 (£40) and top of the line Hardware II costs DM129 (£52).

All come from Acher Eberl Seibert GbR, Eslerner Str. 34, 81549 Munich, Germany.

PostScript breakthrough

Postman is now available to output PostScript documents to dot matrix and laser printers.

It also produces colour on an HP DeskJet 550C and converts documents into various formats such as GEM Image, Windows BMP, GIF and true colour TIFF 6.0 files.

The minimum requirement is TOS 1.4 and 2Mb of memory. Have DM298 (£120) ready and contact SILICON Technology and Promotion, Wilhelmshoer Allee 124, 34119 Kassel, Germany.

Safety in numbers

If you're one of those absent-minded folk who always forget passwords, PIN numbers and so on, then Memohelp is for you.

The program encodes all your personal information and can be run as an accessory, where the data is limited to eight pages with ten lines each.

Memohelp asks you to enter a password up to ten characters long, but at least it's the only code you have to remember.

Version two costs DM60 (£24) and can be bought from Entwicklungsbuero Dr Ackermann, Kanalweg 2, Haimhausen, Germany.

Kandinsky is a vector drawing program which, in contrast to bitmap programs, manipulates images as grammatical units.

This results in added flexibility and requires considerably less memory. Kandinsky is GEM-friendly and co-habits with all flavours of GDOS including Speedo as well as MultiTOS and NVDI. It uses BGI, or Borland vector fonts. Output is either to VDI devices or PostScript. Using the supplied GDOS drive, images can be converted to bitmap format.

Kandinsky is another example of a high quality shareware program from Germany that even puts some commercial packages to shame.

The programmer asks only DM30 (£12) in contribution but I would suggest at least £15 to cover shipping to the UK. Contact Uli Rossgoderner, H.-K.-Schmid-Str. 64, 82140 Olching, Germany.



TT development in Germany continues unabated, albeit not by Atari! The word is that GE-Soft are developing a TT-compatible computer without Atari custom chips.

The unnamed machine will sport a 50MHz 68030 processor with slots for a 68040 and a DSP. The system will contain 4Mb of video RAM expandable to 14Mb.

Integrated fast RAM capacity will range between 64 and 256Mb on the motherboard which fits into a standard PC housing. The ports are located on an external daughter-board and comprise all standard PC ports plus DMA out, Midi and ROM.

There are also two ISA 16-bit slots for PC cards and standard PC keyboards can be used. Supported resolutions are ST high, TT medium and TT high.

Pre-production units should be available to developers at the end of September.

Mainland Europe goes sleepy in summer but PD and demo programmers tend to pick up the slack. The independent are probably the largest international group of demo writers.

They formed at the Dusseldorf show two years ago and consist of several groups from Germany, France and Belgium.

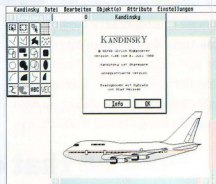
The organisation's members include Animal Mine, Aura, The Avengers, Channel 38, Lazer, Mugwumps, Newline and Risk.

Their meetings and parties are organised all over Europe with the most recent held in Germany under the name Fried Bits Coding Convention '93.

The meet saw about 40 participants with most work being done for the Falcon.



Public domain program Kandinsky challenges some commercial packages



A^{III}a

CGS ComputerBild
231 Northborough Rd
Norbury, London
SW16 4TU
Tel: 081-679 7307
Fax: 081-764 7898

£149.00
Price Held!!

DA'S

VEKTOR

NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!...

Latest products from CGS...

3D Modelling/Rendering Blockbuster:
Inshape Intro for the Falcon
Inshape Professional for Falcon & TT

Digitape Lite:
8 Track Direct to Disk Recording Software
Digitape:
32 Track Direct to Disk Recording Software

Falcon Memory Expansion Boards:
4Mb to 14Mb using standard SIMMS

New versions of Didot Professional and Retouche Professional

DA's Vector

"Stunning colour and special effects – quite simply the best vector graphics creation tool on the ST." Atari ST Review. This is what enthusiastic journalists have to say about DA's Vector. We haven't space to mention the 3D text effects, 3D bar charts and pie charts, animation, and what we call "Vector Morphing" £149.00 inc V.A.T.

The Dream Team

During the 1992 Olympics, the USA used the best basketball players in the world to form the ultimate team. Which soon acquired the title of the "Dream Team". Now CGS-ComputerBild bring you the best in Desktop publishing, and Image retouching at the unbeatable price of £299.00 inc V.A.T. This years 1993 "Dream Team".

Didot Professional



RETOUCHE
Professional



£299.00

Didot Professional Colour and Retouche Professional Colour Design £499.00 inc V.A.T. We also supply the Epson range of colour scanners: e.g. Epson GT6500 with GT-Look II software only £938.83 inc V.A.T. All programs run on the Atari ST(E)/TT/Falcon.



To be officially
opened by a
representative
of Atari

At last, the Atari show everyone has been waiting for. All the top UK Atari companies will be there, alongside representatives of some of the big German software houses. With *Atari ST User* and *Atari ST Review* backing this is set to be Britain's biggest Atari event for years

Alexandra Palace

Sunday September 26, 10am to 6pm
Tickets £5, £3 for entry after 2.30pm
(See Fast Lane Ticket Offer below)

Nearest train station: Alexandra Palace

Nearest tube station: Wood Green, Piccadilly line

By road: One mile from North Circular, or five miles from M1 Junction 2

Who'll be at the show?

All the leading ST publishers of course!
These exhibiting will include:

HiSoft, 16/32 PDL, Atari ST User, Atari ST Review, CGS, Club Cubase and UK Midi Association, Compo Software, ST Club, System Solutions/Atari Workshop, Titan Designs and Warpzone PDL

WE'RE BUSY ARRANGING VENUES FOR THE 1993 BIRMINGHAM ATARI SHOW AND THE 1993 MANCHESTER ATARI SHOW. SEE NEXT MONTH'S ATARI ST USER FOR AN UPDATE



FAST LANE TICKET OFFER

Don't waste precious time queuing up on the day. Order your fast lane tickets now (if you don't want to tear out this form simply write out all the details mentioned here)

Please pre-register me for
the 1993 London Atari Show

- I require ___ tickets at £5 each
 I require ___ tickets at £3 each
(£3 for entry after 2.30pm)

Send this form to:

David Encill
The 1993 London Atari Show
c/o Titan Designs
6 Witherford Way, Selly Oak,
Birmingham B29 4AX



Name.....
(If paying by cheque or credit card this should be the name printed on the cheque or credit card.)

Address.....
.....
.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

Tick this box if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies

I have enclosed a cheque/postal order payable to Titan Designs

I wish to pay by Visa/Access

.....

Expiry Date /

Signature.....

Tick this box if you do not wish to receive information regarding future shows

If your pre-registration information arrives with us before September 19, your tickets will be dispatched by post. Following this they will be available for collection at the special fast lane ticket desk at the show

Protex 6 - A Winning Performance



Protex is still the fastest

- Fastest at editing.
- Fastest at spell checking.
- Fastest at printing.

Protex still has the best printer support

- Hundreds of printers supported
- PostScript driver included **NEW**
- Scalable font support **NEW**
 - Colour printing **NEW**
- Automatic line spacing **NEW**

Protex still has the most advanced features including:

- Styles **NEW**
- Graphics import **NEW**
- Spelling checker
 - Thesaurus
 - Hyphenation
- Document analysis
- Glossary **NEW**
 - Footnotes
- Widows and orphans
- Index and contents
- Addition of numbers
 - File sorting
 - Mail merge
- Programming language

Protex is now easier than ever to use

- Menus and dialogue boxes
- Interactive Help **NEW**
- Macro editor **NEW**
- Dictionary editor **NEW**

Some highlights of Protex 6

Styles

Styles let you make flexible use of printer fonts and effects. You can change a font throughout a document with a single operation.

Document Layout

An easy to use dialogue lets you lay out your page precisely as you want using inches or cm for the page length, margins and tabs.

Graphics

Graphic images may be imported into a Protex document. Supports IMG, PCX, GIF and IFF. You can select any resolution and scale the image. Dot matrix, inkjet and laser printers.

Printers

Protex's unrivalled understanding of printers gives you the highest quality printing at the highest possible speed. Using a printer's built in fonts enables Protex to print pages in seconds rather than the minutes taken by some programs.

The list price of Protex 6 is £152.75 but you can order direct today for just **£99** inclusive. For the Atari ST and TT.

Phone us today and we will send you a usable demo version and a full specification, absolutely free. Upgrade offers available - please call us for the current price.



disk COVER

A 3D virtual world and fully-featured wordprocessor are just two of the delights awaiting you on this month's CoverDisk. So get 'em extracted and have some fun!

Timeworks Word Writer 2

A complete and unrestricted wordprocessor from Timeworks, featuring a sophisticated spelling checker and thesaurus

Programmed by: Timeworks
Configuration: All STs (1Mb recommended) - colour/mono resolutions
Filenames: X_WRIT1.TOS, X_WRIT2.TOS - Self-extracting archives

Each of the archive files must be copied to their own blank formatted disk. Label one disk Word Writer Program disk and the other Word Writer Dictionary and Thesaurus.

The X_WRITER1.TOS file should be copied to the program disk and X_WRITER2.TOS should be copied to the dictionary/thesaurus disk.

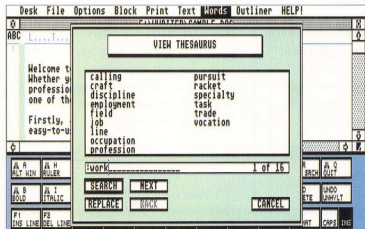
Run each archived program from these disks

and after the extraction process has finished, delete the X_ files as they are not needed any more.

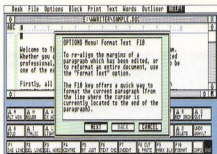
Word Writer 2 is easy to use, fast and contains many features found in expensive packages.

It also has the ability to import files from either Data Manager ST or the Swiftcalc ST spreadsheet applications, enabling you to create customised reports and written documents incorporating information generated from all three systems.

Word Writer is also compatible with 1st Word and 1st Word Plus and can use all their document files. Multiple documents can be opened each, within their own GEM window, and using the comprehensive block editing



If you find yourself stuck for words, Word Writer's thesaurus can provide some alternatives



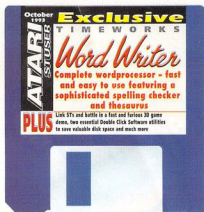
On-line help is available for many of Word Writer's features

Multiple documents may be loaded with the ability to cut and paste text from one to the other

Word Writer reader offer

The complete and illustrated manual for Word Writer, covering all features and tutorial sections, is available for all Atari ST User readers.

For more information, turn to page 20 for details on how to order.



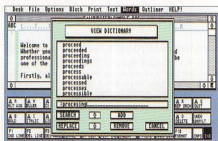
functions it is possible to cut and paste text between independent windows using the mouse.

There are also good search and replace functions as well as an integrated thesaurus with over 60,000 synonyms and alternatives for today's most frequently used words.

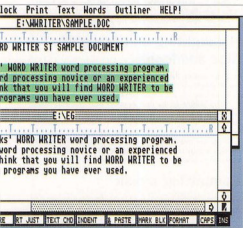
Also available are three different spelling checkers (continuous, on-line and document) which can check your entered text against a 90,000 word dictionary. A personal dictionary can also be created so that you can add your own words.

Word Writer 2 features

- Three types of spelling checker
- Integrated thesaurus
- Personal dictionary for adding your own words
- On-line help system
- Continuous formatter
- Auto-word wrap
- Auto-page numbering
- Built-in print spooler
- Keyboard short-cuts for popular commands
- Form letter printout



The integrated dictionary keeps your spelling in check (pun intended) and has over 90,000 words



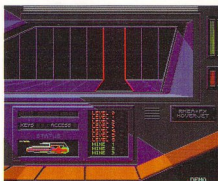
CoverDisk Hotline

Hotline numbers: 0625 859766,
2pm to 5pm every Wednesday.

If you have any other problems with the CoverDisk, our technical editor, Darren Evans, will be available on the Atari ST User CoverDisk Hotline. Help is only available within the times specified, and no advice will be available outside these hours.



Read your mission orders, then prepare to be interfaced into the Infected Program Zone to "delete" a few opponents



Various views are available. This is a rather attractive right-hand view showing the status of your ship

Cyberdrome Hoverjet Simulator demo

A multi-computer simulation in which you must hunt and destroy rogue programs

Cyberdrome is the name of a virtual universe which exists inside a permanent memory matrix. This is home to thousands of intelligent, artificial life programs which are constantly growing and evolving.

Cyberdrome was designed to be a place where humans could interact with these intelligent lifeforms, but this once peaceful domain is now under attack from rogue programs.

These rogues have been created by a virus-infected supervisor program called the Cyberdrome Jurisdictional Enforcement Routine, or CJER (pronounced see-er). Luckily, they have been contained within a small area of protected memory called the Infected Program Zone (IPZ).

Your mission is to prevent these programs from escaping the IPZ and, if possible, delete any such programs controlled by CJER. To do this, you must run the Cyberdrome Hoverjet Simulator program which creates a virtual IPZ area in which you may train for the real thing.

Your Hoverjet is equipped with the latest in program deletion weaponry and has sophisticated defence subroutines to guard against attack.

The Cyberdrome Hoverjet Simulator features excellent 3D graphics and also allows for a second player to hook another ST up to your computer so that you can play as a team. There is a computer-controlled opponent if you find yourself unable to find a team mate.

When the game starts, you must head south, down a central passage towards a flashing



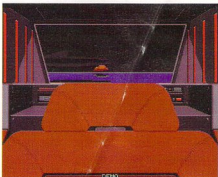
The forward view from your cockpit with short range radar and engine, weapons and shield status indicators

Programmed by: RHEA-FX
Configuration: ST/STE/TT with 1Mb or more - colour resolution
Filenames: X.CYBER -
Self-extracting archive

blue-white wall. This will take you to the main grid where all the action takes place. If you are playing with a friend, make sure they follow you as there are predator programs out to get you and you will need all the help you can get.

The complete version of Cyberdrome (see disk documentation files for details of where to get it) contains seven mission levels and a greater number of different types of opponents including Bantam, Spider and Mantis predator-class attack programs.

Along with the seven missions, there is the ability to allow team players to compete against each other in a series of training exercises including a race course where you are allowed to shoot at your opponent.



A rear view showing an opponent closing in. Always keep your eyes open for sneaky blighters like this

Single-sided service

Single-sided drive users wanting the contents on this month's disk on single-sided disks should send their original CoverDisk and a cheque for £1.50 - payable to Atari ST User - to SSD Service, Atari ST User, Europa House, Addington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

DC Xtract

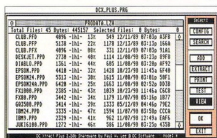
Save disk space with this archiving utility which combines four of the most popular archivers along with an easy to use interface

Archiving programs are used to dramatically reduce the amount of space used by files on a disk. In fact, each Atari ST User CoverDisk is compiled using an Archiving Utility in order to fit as many programs on disk as possible, which results in greater value for money for you.

Archivers are also frequently used by those who access the world of communications. Just log on to any bulletin board and you will find that nearly all files ready for downloading are archived.

The smaller size results in shorter downloading times and as most people using a modem realise, time is money when using the phone lines for communication.

There are various types of archivers and



DC Xtracts' GEM interface makes that creating, updating and extracting is infinitely easier than using the command line method

Programmed by: Paul W Lee
 Configuration: All STs - Colour/mono resolutions
 Filenames: X.DCXTRA.TOS
 Self-extracting archives

they are recognised by the last three letters (or extender) of the filename. For example, a file having been archived using the archiving utility STZip will have .ZIP as its last three letters. The most popular archivers are ARC, LZH [LHarc], ZIP and ZOO. Each has its own merits and some are more efficient at compressing files than others.

Unfortunately for the less experienced user, most of these archivers are generally TTP programs. TTP programs on the ST do not use GEM and its menus and, as such, can be difficult to use for the less experienced.

Thankfully, some programmers realised this and produced some very good programs that provide a GEM interface so that all operations could be carried out using the mouse and menus. This made the archiving process much easier.

DC Xtract is one such program which provides an easy to use interface and has the added feature of incorporating four of the most popular archiving utilities used today - ARC, ZOO, LZH and ZIP.

DC SEA

Transform archived files created with DC Xtract into self-extracting archive files which you can simply click on to de-archive them

Once archived, files will not be directly executable and must be de-archived (or extracted) before they can be used. This means that if you send an archived disk to a friend, they must have a copy of the appropriate archiving utility in order to extract the files.

DC SEA makes things much easier by converting archived files into executable programs. To extract a file converted using DC SEA, it is simply a matter of double-clicking on the file to run it.

It will then begin to extract automatically without the need for an archiving utility to be up and running. Once the extraction is



Creating a self-extracting archive file is easy. Simply select the archiver type, then click on Begin

Programmed by: Paul W Lee
 Configuration: All STs - Colour/mono resolution
 Filenames: X.DCSEA.TOS
 Self-extracting archive

complete, the converted file can be erased and the extracted files are ready to use.

It is important to realise that a converted file needs enough disk space to extract and in general, you should copy a converted file to its own blank disk before running it. If you find DC SEA and DC Xtract are just what you need, then be sure to send the shareware fee to the author to encourage further upgrades and improvements.

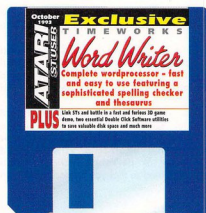
Support shareware

Many of the greatest programs which appear on the Atari ST User CoverDisk and in PD libraries are distributed under this shareware banner.

Shareware allows the user to try out the program and if it is found to be suitable, the user is requested to send a registration fee to the author as payment for the program.

This fee is nearly always minimal, and ensures that the author is encouraged to produce more programs. Generally, once paid, the registration fee also entitles the user to notification and distribution of upgraded versions of the program for a nominal fee, to cover postage, and in many cases, other programs are included free of charge.

So support shareware, send in your registration fee to ensure that shareware authors continue producing quality programs for the ST.



Using the CoverDisk

Write-protect your CoverDisk now by sliding the write-protect tab you can see through the hole at the top right corner of the CoverDisk.

In order to fill the disk with as many programs as possible, ST User employs disk compression techniques when placing large programs on the CoverDisk.

These files are termed "archived files" and cannot be directly executed from the CoverDisk. Archived files are identified by their names beginning with X.

Any files that do not begin with X, are actually folders containing files which are not compressed.

These uncompressed files should also be copied to a blank disk. Following are a series of step-by-step instructions for using the CoverDisk.

Important: Make a backup of your original CoverDisk and put it in a safe place.

Using archived files

Note: When copying files or disks, the ST refers to disk A and disk B in its on-screen instructions. Disk A refers to the disk being copied while disk B refers to the disk being copied to (usually a pre-formatted blank disk).

1. Format a disk.
2. Copy the required archived file to the formatted disk.
3. Run the copied archived file. It will now automatically "extract" to its full size.
4. Once complete, delete the X_ filename as this is no longer required. The formatted disk should now contain all the files that were in the archive file.

Normal uncompressed files

1. Format a blank disk.
2. Open the required folder and copy all files in the folder to the formatted disk.
3. You can now immediately run the program/s as is.

Highlighting and dragging files and icons

1. Click once on the item, it should turn black (the item is now highlighted).
2. If you keep the left mouse button held down on the item, a dotted outline of the item appears and you may then re-position it by moving the mouse to the required position (effectively dragging the icon) and releasing the mouse button.

If you are new to the ST and did not understand some of the terminology in the preceding steps. There now follow an explanation of some basic techniques needed.

Formatting a disk

1. Place the disk to be formatted in the drive.
2. Highlight the Drive A icon.
3. Move mouse pointer to the FILE menu at the top of the screen and select FORMAT.
4. A box will appear. Click on OK.
5. Another box will appear. Ensure DOUBLE SIDED is selected then click on OK. The disk is now being formatted.

Copying files to another disk

1. Select the file to be copied by highlighting it and dragging it to the disk B icon.
2. A box entitled COPY FILE(s) appears. Click on OK and follow instructions on the screen exchanging disks as required.

Problems with your CoverDisk?

With thousands of disks being duplicated each month, a few will inevitably be faulty. Fortunately, we can help you. Send the faulty disk to:

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◆ MEMORY UPGRADES ◆ TOS UPGRADES ◆ DISK DRIVE UPGRADES ◆ EMULATORS ◆ ACCELERATORS ◆ many REPAIRS

The first thing to do is extract the Word Writer files from the archived files on this month's CoverDisk. To do this, you need two formatted disks, one labelled Dictionary & Thesaurus and the other Word Writer Program.

Copy the X_WWWRIT1.TOS file onto the Word Writer Program disk and then copy X_WWWRIT2.TOS onto the Dictionary & Thesaurus disk.

Now you must run each file on the two disks in order to begin the extraction process. After the extraction has finished, be sure to delete the X_ files as these are no longer required.

Once all the files have been extracted, insert the Word Writer Program disk and double-click on the WWINSTALL.PRG file. This is the printer installation program, which sets up a file containing information about your printer. Word Writer needs this information before it can print your documents.

When the Install program has loaded, move the mouse pointer up to the File menu item and click on Read. You will then be presented with a file selector box. Look through the printer files. If your printer is an Epson or Epson-compatible, you should select the EPSON.CFG file.

Next, move the mouse pointer to the Codes menu item and you will see that a list of printer and text style commands (bold, underline and so on) will be displayed.

CONTROL CODES

You must now select each of these items and enter the correct control code for each. For example, to enter the control codes for bold for an Epson printer, you would select Bold from the Codes menu item and enter 27,69 on the START column. For the necessary codes, you should refer to the manual for your printer.

Some of the printer files may already

Word Writer manual offer

If you wish to find out more about Word Writer 2 and its many features not described here, there is a fully illustrated manual available at a discount price of £14.95 to all Atari ST Users readers.

For further information or ordering a copy of the manual, turn to page 20

Hard disk owners

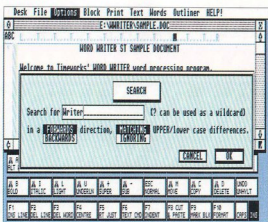
If you have a hard drive, you can install Word Writer 2 simply by copying the files onto your preferred partition. However, in order for Word Writer to function properly, you will need to inform it where to find its dictionaries and other data files.

Move the mouse pointer to the File menu item and select Set Path. An information box will appear listing the paths where Word Writer

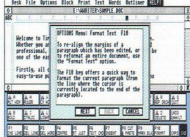
thinks its data files can be found.

Most likely, these are set up for a floppy-based system at the moment, so you must edit the path names to point to the partition and folder where you have installed Word Writer.

Once edited, click on OK and upon exiting, Word Writer will remember the changes and use the new paths from then on.



There is a good search and replace function



A built-in help feature allows you to call up instant information on many of Word Writer's commands and features

have values entered for each of the text styles. If this is the case, simply leave them unaltered. If you find that your printer does not function properly with these codes, replace them with the ones explained in your printer manual.

When finished entering the codes, move to the File menu item and select Save As to save all the information you entered to the printer file. When saving your printer file, be sure to give it the name PRINTER.CFG. Word Writer automatically looks for a file with this name and uses it as the default printer.

Now you quit the printer install program and run Word Writer 2. Do this by double-clicking on the WW_UK.PRG file. Upon loading, a file selector box will appear. Select the file SAMPLE.DOC and click on OK.

The SAMPLE.DOC file will now load and the document text will appear in its own window. You may load multiple documents into Word Writer (memory permitting).

Just below the window bar, which contains the name of the document opened, is the ruler status line. The letters L and R at the extreme left and right refer to the left and right margin positions and the letter T indicates the tab positions.

The margins can be moved by clicking

on them with the mouse and dragging them to a specified position. The tabs can be altered by simply clicking once on them with the left mouse button. This toggles them on or off.

On the same line on the far left, you will see ABC. These three letters indicate the current text style and change accordingly when you select various styles.

At the bottom of the screen, you will see a number of icons. These are the Quick Keys and allow for quick selection of frequently used commands.

Let's do a little text manipulation to show just how easy it is to edit text. With the sample document still loaded, move the mouse pointer to the File menu item and select Open. When the file selector appears, type in NEWFILE.DOC and click on OK.

Word Writer will now ask if you wish to edit a new file, click on OK and an empty window will open. Use the mouse to reposition the windows so that you can see both of them at once.



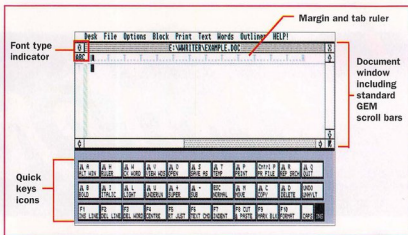
A quick and painless guide to Word Writer's many powerful features

Word Writer's block editing functions are extremely useful when editing multiple documents. To show this, click on the window containing the sample document text, to make this window the active one.

Next, position the cursor at the beginning of the document using either the mouse or the cursor keys. Move the mouse pointer to the Block menu item and select Top [or press the F9 key]. Then, move the cursor to the end of the first paragraph and select Set Bottom [or press the F9 key again].

The text between the two marked positions will now turn a sickly green colour to indicate that this section of text has been marked for editing. If you now select Cut from the Block menu, Word Writer will copy the marked text into a buffer in memory.

To transfer the marked text into the other window, simply click on the window to make it the active one and position the cursor to where you want the text to be placed. You can now select Paste from the



Block menu or press the F8 key and the marked text will be copied at the cursor position.

Marking text for editing can also be done using the mouse. This is much faster than selecting the menu items and is achieved by simply dragging a box around the required section of text with the mouse. As you can see, editing existing text is extremely easy. When it comes to typing in text, there are a number of features available to you.

For instance, there are many text styles available such as underline, bold, italic and others. To activate these different styles, simply check out the Quick Keys icons at the bottom of the screen. For example, to activate boldface text, simply press the Alternate key and the letter B at the same time.

You will notice that the letters ABC on the ruler bar line discussed earlier change to boldface to indicate the current text style.

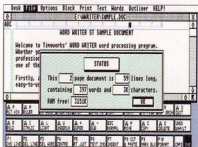
TEXT STYLES

To activate underline, simply press Alternate and the letter U and again, the ABC letters change to reflect the active styles. Any text typed in will be printed in whatever current text styles are in operation.

No matter how good a typist you are, there is always the chances of mistyping a word or simply spelling a particularly obscure word incorrectly.

Word Writer has a powerful spelling checker which can operate in three different ways – continuous, on key or document. Continuous will watch as you type a word, and as soon as you press Space – marking the end of the preceding word – will check it.

If it is a word not in Word Writer's dictionary, it will instantly be highlighted green to show that Word Writer does not recognise it. This is a very powerful feature but some may find that it interferes with their typing



and slows things down slightly.

Document mode simply allows a complete document to be checked after completion and Word Writer will scan each word, stopping at those it does not recognise allowing the user to either change them there and then, or allow the word to be added to the users' personal dictionary.

On key mode is used when text is being typed in and the user suddenly realises that the word just typed may not be spelled correctly. Pressing Alternate W will immediately highlight the word to the left of the cursor and Alternate V will bring up the dictionary view box with a list of suggestions for that word shown in a window.

Those of you who have ever been stuck for words will no doubt be pleased to know that Word Writer contains a built-in thesaurus.

Should you wish to find an alternative to a certain word, simply highlight the word in question and press Control and T. The thesaurus will be accessed and may then be searched using the highlighted word as a reference.

Eventually, after completing your document, you will want to print it out on your printer. This is achieved by moving the mouse pointer to the Print menu item.

From here, you have the option of either printing the currently loaded document or printing a document which is not loaded but is saved on disk.

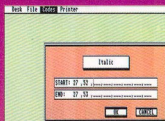
Also, you can alter the page layout, which allows you to specify how many lines are reserved for the header, body text and footer.

Selecting either Print Current Document or Print Disk will display the printer specification options. Here, you can tell Word Writer such things as how many pages to print, which pages to print, whether pages are to be numbered and where the page number should appear.

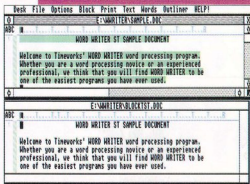
It is then simply a matter of clicking on OK and the printing process will be started.

As you can see, Word Writer is extremely easy to use and is full of features to help you produce lengthy documents. If you even find yourself stuck on a particular feature, you can simply call up the on-line help function by moving the mouse pointer to the HELP! menu item and selecting a particular topic. Word Writer will then display a brief description of the topic to jog your memory.

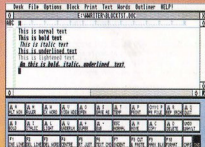
At a glance



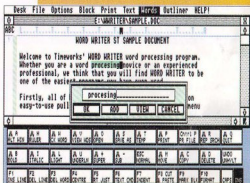
You must first inform Word Writer about the printer connected to your ST



Copying text between multiple documents is just one of it's many powerful features



Various text styles are available, such as bold, italic, and underline



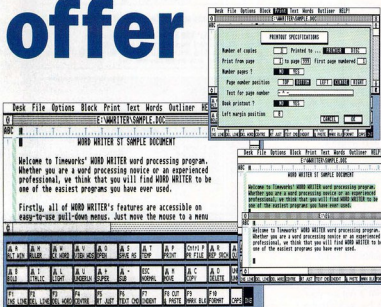
The built-in spelling checker will highlight any errors and allow you to correct them immediately



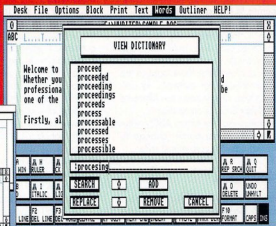
Never be lost for words again with Word Writer's integrated thesaurus

Word Writer

CoverDisk offer



Make the most of the free WordWriter software on this month's CoverDisk by buying the user manual for only £14.95 (incl p&p)



The comprehensive manual covers all of the package's features. An excellent *Getting Started* section is followed by the *Quick-Start Mini-Manual*. This is a brilliant guide to help get your new wordprocessor up and running, with clear and concise instructions relating to the essential basic workings of the package.

The indispensable troubleshooting section contains instant remedies for all the problems you might come across, along with additional hints and tips, in an easy to use format.

The Quick Reference section contains all the *Quick Keys*, and an extensive index rounds off a thoroughly good value-for-money manual.

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From the offset, the ST has been particularly well equipped as far as its music expansion capabilities are concerned. What this means for the average user is that, should they wish to dabble in the world of music, it is a relatively cheap exercise to do so.

However, while it might be cheap, the idea of composing tunes can nonetheless be daunting. Surely there must be some software that will aid the reticent in the quest for musical expression? Something other than hex-happy trackers and daunting sequencers?

Enter the composition program, a relatively new and altogether strange beast. Highly impressive to your average non-muso and their friends, composition programs do a proportion of the work for you, making it that much easier to get music on disk and pumping from your speakers.

Basically, such programs offers a definable amount of control over some of the parameters that govern the music, such as length, basic melodies, style (for instance, rock or disco?) and so on. Then, they do the rest for you. It's

like having a set of trained, skilful musicians inside your computer doing all the hard work!

Of course, things aren't that simple. If every computer could compile top tunes, the musician would be out of business. What the computer can do, though, is provide you with raw material which you can listen to, edit and chop around. It's a case of you guiding the machine towards something new.

With the modern electronic music, the means of

The ST has not only put the tools for making music directly into the computer user's hands, it has also demystified the very act of composition.

Phil Morse searches for easy ways to write great music

Silicon

creation has as much of a bearing upon the finished result as anything else, and by experimenting with novel methods of composition – such as those offered by this extremely disparate selection of composition aids – the user is opening his or herself to new and often un-

explored areas of potentially mind-blowing creativity.

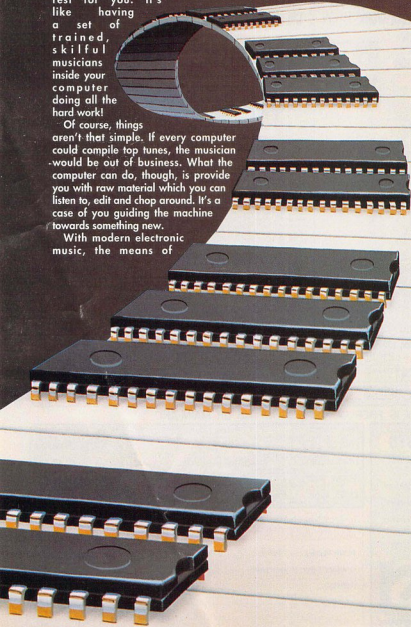
If you're starting from scratch, first you must have some equipment. Presumably you've got your computer – what else do you need before the notes can start a-pouring?

First you need something to actually make the music. The ST is the perfect music controller – what it isn't (as you will no doubt have noticed from the bleepy efforts emanating from your monitor in your fave games) is a good sound producer.

The best route for the beginner, in terms of both price and convenience, is to buy a sound module. This is basically a small box which plugs into your machine's Midi ports and actually produces sounds, under the instruction of the computer.

The sound module is plugged directly into an amplifier so that you can hear what is being produced. Practically, you'd probably use your hi-fi for this purpose. All you need do is plug a standard hi-fi lead between the sound module and the Aux, Video or Tape 2 input on the back of your hi-fi and eureka! – top quality pianos, drums, strings, flutes, and a myriad of customisable synth sounds are at your disposal.

Most modern sound modules are "multi-timbral". This means that they can play more than one sound at once. This is essential, as it means that, from one box, you can have all your instrumental parts playing in unison. By now you are probably beginning to realise the power an ST and the correct hard-





Is it a sequencer?



Is it a tracker?



No, it's John the Composer!

symphonies

ware puts into your hands...

An unbeatable starting point is a sound module made by Roland, called the SC-7. This is an extremely high quality, basic unit which is capable of all of the above, yet costs a reasonable £314. Alternatively, the latest Yamaha sound module, the CBX-T3 is causing waves, and at £359 for 192 sounds and 10 drum kits, it's good value, too.

KEYBOARD

Along with your sound module you'll also need a keyboard to play. As the actual sound circuitry is in your module, the keyboard is simply a set of keys in a case [a sound module and keyboard combined is what we commonly call a synthesizer].

Don't worry if you can't play keyboards - you don't need to be able to, as playing music with a computer to help you is a different ball game

entirely from old-fashioned methods. But more on that later...

Roland are your best bet here, too. For around £140, their PC150 keyboard is an absolute bargain. Styled in grey to match your computer, this compact box nevertheless contains a set of high quality "ebony and ivories", and features many refinements which you'll come to appreciate as your hobby takes hold of your psyche (and your wallet).

As you're probably aware, most songs are actually put together on a sequencer, and as most of the programs featured here don't even pretend to be one, and can save their output in Midi format anyway for loading into one, you really ought to buy something like Gadgit's excellent Sequencer One Plus - this example is cheap, simple and all you'll need alongside some of these complex compositional monsters! So, once you've got a sound

module and a master keyboard plugged in and some sequencing software ready to fine-tune your efforts, it's time to load up the software that's going to help you to compose your killer tune.

I've looked at a very wide variety of composition programs here, biasing my selection slightly in favour of the new or those offering an new angle.

They range from the fun to the highly serious, the practical to the plain bizarre. What they all share in common is a new approach to composing music, using the strengths of the computer to offer new insights into the murky composition process.

COMPOSITION

What can be learned from all of these programs and the incredibly varied methods used by modern musicians to compose and record music is that experimentation is becoming more and more a major part of the composition process.

Whether you're chopping up pre-recorded Midi files or inverting a track in Fractal Music, as long as you are always ready to try something new, any of these programs will yield results which will never be worse than interesting....

Building blocks

Another increasingly popular short-cut in the composition process is the use of commercially available Midi files.

There are plenty of complete songs (minus vocals, of course) available on disk from a number of companies, but here we're more concerned with disks offering "building blocks" from which a song can be made.

Surely the most legendary of such disks are the Heavenly Music Dr Beat entourage - now in original flavour, second helping and Soul and Dance. All offer a large number of pre-programmed drum patterns as standard Midi files, which can be loaded into a sequencer and "cut and pasted", altered, experimented with - generally, creatively patched into something new.

Experimentation is definitely the key here - these are raw materials, not polished pieces of artistic perfection. They're well documented, extremely well programmed and highly useful.

With disks such as Heavenly's Techno Grooves, the concept has been taken a stage further, with whole chunks of music included too. This is great because you can "steal" any pattern, change its instrument, mess around with it and come up with something new to augment your drum tracks. However, one has to ask where it will all end!

The Groove Library disks from RealFeel also offer the same degree of professionalism, and all are highly recommended both as tools for making "notepad" music (getting ideas down before you forget them) and as building blocks for finished compositions.

If you've ever tried to program an interesting hip hop breakbeat, you'll appreciate the time-saving potential of such tools!

From Heavenly Music:

- **Dr Beat** - General drum and percussion patterns
- **Dr Beat Vol 2** - More of the same
- **Dr Beat Soul & Dance** - Foot-oriented drum patterns
- **Beat 'n' Bass** - Rhythms and bass/funk grooves
- **Techno Grooves** - Complete techno arrangements

From RealFeel:

- **The RealFeel Groove Library** - Drum patterns played by a "real" drummer

John the Composer

Newtronic, £49

John the Composer is supplied in a video-style box, complete with one disk, instruction manual, registration card, a useful Midi information sheet... and a dangle.

For those of you *not au fait* with this final piece of gadgetry, a dangle is a small "key", if you like, that plugs into your ST, without which the program won't work.

A minus point from me, I'm afraid - I am leathe to continually plug dangles in and out of ports with finite lifespans just

because some other idiot copies software!

The manual could be a little better (it's written in "Finnish English", I think) but in its favour it has a full index and lots of screenshots to demystify the program.

Not that it needs demystifying, by the way, because it's all very easy to use. It even works without Midi equipment, although obviously it's much better with.

Four channels carry four instruments – drums, bass, chord and melody – each of which has various user-adjustable parameters, all of which can be tweaked after setting fundamentals such as the key the piece is to be played in.

You can, depending upon the part you're currently working on, adjust things such as highest and lowest melody points, number and syncopation of notes, how often chords change... and all on an easy-to-use screen, negating the need for any serious musical knowledge.

You can put music into sections (up to four) so that a song has recognisable changes throughout, and the repetition command allows all-important familiarity with your melodies to breed as the song works on.

TAKE OVER

The less you want to do, the more you can ask the program to take over – it will jam away quite happily forgetting any original melodic nudge you gave it!

As if all this wasn't enough, you can pigeonhole into separate folders all your different efforts written in different styles, and John the Composer will draw on these as and when requested in order to influence future compositions.

Although it's actually a pretty complicated piece of software, the use of nice, clear icons and screens make it all rather simple to use. If you're expecting it to compose another *Souvenir* or *Forbidden Colours* you'll be disappointed – plaintive, heart-rending

melodies will never be a computer's strong point – but if it's inspiration you're after, you can always listen to John, nick his best bits and use them later on in the construction of your own songs in your "normal" sequencer.

Session Partner

Newtronic, £149

A highly powerful and versatile piece of software, Session Partner is best described as an "auto-accompaniment" program – but to call it this is to miss the point. It's an incredibly powerful system which will provide a constantly changing music backdrop to anything you care to play.

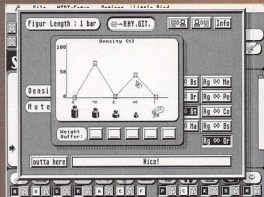
Supplied in a black video-style box, the manual is reasonably clear in its explanation of what's going on. However, the software is well designed and mainly self-explanatory.

The program is copy-protected, with a dongle for the joystick port. Much as I loathe the little things, at least this one plugs into a socket which is designed to have things shoved in and out of it... although anything that plugs into the ST's joystick port isn't exactly making marks in the user-convenience box!

Running on any machine with 1Mb of memory or more, and requiring a hi-res monitor and a Midi set-up, Session Partner demands some kind of structured musical pattern before it starts. In other words, you tell it the chord progression, the verse/chorus structure and so on, and it bases its accompaniment around this.

Where it shines is in its ability to – in any of a number of styles – "fill in" the whole musical arrangement around your basic structure. It's a far cry from Bontempi's auto-chords! You have total control over the way it plays the accompaniment, defining things such as the time signature, tempo, key and style.

There's even a program on the disk called Backing Partner which will listen for any chords played from your Midi keyboard and adjust the accompani-



Session Partner's requests have a rather flippantry approach

ment accordingly. There's no room to describe in detail the versatility of this program. Suffice to say that it totally revolutionises the way you'll let a song develop. There is a set of dice which allow you to randomly affect the individual instruments and arrangements simply by clicking on them. The instruments are represented by icons across the bottom of the main screen, with their own adjustable Midi parameters.

More power lies in your ability to mess with parameters in real time, hearing the results instantly. Flipping through countless arrangements and patterns at stupid speeds almost guarantees that, in the end, you'll come across something you like, and then it's simply a case of saving out the required bits of music.

Fractal Music v2.51

Datamusic/Oscar Music Productions, £79

Fractals and music have a lot in common, especially fractals and dance music. Using a chaotic combination of randomness and repetition unique to fractals and central to dance music, some incredibly liberating results can be achieved. You can also, quite equally, create a complete racket, as I found out (but did I have fun getting there!).

Compatible with all STs, Fractal Music is supplied on one disk with a spiral-bound manual, which is concise and clear. The program itself is also highly simple in use – a fact which belies its flexibility and power. It will play a 16-

Alternatively...

Other compositional aids are available. Starting with a real heavyweight, Tonality Systems' Symbolic Composer is an incredibly complex and thus potentially highly flexible music composition language, which takes my theoretical musings about how the way music is created can affect the finished result to the ultimate extreme.

Here, you define your own personal styles and preferences and end up with music which could not conceivably have been composed any other way apart from with this program – after about six months!

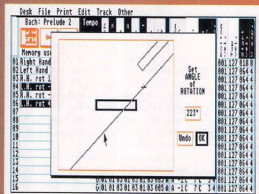
If you've got the time, this will reward you with hours of theoretical, intellectual and highly rewarding music making. Just don't expect results the first week you use it.

Music Mandala from Newtronic is much of a fun, straight-out-of-the-box affair, and as such is limited in what it can achieve. However, after a few clicks, you can have a structured, defined song underway, complete with fractal-based graphics on-screen being "composed" alongside the music.

It's very much a practical, hands-on set-up, but some severe limitations – the inability to save a composed piece, for example – keep it pegged firmly on the "fun" side of things.

Lots of numbers, but Fractal Music isn't actually that hard to use

Track	Preview 1	Preview 2	Preview 3	Preview 4	Preview 5	Preview 6	Preview 7	Preview 8	Preview 9	Preview 10	Preview 11	Preview 12	Preview 13	Preview 14	Preview 15	Preview 16	Preview 17	Preview 18	Preview 19	Preview 20	
01	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
02	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
03	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
04	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
05	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
06	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
07	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
08	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
09	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
10	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
11	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
12	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
13	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
14	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
15	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro
16	Right Hand	Left Hand	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro	Intro	Chorus	Verse	Bridge	Outro



Ever wanted to rotate a melody? You can with Fractal Music!

channel Midi instrument, and create its compositions based a number of parameters, which is where your degree of control comes in.

Described by the authors as a "music processor", its particular strength is its set of music distortion facilities. You can affect music already there in a number of highly original ways, which occasionally produce results definitely unobtainable by any other method!

For instance, by playing with the pitch, velocity and time duration of sets of notes within a piece (the authors prefer the term "fractation" to "processing"), random distortions can be produced with ease.

A major aspect of the program is looping, and this is where the repetitive bit comes in. You can nest loops within loops within loops, just like in fundamental Basic programming, and the repetition thus invoked is the essential pitch-side to the random bits. It turns the chaos of fractal-based mathematics into something approximating music.

The program's approach to more conventional functions is fresh (and very mathematical) too – you can quantise to odd beats, for instance, and I've never transposed a track by ratio before. Semitones? Didn't even miss them...

MANIPULATION

The best use for this program would definitely be the manipulation of previously created Midi files. The music it produces on its own is erm, definitely "new age". However, do not let this put you off, as fractal composition is a fascinating process to work with, and there is a large saving grace.

It is possible to save "your" compositions as Midi files, so a cracking piece of music can be grabbed as-is and kept forever. Should you save just the parameters, you can guarantee that the machine – while living within your limitations, as saved – will not play the same piece of music twice.

So you have the choice of a standard "capture" when the software gets it right, or alternatively saving the parameters used to generate a piece of music, which you can then alter and experiment with at any time until you're happy, when you can finally save your result as a Midi file.

Clear in concept and realisation, Fractal Music is a commendable product, and it's easier to use than to explain, I promise!

Improvisor Pro

Creative Sounds, £149

Again centred around bass, drums, chords and melody, Improvisor Pro (and its cut-down sister program Improvisor) offers dedicated and serious software which aims to be easy to use without sacrificing flexibility.

It displays a commendable integrity of approach – heavy on (practically applied) theory, this program would be an ideal classroom aid, for instance, as well as a highly useful practical musicians' tool.

PROFESSIONAL

It comes in a professional-looking acrylic library case with a large folder tucked inside, containing the disk and a glossy, ring-bound manual. The smart presentation lends a degree of confidence in the program which is thankfully not denied by actual use.

The user can define a database for melodies and rhythms, a little like John the Composer, and also control deviation characteristics from set norms for melodies, scales and so on. There's full Midi file handling, comprehensive chord recognition, and – and here's where educational users might well be interested – a useful theory guide, containing notated examples explaining what is going on.

Unfortunately there's no room to go into any detail here – suffice to say that, for the serious musician wanting to learn about music as well as make a nice sound, Improvisor Pro provides an intuitive interface which is transparent enough for you to get a real feel for exactly why what you are doing is producing the required results.

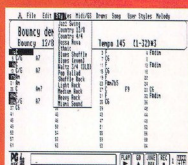
Again, it wouldn't produce hit tunes on its own, but it might well help you to...

● Existing users of Improvisor can upgrade to Pro for £39.

Band-in-a-Box

PG Music/Arbiter
Pro Midi, £89

No round-up of compositional aids would be complete without a mention of one of the big boys in the arena, Band-in-a-Box, which has now reached v5. Arguably the program that started it all, Band-in-a-Box is tried and tested and



Band-in-a-Box is the program that started it all

highly effective, if surpassed in special-ist features by later programs.

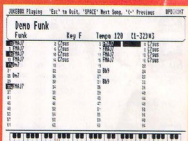
The most colourfully presented of all the programs here, Band-in-a-Box works on the same principle as Session Partner, in that you enter a chord progression and it generates a musical accompaniment to go along with it. It will play five musical parts (piano, bass, guitar, drums and strings) and must be used with a Midi set-up.

STYLES

There are now 100 built-in styles, although with the Country styles running into double figures, I find the inclusion of a mere three dance styles (disco and two pop) rather pathetic. Where are the Hip Hop, Hi-NRG, House, Regga and Soul styles, to quote a mere few? Keep up with the times, kids! However, there is the facility to define your own, so maybe Breakbeat Rave is only an upgrade away.

There are the usual controls of tempo, style, time signature and so on, and neat feature is the ability to mark where you want the software to play drum fills, adding spice to rhythm tracks.

More limited than, say, Session Partner, Band-in-a-Box is nevertheless a highly tested and refined piece of software, which has proved its worth by still being here after all this time! Just don't get too excited if you're a fan of any type of dance music.



Band-in-a-Box playing a composition

Contacts

- Arbiter Pro Midi, Wilberforce Road, London NW9 6AX Tel 081-202 1199
- Creative Sounds, PO Box 877, Bristol BS99 5UA Tel 0272 244395
- Heavenly Music Midi Software, 39 Garden Road, Jaywick Village, Clacton CO15 2RT
- Newtronic, 62b Manor Avenue, London SE4 1TE Tel 081-691 1087
- Oscar Music, 57 Cricklefield Road, Hackney, London E5 8NR Tel 071-377 6294
- RealFeel, 8 High View House, 1 High View Road, London SE19 3SS Tel 071-241 0621
- Tonality Systems, 18 Park Avenue, Denby Dale Road, Wakefield WF2 8DS Tel 0924 383017

A printer is something you'll want to last for quite a while, so it is important that you buy the best one for your needs. Many's the computer owner who has splashed out a few hundred pounds on impulse only to find out when it's too late that the printer isn't really good enough, or that there were cheaper or better alternatives.

Most of us think of a printer as a just smallish lump of plastic that drowns out the TV when it's working, but that's just the most common type of printer, properly known as an impact dot-matrix.

You've probably heard of three other types of printer: laser, inkjet and bubble jet. There are probably 50 or so printer manufacturers worldwide, and most make scores of models, leaving us with a few thousand different printers from which to choose.

SERIAL v PARALLEL

At the simplest level we can think of there being only two types of printer – those that plug into the serial port and those that plug into the parallel port.

The differences between the serial port and the parallel port are not complicated. Data sent down the serial port goes one "bit" at a time. One ASCII character is eight bits big – one "byte" – so to print a letter A, for example, the eight bits that make up the ASCII code for that letter have to be sent one after the other.

If you could send all eight bits of a

character at once, printing would be quicker, yes? And this is what happens to data sent down the parallel port – all eight bits that make up the ASCII code travel together down eight separate but parallel lines, and all arrive at the printer at the same time.

Most modern printers have a parallel interface, some have both parallel and serial or the option to fit either and a few still have only serial interfaces. I can't think of a single good reason why an ST user should buy a serial printer.

Next there are the different ways that printers actually make marks on the page. Impact dot-matrix printers work by making little pins strike an inked ribbon, thus transferring a pattern of dots on to the paper on the other side of the ribbon.

The cheapest type of impact dot-matrix printer has only nine pins in its "print head" and consequently the qual-

ity is not high because the characters it produces are made up of only a few, quite large dots. This type of printer is good when printout quality isn't important. Many businesses will have a cheap 9-pin printer hooked up to their client databases ready to print a few thousand address labels. Or hooked up to their invoicing system, where fancy quality isn't important.

Printers can cause more trouble than any other piece of hardware.

Dave French shows that with a little understanding you and your printer can live together in harmony

much, or not quite far enough, which results in thin white or dark lines across the printout. The main problem with all colour impact dot-matrix printers is that the ribbons, which are quite expensive, get dirty very quickly indeed, so you can print only a few decent colour pictures before everything starts to look "muddy" because the ink from the black part of the ribbon is beginning to mix with the other colours.

If high quality graphics are important to you then forget impact dot-matrix printers and start looking at inkjet, bubble jet and laser printers.

HIGHER QUALITY

Inkjet and bubble jet printers use different methods to spray ink from a reservoir or cartridge on to the paper. Both are also dot matrix printers because the characters they print are constructed from a matrix of dots, just like impact dot matrix printers, except the dots are a lot smaller, which means that the characters are of a higher quality than impact dot matrix, even though the claimed dots-per-inch (dpi) resolutions may be the same or similar.

Be warned that some cheap inkjet printers are not high quality, emulating old 9-pin Epson printers. Look for a graphics output resolution of at least 300 or 360 dots per inch. Be warned also that because their paper feed mechanisms works in exactly the same way as impact dot-matrix printers, some

Your questions answered

Q Why is the graphics output from my colour 24-pin dot-matrix printer too dark?

A Because the print density is set too high. Lower the print density and try again.

Q Why am I getting horizontal white or black lines across my printouts?

A Because the paper feed mechanism of the printer is feeding the paper a little bit too much or not quite far enough. There's no complete solution to this problem, it's a fact of life – some printers suffer from it more than others.

Q If I can't afford a laser printer, which is the best one to buy if I want high quality output?

A An inkjet or bubble jet printer. The more money you spend, the better quality you'll get. But keep in mind that these types of printers produce the best quality output on special paper that is more expensive than the ordinary variety.

Q Are 9-pin colour dot-matrix printers any good?

A It's like buying a Yugo car. You get what you pay for.

Pain-free

ity is not high because the characters it produces are made up of only a few, quite large dots. This type of printer is good when printout quality isn't important. Many businesses will have a cheap 9-pin printer hooked up to their client databases ready to print a few thousand address labels. Or hooked up to their invoicing system, where fancy quality isn't important.

But if you want to write letters that don't look cheap and nasty, you need better quality. The next step up is 24-pin printers; the pins in these are smaller, which means that the dots they produce are smaller, and so the characters are of a higher quality.

They generally come with a few built-in fonts and produce so-called "letter quality" output. If you need a printer mainly for writing letters, a 24-pin impact dot-matrix printer will be good enough.

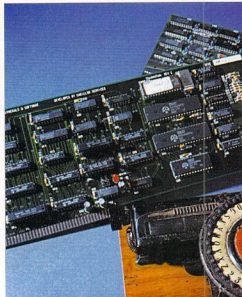
But if you want to print a lot of graphics, especially if you want colour, think again. Every impact dot-matrix printer I have ever seen suffers to one degree or another from "banding" when printing graphics.

Because of very small inaccuracies in the paper feeding mechanism, the paper is fed through a little bit too

of the cheaper bubble jet printers also suffer from banding.

The only "jet" printers I have seen that don't suffer from banding are the Hewlett-Packard DeskJets and the Canon BJ-200 and BJ-230 bubble jets.

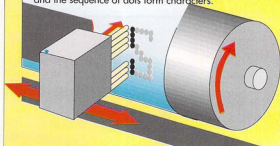
And even then you need to use special "coated" paper to get the best results, which is quite a bit more expensive than ordinary paper. For printing



How they work

DOT MATRIX

A line of metal pins (usually 9 or 24) are fired by an electromagnetic coil at the paper through a ribbon, the impact leaving a row of inked dots. The print head is moved along by a stepper motor and the sequence of dots form characters.



LASER

Laser beam traces a pattern on a photosensitive drum creating a static charge on the exposed areas

Drum rotates and toner is attracted from a cartridge to the charged areas

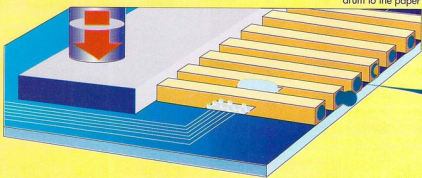
An electrically charged wire pulls toner from the drum to the paper

Charged wire neutralises any remaining charge on the drum

Any toner still stuck to drum is removed by a blade

Heated rollers fuse the toner to the paper

Discharge brush removes the electric charge from the toner and paper



INK JET

Microscopic nozzles on the ink-jet cartridge sprays fine jets of ink onto the paper. Ink first passes through a filter into the reservoir which supplies the nozzles. A metal plate in the nozzle heats the ink which creates bubbles. These bubbles merge together to form one large bubble which expands, forcing a drop of ink from the nozzle. The vacuum formed when the bubble contracts refills the nozzle from the reservoir.

printing

colour graphics, the first printer you should consider is the Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 550C, which costs about £500 to £600. This printer can produce superb results on the proper Hewlett-Packard paper.

Believe it or not, laser printers are also dot matrix printers, for exactly the same reason that inkjets and bubble jets are. Laser printers use heat to glue

extremely fine particles of "toner" on to the paper, and because the toner isn't wet (like ink is) there is no chance of getting fuzzy output from the ink soaking into the paper and spreading. You get very sharp edges with laser printers, even on ordinary paper.

Banding is almost non-existent with laser printers, but like everything you buy, the quality of laser printers varies with price. Some of the cheaper models will use a quite coarse grain of toner, which means the dots they produce will be that much larger, and this can sometimes result in something that looks similar to banding. But there are no bad laser printers, only better ones.

If you are thinking about a laser printer, keep in mind that many of them come with only 512k or 1Mb of memory. Neither of these amounts of memory is enough to produce A4-sized graphics at 300dpi, like pages from desktop publishing programs for example; you need at least 1.5Mb.

If the laser printer has an even higher resolution - like the 400dpi Ricoh LP1200, or the new 600dpi Laserjets - then you'll need more memory still, at least 4Mb for 400 dpi and 6Mb for 600 dpi.

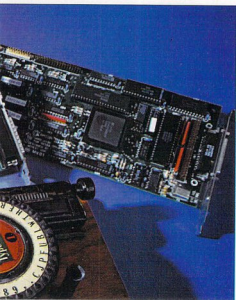
Troubleshooting

If you select the Print option from a program and nothing gets printed, here are a few things to check:

1. Is the printer broken? Look in your manual to find out how to execute the printer's self-test. If it works, obviously the machine is not broken.
2. Is the printer cable broken or incorrectly wired? The easiest way to check this properly is to connect another printer to your ST using the same cable. It would be best if you got someone who knows how to properly set up the ST for printing to check this.
3. Is the printer's parallel/serial port broken? The easiest way to check this properly is to connect the printer to another ST, using a different cable if possible.

Another common problem is pictures printing out as garbage - lots of weird characters, and the print head thrashing about all over the place. This is always because you have the wrong printer driver selected.

Remember that many printers contain more than one printer emulation, and if the machine is set to IBM mode, for example, and you use an Epson printer driver, you will probably get garbage. The emulation and the printer driver have to be matched.



QUALITY AT THE R



SCANNER

Newcomers who like to scan detailed graphics or complicated images experience with the ALFADATA a favourable alternative to typing or re-scaling and investing a lot of time. Advanced users who insist on the efficient character recognition and comfortable graphic software. Choose between ALFADATA Plus or ALFADATA Plus OCR.



ALFADATA PLUS
£119.00
ALFADATA OCR
£179.00

SOFTWARE

WORD PROCESSORS

Wordwriter	£45.00
1st Word Plus V3.2	£33.95
Calligrapher Pro	£73.95
Calligrapher Gold	£104.95

DTP SOFTWARE

Calamus 1.09N	£95.00
Pagestream V2.2	£149.00
Calamus 5	£235.00
Timeworks Publisher 2	£53.95
Calamus SL	£545.00
OCR Software	£49.95
Touch Up	£27.00
Easysdraw (supercharged)	£29.95
Cyber Studio	£19.00
Cyber Control	£19.00
Cyber Paint	£19.00
Truepaint (for Falcon)	£32.95
Human Design Disk	£9.00
Future Design Disk	£9.00
3D Fonts 1	£9.00
Cad 3D	£9.00
Cad 3D Developers' Disk	£9.00
No Desk 3	£28.00
That's Funface	£9.00
Signs and Banners	£15.00
Calendar + Stationery	£15.00
Greeting Cards	£15.00

MUSIC SOFTWARE



Emagic Notator SL	£279.00
Emagic Creator	£179.00
Emagic Unitar 2	£230.00
Cubeat	£150.00
Cubase Version 3	£319.00
Cubase Light	£70.00
Notator Alpha	£170.00
Cubase Audio	P.O.A.

ACCESSORIES

Mono-Colour Monitor
Switchbox	£14.95
Multi-sync Switchbox	£29.95
Printer Cable	£6.00
Modem Cable	£6.00
Null Modem Cable	£6.00
Serial Cable	£6.00
Philips/Atari Cable	£10.00
Scart Cable	£10.00
5.25" External Drive	£29.00
3.5" External Drive	£50.00
3.5" 1.44Mb External Disk Drive
For Atari/Mega STE/TT	£99.00
Blitz Turbo	£25.00
Ripper Cartridge	£25.00
Power Cable (kettle lead)	£6.00
Mouse Pad (picture)	£5.00
Blank Disk (branded)	£4.49
Spike Protectors	£30.00
Dust Covers (all sorts)	£6.00
Soldering Irons	£10.00
SCSI II Cable	£29.95
Hard Drive Fans	£5.00
Midi Cables	£5.00
D.M.A. Cable	£6.00
SCSI Cable	£6.00
SCSI Splitter Cable	£9.99
Optical Mouse Pad	£10.00
Printer Ribbons (all sorts)	P.O.A.
Toner Cartridge (all sorts)	P.O.A.
Monitor Stand	£9.95
Disk Box (40 capacity)	£4.95
Atari to TV cable	£10.00
Printer Switchbox	£9.95



ICD HOST (SCSI) ADAPTORS
AD SCSI ST	£100.00
AD SCSI plus ST	£110.00
The Link	£89.00
ICD Utility Disk + Manual	£24.95
Clean Up ST	£14.95

ATARI FALCON 030

A 16MHz 32 bit computer for fast processing, it comes with a 1,44Mb floppy disk drive, with built-in speaker.

Falcon 030 4Mb	£749.00
Falcon 030 4Mb + 65Mb	£899.00
Falcon 030 4Mb + 85Mb	£949.00
Hard Drive	£1099.00
Falcon 030 4Mb + 120Mb	£1099.00
Hard Drive	£1299.00

FALCON MONITORS

Hi-Res mono monitor for Falcon 030	£99.00
SVGA colour for Falcon 030	£239.00
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GASTEINER

Nobody who knows anything about the personal computer business would describe the ST as a typical business computer. We all know that where there are suits there tend to be IBMs or their many clones – and sometimes also the odd Apple Macintosh.

You just don't walk into offices and expect to see the Atari logo – it's as simple as that. This is not so because the ST isn't up to the job: Indeed, for most humdrum office jobs and quite a few more demanding ones it is actually faster and more user-friendly than a great many PCs, Windows or no Windows, and cheaper too.

But it is easier to talk the average manager into donating his company car to charity than persuade him that there is an alternative to "the industry standard".

Atari computers are, by and large, seen as home computers, a category somewhere between business machines and games consoles.

CORPORATE

Telling the difference between a home computer and a games console is easy: the computer has a keyboard attached to it. But the distinction between home and business computers is not so simple: they look similar and there is often little to choose between them in technical terms.

The most obvious difference – as every Dixons salesman knows – is in the type of customer buying the machines, with business computers going into the corporate market and home computers being bought by individuals.

The needs and interests of these individuals vary so much that home computers must be extremely versatile, in order to meet whatever demands their owners may make on them.

Many STs end up in children's bedrooms being used exclusively to play games, whatever the original "educational" justification which parents may



Karl Brandt: At System Solutions he brings top Atari products to Britain

have had for buying their offspring such a high-tech present.

Others, however, lead more responsible lives, serving in a busy professional's home office, running a small business, providing the heart of a complete publishing system or a busy recording studio.

Even today, the wordprocessing, database, desktop publishing, computer-aided design, Midi sequencer and video editing software available for the ST, TT and Falcon computers can compete rather well in most fields with the over-priced equivalents running under Windows.

Serious ST users therefore come in many guises, from freelance writers to jobbing printers, from schoolteachers to pop stars, from programmers to priests.

If this diverse group has anything in common, it is probably a sense of value for money (often disguised as an acute shortage of funds) and a non-conformist readiness to digress from the well-trodden paths of the industry standards.

But this individualism can have its

Get

price: What do you do when you have a problem and everyone else around you has PCs or Macs and has never heard of an AUTO folder?

What if you need to make a decision about what vector graphics software to invest in and everybody else recommends Corel Draw?

So one big problem that the serious ST user faces is support. Atari UK themselves sell the computers but do not seem to care all that much how they are used as long as people buy them. The local High Street has little to offer, either.

BOX SHIFTERS

You may, if you are lucky, find an ST or Falcon for sale but apart from games and joysticks you are unlikely to find much in the way of software or peripherals. Specialist computer shops are increasingly rare and seem to fall increasingly into one of two categories: Games only or the wall-to-wall carpeted showroom where Atari have never been heard of. So where do you turn?

There are, of course, the mail order houses. You will be familiar with the advertisements of firms which seem to have just about everything you could possibly wish for, and often at exceptionally good prices.

Without these box shifters, as they are known in the industry, the Atari scene would have come to a grinding halt long ago. The slightly dismissive term "box shifter" is a bit of an injustice – in fact, some of these companies have some very knowledgeable and helpful people around, and often put together some very good own-brand deals, especially for hard disks and other peripherals.

But since these mail order firms



David Encill: Started Titan Designs with graphics card

compete very keenly on price, the pressure is to keep overheads to a minimum and there is therefore little margin for employing extra people to hold customers' hands.

And as they have such large catalogues, the number of people required to support all of the products sold would be quite considerable!

Whichever way you look at it, there is no way around the hard business realities: you get what you pay for. Value for money can mean "cheap", or it can mean "quality".

If you want help with problems, regular bug fixes and upgrades, decent documentation and the knowledge that you are dealing with people who are as committed as you are to the ST as a computer for serious applications, you have to be prepared to pay a little extra.

Not too much, of course, since if you had money to burn and a corporate-sized budget you would have bought IBM or Apple in the first place! This

where the companies profiled in this article come in.

Together, they provide the infrastructure that keeps the serious ST scene going. Of course they are in it for the money, but it is also in their interest to help you sort out your problems in order to keep you loyal to the ST – any defector to the PC or Mac, remember, is a customer lost. Their commitment to the business, professional or hobbyist ST user is their livelihood.

The combined effects of the stagnation in the ST scene (before the arrival of the Falcon) and the economic recession have seen a reduction in the number of companies supporting the serious ST user in this way, with some prominent casualties going into bankruptcy – Signa Publishing being only the most prominent example – and others seeking safety in numbers by moving over to other hardware platforms. Talking to the people behind the companies featured in this

serious

As the Falcon breathes new life into the Atari scene, the further expansion of the user base will also benefit all those for whom computing is more than a game. Günter Minnerup surveys the state of play in the serious ST market

System Solutions

There can be few ST owners who have not heard of System Solutions, also known as the Atari Workshop.

If the latter name suggests soldering irons and test benches then it is because hardware engineering and repairs were indeed at the origin of the company, and still form a substantial part of their trade today, but System Solutions are about much more than hardware.

It's about, well, system solutions – as long as your system is an Atari one, they have the solutions. As every Atari devotee knows, the Mecca of serious Atari computing is Germany where so many of the leading programs and hardware add-ons come from.

The fact that System Solutions' managing director, Karl Brandt, is German-born must therefore give them an advantage over their competitors



The Blackwater Bulletin Board is dedicated to supporting System Solutions' customers

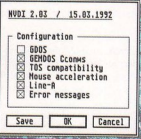
since he knows the German ST scene well and can quickly point to bring new German products into the UK market – and, if necessary, translate the documentation himself.

Although Karl plays down the importance of the German connection and points to the many non-German products in their catalogue, especially from the USA, the real success stories – the screen accelerator NVDI, for example, or the Overscan video resolution enhancer – still tend to hail from the land of wüster and hard money.

The business operates from two sites, both containing service and repair workshops. The Desktop Centre in South London also offers a showroom where customers are encouraged to try out anything before committing themselves to a purchase, while the Windsor branch is where mail orders are dealt with – although many out-of-town customers prefer to take their repairs to Windsor in order to avoid the London traffic.

The third string to System Solutions' bow is Summer Type, which offers DTP bureau and typesetting services to Atari users.

One of System Solutions' big sellers is NVDI, a German accelerator that squeezes more speed out of your ST than you would have thought possible. Just look at the effect it has on my already super-fast TT030!



Compo



Compo's software PostScript emulator CompoScript gives the Atari laser PostScript compatibility. It will even save PostScript files – such as clipart from other machines – as an IMG or TIFF bitmap file

Compo UK are another company with strong German links, although their director answers to the beautifully Anglo-Saxon name of Neal O'nions.

The vast bulk of Compo's catalogue is imported from Germany, including some products which have made a massive impact on the UK Atari scene. Chief among these are the PC/AT-Speed series of DOS emulators and the wordprocessor That's Write.

Neal O'nions is fond of talking about Compo as a "high service oriented company" who will not simply take your money and run.

A telephone helpline, usually with Neal himself at the other end, will provide answers to any problems you may encounter with Compo products, and upgrades and bug fixes to registered customers are all part of the service.

Talking to Neal about the state of the Atari market is a refreshing antidote to the gloom and doom encountered so often elsewhere:

"Whatever Atari themselves do, there are hundreds of thousands of STs around and will be around for a long time to come. I'm not worried about the prospects for us, in fact we're expanding all the time."

Compo are well placed to take advantage of the new Falcon since all their existing software is Falcon-compatible and they have two products which almost every Falcon owner will want: FalconSpeed, a DOS emulator which will let you run PC Windows in full-colour VGA; and Screenblaster which offers a whole new range of improved screen resolutions.

Music and video software and add-ons will also follow as, like everybody else, Neal sees the Falcon making a real stir as a home entertainment machine.

Camcorder owners will be able to edit their home movies on the Falcon and achieve professional effects that have been impossible to achieve before."

CGS

In little more than two years, a small South London photocopier business has become one of the essential ports of call for anybody involved in professional Atari desktop publishing.

If you need a flatbed scanner that can produce true greyscale and colour illustrations you will almost inevitably end up as a new customer of Ray Cross. He was hooked by the ST when he saw its graphic and DTP capabilities demonstrated at a show and decided to become involved as UK distributor for the German company 3K-ComputerBild, developers of the heavy-weight packages Didot Professional and Retouche Professional Colour Design.

3K-ComputerBild may have perished, but these very well respected products live on and the programmers behind them continue under the new label of Digital Arts which has already created a stir with the revolutionary outline art package DA's Vektor.

Ray, too, is happy to report that after a long stagnation business has picked up again with the release of the Falcon, and is ready with new products such as Chagall [yet another scanned image editor] and DigitTap.

But he stresses that his chief commitment remains to the integrated desktop publishing environment created by the Didot-Retouche combo which has now established itself as the main alternative to Calamus.



CGS ComputerBild's speciality are the Epson series of professional flatbed scanners, integrated smoothly into Atari ST/TT/Falcon system by the LOOK software driver

HiSoft

article, however, it was clear that the survivors of this difficult period felt that the worst was over and that, if anything, their own position had been strengthened by the reduction of the competition.

Another striking consensus emerging from these conversations was the revitalising effect that the Falcon is having on the Atari scene.

Everybody felt that the Falcon had brought a breath of fresh air in to the market, that its impact on new hardware sales and software development was already being felt, and that everything now depended on the right 'packages' - computer, software, hardware - being promoted to make the most of the Falcon's strengths in the fields of music, video and DTP.

The Bedford-based HiSoft seem to have been around the ST scene for as long as anybody can remember, but there was a time when they were chiefly known for their programming languages and utilities: Devpac, HiSoft BASIC, HiSoft C, Lattice C, HighSpeed Pascal, Modula-2, HiSoft FORTH, Nevada COBOL, the resource construction set WERCS and disk hacker Knife ST.

These, of course, remain an important part of HiSoft's business, but over the last year or so the company strategy has been to expand its product palette and support the serious ST on a much broader front than before.

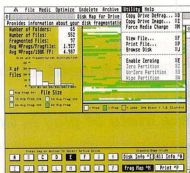
Through a combination of take-overs of other companies and importing new

products from Germany and the USA, HiSoft are now in a position to supply almost everything for the serious ST user, from the hardware itself - they have been particularly active selling Falcons recently - to wordprocessors, databases and spreadsheets.

With the acquisition of Microdeal and AVR, HiSoft have also entered the music and video markets which they, along with everybody else, identify as the key growth area for the Falcon. The Midi sound sampler Replay 16, for example, will soon be released in a Falcon-enhanced version under the new name Clarity.

HiSoft owner David Link explains this expansion strategy in terms of the changing nature of the ST market. The demand for programming languages was obviously at its highest in the early days, when everybody was writing new software for a new machine, but today this has settled down and the typical customer of today wants mature, reliable applications.

With the recently acquired tried and tested Superbase Professional database, the K-Spread 4 spreadsheet, and the new sophisticated wordprocessor Papyrus from Germany covering the classic personal computer applications, I am beginning to wonder when HiSoft will



HiSoft's Diamond Edge gives you complete control over your hard disk and includes an optimizer to restore overworked and over-fragmented partitions to their full speed

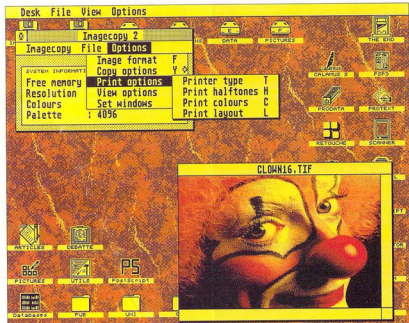
JCA

Mention desktop publishing on the Atari and everybody will reply Calamus. The monster DTP package from Germany has acquired legendary status but, in truth, has also had a somewhat chequered history.

Originally signed up by Atari themselves, it was then introduced to the UK by Signa Publishing who went bankrupt, taken over by Halco and has now migrated to JCA, a new company and another example of a public domain library - the well-respected Riverdene PDL - branching out into the commercial field.

JCA's Alastair Craig, well familiar with Calamus since his time working on the product for Halco, is not deterred by the previous problems and reckons that there is still room for expansion in the DTP market.

The entire Calamus range is due for an imminent facelift with the release of



Imagecopy 2 from the ST Club: a graphics viewer, converter and printer representing exceptionally good value for money. It will handle almost any file format and even print colour separations - not bad for only £19.95

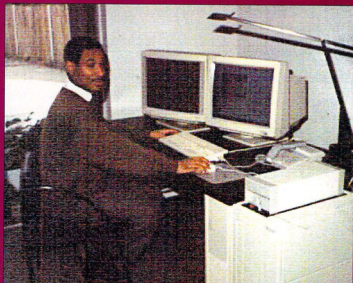
Showing off

CGS ComputerBild's Ray Cross, Neal O'niens of Compo and David Encill of Titan Designs are the prime movers behind a new project, the Le'St Get Serious Shows.

The first of these took place in the Hammersmith Novotel in August, and is to be followed up by another London show at the Alexandra Palace and a Birmingham venue later in the year.

There is a widespread feeling among serious ST users that Atari have underestimated the importance of such showcase events: of course the machine will sell itself, but non-games users need the personal contact with software and hardware vendors, as well as other users, which such events offer.

The new series of shows, if it succeeds and continues, is therefore very good news indeed, especially if the Birmingham show is followed up by others in provincial and Northern cities.



Ray Cross:
Head of CGS
and organiser
of latest
Atari shows

come up with their own desktop publishing solution...

System Solutions, Compo and HiSoft are undoubtedly the three dominant forces in the serious Atari scene today, with their broad product palettes and their excellent reputation for quality service and support.

Alongside them, however, there are a number of smaller companies – often essentially one-man bands – who are equally committed to the ST as a serious machine and have a lot to offer.

Titan Designs

If ever there was an example of a single product establishing a company in the marketplace, it is at Birmingham-based Titan Designs. Their Reflex graphics card met the demand for a cheap and flexible enhancement to the ST's limited built-in resolutions, especially for applications such as desktop publishing and computer-aided design.

Since there was virtually no competition for the Reflex card in Britain, this product

alone put Titan Designs into touch with large numbers of serious ST users who they then supplied with a vast range of other products on a mail order basis.

Mail order, yes, but no box shifting; owner David Encill, a dedicated hardware hacker himself, places great emphasis on customer support and advice and is continuously developing new products.

Most recently he has turned his attention to the potential of the new Falcon in the video market with the Graffiti and Fresco true colour genlocks – again, the only ones on the market – and Expose, a true-colour, real-time video digitiser.

ST Club

When the ST first appeared on the scene in the mid-80s, it was a powerful, even revolutionary new machine with very little software – a gap that was quickly filled by an army of public domain and shareware authors.

Since public domain software can be freely distributed, PD libraries musthroomed all over the place, many disappearing again as quickly as they advertised their services.

Today, only a handful are left, but the biggest and best of them have become far more than mere public domain libraries.

The biggest and most successful of them all is the Nottingham-based ST Club, a commercial user group run by Paul Glover which seems to have pretty much cornered the serious ST market in that there can be few outside the games playing fraternity who haven't heard of it.

Once again, the secret of success was the telephone and Paul's almost continuous availability to help and advise users.

Another key to success was the transition from a public domain supplier only to a publisher of cheap but excellent commercial software.

Imagecopy 2, Fontkit Plus, Fonty, X-Debug, the Universal Item Selector and others are priced like shareware but well-documented, thoroughly professional pieces of software.

A rather unusual new product is GEMulator, an ST emulator for IBM

compatibles, so you can now run your favourite ST software on your workplace clone!

OPTIMISM

The overall impression gained from this survey is that after a period of contraction and economic problems there is now a new air of optimism about the serious ST scene.

With so many hundreds of thousands of STs around, and so many of them used for more than games, there is little cause to worry about the future of serious ST computing.

Directory

HiSoft, The Old School Greenfield,
Bedford
Tel: 0525 718181

System Solutions, The Desktop Centre,
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London SE22 8RS,
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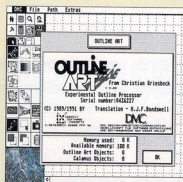
Compo, 7 Vinegar Hill, Alconbury
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Titan Designs, 6 Witherford Way, Selly
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Tel/Fax: 021-414 1630

CGS ComputerBild, 19 Ledbury Place,
Croydon CRO 1ET,
Tel. 081-686 8121,
Fax 081-666 0405

JCA Europe, 30a School Road,
Tilehurst, Reading RG3 5AN,
Tel. 0734 452416,
Fax 0734 451239

ST Club, 2 Broadway, Nottingham
NG1 1PS,
Tel. 0602 10241,
Fax 0602 241515



Soon to be available to the long-waiting British Calamus users: Outline Art 2, the colour version of DMC's well-known vector illustration program

Calamus SL v2 and, perhaps surprisingly, Calamus for Windows NT – it would not be the first time that ST applications have travelled successfully onto other platforms.

If you're anything like me, you'll have ferreted away at least a dozen "keepsake" videos containing moments and memories from the past. Some of them will best be forgotten – the things I did at my sister's wedding would give the board of censors a collective coronary – but others tend to get an airing every time some unsuspecting relatives arrive for tea. I forget quite how many times I've shown the one of my daughter performing in the local pantos...

I've often been tempted to tidy up these videos by adding decent introductions and titles but the motive and the means has always eluded me – until I was asked to look at a budget video titler now being sold by Goodman International.

First off though, let's sort out exactly what we mean by video titling. I always thought this was a bit like the subtitles that you see on Channel 4 films and I could never quite see the point of it.

I could see some excellent ways of losing yet more friends – wedding video subtitles like "Here is Aunt Ethel with her fifth glass of sherry" certainly wouldn't encourage her to remember me in her will. Anyway, this type of thing requires specialised hardware like genlocking devices, doesn't it?

No, video titling simply means adding introductory sequences to videos, something that can be done with software alone. Using Video Supreme software, you can create quite long intros together with sound samples and numerous special effects.

Apart from simple intros comprising basic text and graphics, you can add footage credits, lists of wedding guests, dates, place names and so on – all the things that will matter when you're watching the video years after the actual event.

By introductory sequences, I don't mean actual video footage, of course. Essentially you create the screens in an art package such as Degas Elite, save them to disk and then import them into the video titler. The video titler then

Part of the author's demo – there are 154 ways in which this screen can dissolve to make way for the next



Taking the title

John Hetherington tries his hand at video titling using a new budget program

displays them in the sequence defined by the user and dissolves or wipes them away to display the next. The sequences are only limited by your own imagination – and artistic skill I suppose – but they can include text and colour graphics from a wide range of sources as well as sampled sound.

You could even include digitised images from the video itself, if you happen to have the right hardware. Video Supreme is supplied on a single extended format disk with a plastic comb-bound, 22-page A4 manual.

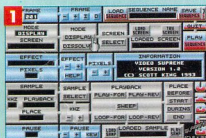
Just for once, the program wasn't developed on a turbo-charged TT with

scores of megabytes of fast RAM, a 24-bit graphics card and three hard drives. It was written in STOS Basic on a bog standard 520ST with only a floppy drive, although the STOS code has been modified to run on other machines up to and including the Falcon.

In fact, memory is so tight that the loader program should be run from the AUTO folder to save an extra 32k of memory, unless you have 1Mb or more of memory, in which case it can be run from the desktop or copied to a hard drive and run from there.

The manual is dreadful, not to put too

Introducing a video's



This is the heart of the program, the editor. It is divided into several colour-coded sections – frame, screen, effect, sample and pause. The first thing to do is to choose whether we display or dissolve in the Mode box but as it is the first frame, obviously it has to be display

Let's run step by step through the creation of a simple two frame sequence



Then we click on the Screen Select button to choose a screen from the file selector



This is the first frame – nothing more than a Degas plc with a SpeedoGDOS font. Back to the editor's main screen and we can view it by clicking on Try Screen or apply a different effect by clicking on the + and – buttons in the Effect box to cycle through the full range

Make the most of a myriad of uses

Aside from the obvious use for video titling sequences, there are quite a few more applications for the program. You can create a personalised boot sequence for your boot disk, create graphic instructions or storyboards on disk for games and other programs or create multimedia-style demos for use in shops or at exhibitions.

The main use, though, will be for video work and there are dozens of ideas for intros. You can create standard title sequences with the name of the photographer and the "players". You could even create a tongue-in-cheek sequence with a roaring lion or a gang, perhaps with a dummy censor's certificate!

The difficulties with Video Supreme are mainly limitations of the videotapes themselves. Intros often have to be squeezed into only a few seconds at the front of a tape as the video footage itself, once recorded, can't easily be moved. The only way to do this is to record onto a second video recorder and this degrades the image quite considerably.

This area is often the least pristine part of the tape and is frequently damaged by constant use. If you're lucky, you'll have a minute or so at the start but don't count on it. In practice, you'll probably have to use a stopwatch to determine how much time you have and it's a pity that a timer wasn't built in to the editor to make the process easier - there's no way of telling how long your newly created masterpiece will run.



Warnings about tape ownership are just one idea...

HOME VIDEO 4
Weddings, etc

Jane's 2123
Steve/Mary 3450
Christening 5441

How about a menu so you can fast forward to the right spot?

100k long in *.SAM format can be included with playback speeds between six and 20kHz.

The interface is highly graphical though not entirely intuitive. The mouse gets you through most things and there's a custom file selector to help things along though it isn't hard drive friendly and wouldn't let me change directories to introduce new screens from other partitions.

The program also fell over when used with NVDI 2.5 and several other desk accessories like Imagecopy, much to my disappointment. However, it's not hard to use and after a while, putting together a reasonably complex sequence inside half an hour shouldn't be a problem.

Video Supreme isn't a complete video titling solution, despite the way in which it's described. To get the most out of it, you need other packages to do the ground work.

PAINT PACKAGE

Firstly you need a good paint package capable of saving in Degas format and preferably one with plenty of display type fonts. Hyperpaint, Prism Paint or Degas Elite would be a good choice, particularly with SpeedoGDOS installed.

Secondly you'll need some method of sampling sound if you want to add really exciting intros and digitised speech. Version 2 of the software is on the way, according to the author, and he hopes to add text support, including a selection of fancy fonts.

Text handling from inside the program will be very useful - at present it is hard work creating screens in one program and having to save and import them into the video titling software.

The ability to add text "on the fly", so to speak, will certainly make it more of a package but as it stands this is still an excellent program at a very modest price and yet another example of the quality of software that can be produced using the much maligned STOS programming language.

role

fine a point on it, and it takes a certain amount of dedication to get to the point where you're creating a sequence of your own, plus some sore fingers and thumbs from constantly flicking through it.

There is very little in the way of tutorial though the hardware information is perfectly adequate, allowing me to hook straight up to my video without any fuss. A little twiddling with a screwdriver is required but that is all.

The program consists of five main modules, the editor for creating sequences, the preparer for recording sequences for the runner, a quick try

program for the impatient, the sequence runner itself and a compacter for compacting PII and NEO screens to save room.

The runner program can be freely distributed as the main video titling program can be used without a video to produce disk-based demos and game introductions.

Sequences up to 200 frames long can be created and recorded on video but don't get confused - although a video runs at 25 frame a second, these are completely different to the Video Supreme frames, which can themselves last several seconds.

You should be able to get at least ten minutes of intro before getting anywhere near the 200-frame limit - just don't expect your audience to stick around! Graphics in PII, NEO and STOS MBK format can be included in sequences. The program claims there are 270 different ways of displaying each screen and 184 ways of dissolving or wiping it. Sound samples up to

opening credits



The next step is to choose a sampled sound using the file selector and then deciding how to use it. Samples can play forwards, backwards or in a loop and can start before the visual effect, play continuously through it or directly afterwards



You'll have to take my word about the sound but you can see the special effects in action. All that remains is to add a second dissolve frame to remove this one, save the sequence and we're off! You can also define how long the frame should remain

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Hundreds of special effects and sound support make this little gem well worth having.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

Poor documentation but the STOS type interface isn't too bad.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

Good value and the promise of more to come.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

Product: Video Supreme
Supplier: Goodmail International,
18 Conrad Close, Meir Hay
Estates, Longton, Stoke-on-
Trent

Telephone: 0782 335850

Price: £14.95

Configuration: All Atari, any
configuration

For those of you unfamiliar with emulators, Falcon Speed transforms your Falcon into a PC-compatible computer capable of running most serious PC software, including the Windows operating system.

The company behind Falcon Speed are SACK electronics, who are also responsible for PC Speed and AT Speed, currently available for the ST range.

The only packages to fall down when run on the emulator are those which are protected such as games, or software which accesses PC hardware directly. So, don't expect to play X-Wing or Wing Commander once you have fitted the emulator.

EXPANSION SLOT

Falcon Speed is clocked at 16MHz and is much easier to fit than SACK's previous emulators, which required soldering. This is thanks to the Falcon's internal expansion slot located near the power supply.

All that is required is to open up your Falcon (remembering that doing so will invalidate your warranty), locate the expansion slot and remove a small jumper plug (don't worry, no desoldering here, just simply pull it off the pins) and then plug in the emulator board.

If you do not relish the idea of doing the job yourself, Compo Software offer a fitting service for £20 and, being a authorised Atari dealer, this means your warranty will remain intact.

If you do decide to fit Falcon Speed yourself, be careful about static electricity damage to components either on the Falcon Speed board or in your Falcon.

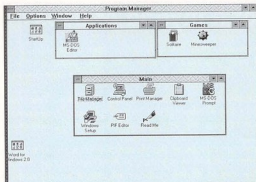
Once fitted and your Falcon is in one piece again (I bet you're still left with a spare screw. I always seem to be!), you

ST emulators

SACK electronics are also responsible for two other emulators specifically for the ST range.

PC Speed and AT Speed both require a knowledge of soldering so those of you not experienced with a soldering iron are urged to take advantage of Compo Software's £20 fitting service.

PC Speed is available for £55 while AT Speed comes in two versions, 8MHz and 16MHz, costing £139 and £199 respectively.



Windows 3.1 is surprisingly quick considering it's running on a 16MHz 286

can load up the software from the supplied disk.

On this disk are the Falcon Speed configuration program, an AUTO folder program which activates the emulator board plus some Falcon Speed VGA screen drivers. There are also some support utilities for use when in PC mode.

You can use Falcon Speed with any kind of monitor such as Atari's colour and mono variants, and there are many PC screen modes available, including CGA, EGA and VGA. But if you want to run Windows in colour mode (16 colours), you will require a VGA or SVGA monitor.

However, you can run Windows under mono VGA screen emulation using a high resolution monitor, such as Atari's SM123. Selecting the screen

mode and other essential settings for the emulation mode is achieved by running the Falcon Speed configuration program.

This program allows you to specify such things as which physical hard disk partition is to be used as the logical DOS partition, which is a techie way of saying you can use, say, partition F on your Atari hard drive as DOS partition C for the emulator.

You can also set up the mouse emulation, floppy disk type, keyboard layout and laser printer support, among other options. The whole process is made very painless due to the fact that the configuration program is GEM-driven and there is a step by step guide in the Falcon Speed manual.

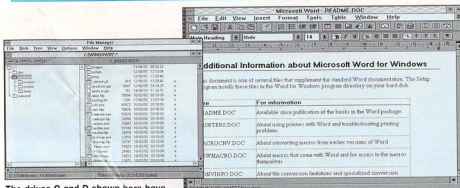
The manual is quite helpful and I had little difficulty in following the instructions, but it is worth pointing out that you should also read the READ.ME documentation file on disk as these too contain helpful hints.

After the configuration process, you

The first PC emulator for the Falcon has arrived in the form of Falcon Speed - a 286 emulator from Compo Software.

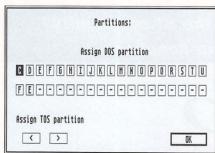
Darren Evans checks it out

Intel inside



The drives C and D shown here have been mapped to drives E and F on the Falcon's internal IDE drive

Another surprise was just how well Microsoft Word for Windows operated. Quite useable indeed



Falcon Speed's configuration program lets you assign your Falcon's hard drive partitions to be used as MS-DOS partitions

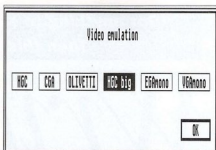
can now activate the newly installed emulator by executing the FALSPEED.PRG program. This can be done in one of three ways. You can have it in your AUTO folder to execute at boot time; you can simply double click on the program from the desktop; or – and this is the most powerful mode – you can use Falcon Speed as an accessory by simply renaming the FALSPEED.PRG program FALSPEED.ACC.

TWO-IN-ONE

This then allows you to effectively have both a Falcon and PC operating at once, with the ability to easily switch between the two at the click of a button. However, at least 2Mb of memory are required to operate Falcon Speed as an accessory.

Once the Falcon Speed program is executed, the screen clears to show a PC display showing various system information such as available hard and floppy drives, attached display type and amount of memory free. Extra Falcon memory above 704k is automatically allocated as extended memory.

There is also a prompt to insert a DOS system disk and it is worth

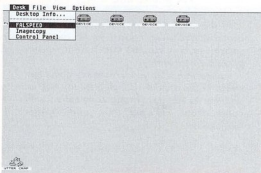


Various PC screen modes are provided for by Falcon Speed including Falcon VGA colour modes

mentioning that the MS-DOS and Windows software is not supplied with Falcon Speed but must be bought separately. MS-DOS and Windows each cost around £70 to £80.

Incidentally, if you install MS-DOS to PC partition C, you can tell Falcon Speed, via the aforementioned configuration program, to boot from drive C. After either booting from the hard disk or from a floppy system disk, the Falcon behaves like a 286 from here on.

I must admit to having prior reservations to the operating speed of this



Falcon Speed can be configured to run as an accessory, which allows the user to switch between Falcon and PC modes at will

16MHz 286 emulation, but I have to say that I was quite surprised at how fast everything was.

In protected mode (the mode designed to get optimum performance) Windows 3.1 ran at quite a usable turn of pace and even Microsoft Word for Windows (using the minimum installation option) was surprisingly usable.

MONITORS

As indicated earlier, if you want to run Windows in colour mode, you need a VGA or SVGA monitor. Falcon Speed comes with four Falcon VGA screen drivers providing two colours at 640 x 480, 16 colours at 640 x 480, 16 colours at 800 x 600 and a whopping 16 colours at 1,024 x 768. In these latter modes, Windows looks most impressive with its abundance of colour icons.

Overall, I was very impressed with Falcon Speed. Its extremely easy installation married with a surprisingly speedy performance make it a good buy for the new Falcon owner looking to run PC software at home.

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Colour Falcon VGA screen drivers and speed of operation impressive

Excellent

Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

Easy to install and use, with the manual and ReadMes providing useful tips.

Excellent

Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

You would be hard pressed to find a real PC for an equivalent price.

Excellent

Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

Product: Falcon Speed
Supplier: Compo Software,
7 Vinegar Hill, Alconbury
Weston, Huntingdon
PE17 5JA
Telephone: 0480 891819
Price: £229
Configuration: Falcon – hard disk and
2Mb recommended but
not essential

Falcon

Why emulate?

Why emulate another computer, you may ask? Well, there are numerous advantages and reasons for doing so.

For instance, consider Mr F Alcon, an industrious chap who works for a large company with a network of PC computers in the office. Mr Alcon works in a department which is completely computerised and his work is done largely on his PC using the Excel spreadsheet.

Now, there are only so many hours in the day and sometimes Mr Alcon's workload overtakes him. So, what does he do? He has to stay after hours in the office to catch up.

If Mr Alcon had a PC emulator fitted to his Falcon, he could have done all his catching up at home by taking his Excel files with him on a floppy disk and simply loading them into Excel running on his Falcon. The advantages for someone like Mr Alcon are obvious.

Another area where PC emulators come in useful became apparent when a friend of mine took up evening classes on a course in computers. Part of his course involved learning to use MS-DOS and Windows and he was on the verge of paying out £650 for a PC to use at home when I told him that maybe he should look at fitting an emulator to his ST. He subsequently bought one for a fraction of the price of the real thing and passed the course with flying colours.

So, depending on your requirements, a PC emulator can save you an enormous amount of money.

Playing the tax game

Will Atari market a model of the Falcon as a business pack? Many small businesses are one-man bands and have bought PCs because the tax man considers them a legitimate business expense.

An Atari ST would be considered to be a games machine, not wholly for business use and only a small part of its price would be allowable as a business expense.

Now the PC is sold as a Leisure Station – a posh name for a games machine. The tax man might now consider the powerful Falcon as an equally legitimate platform for business software.

Come on Atari, don't allow the Falcon to be thought of as a home computer or a music machine – attack the PC on its home ground.

Robert Swann, Clwyd

The Atari ST can be passed as an allowable expense providing that you can show that the machine is used legitimately for your business.

As far as the tax man is concerned you can use any type of computer – an ST, Amiga, Apple Macintosh, PC or whatever – providing that you use the machine for your work.

The Atari ST has been recommended as an ideal machine in Which? and several trade magazines, especially those for writers, but new EC law might cause you some difficulty if you employed other people.

It says that computers in the workplace must have keyboards which can have their positions adjusted and tilted to enable the operator to find a comfortable working position.

The Falcon does not meet this requirement, as it cannot be tilted, although if Atari ever produce the new case version the situation might change.

As far as we know there are no plans for Atari to market a business pack for the Falcon. However, in the United States machines will be bundled with Atari Works.

This is an integrated package which includes a document processor, spreadsheet and database. Atari say they do not intend to package it with British machines.

Price strangles Falcon

Why is the Falcon so expensive? Once all the enthusiasts have bought their machines the

Got anything to say to the ST community?
Then this is your soapbox

Write Now

price will surely strangle sales – especially when you can buy an Amiga 1200 for £299.

If Atari don't cut their prices by at least £150 to £200 it will badly hurt sales of the computer.

A Beveridge, Edinburgh

Atari say the Falcon's price jumped way above its launch price because exchange rates between the pound and dollar became unfavourable.

At the moment there are no signs of the pound strengthening against the US currency, so we can only assume that current Falcon prices are here to stay.

I agree with what you have to say about the effects of the computer's high price tag but, in addition to Amigas, strong competition will come from cheaper PCs and Apple Macintoshes.

Words of advice

My family have just bought ourselves an Atari 1040STE and I would like to know where I can get hold of a comprehensive list for disks I can use on our computer.

There is one disk I would like called Scrabble. Can you help?

Mrs D Spittle, Plymouth

A comprehensive list of applications available for the ST appeared in last month's issue of Atari ST User. It included names, prices, suppl-

ers and descriptions of each package.

You are already reading the best magazine for leisure software reviews, but our sister title ST Action publishes a monthly games buyers' guide.

A version of Scrabble was once available in the public domain but the makers of the original board game threatened legal action against any non-profit making library distributing it.

But the good news for Scrabble fans is that Birmingham software house US Gold have just published an ST version of the game that can be sold, and a full review appeared last month.

Duplication worry

I will start with the obvious praise that your magazine deserves; it has given me a wealth of information on products to enhance my STE.

I have read many times of people complaining about software appearing on cover disks that other magazines have given away in the past.

But this time I feel so strongly that I have decided to fire up the old wordprocessor myself.

Atari ST Review gave away Speed of Light on their July CoverDisk and then you gave the same program away in August.

I know that both magazines are owned by the same company and you advertise each other's magazines, but isn't it a bit much to be

Peeping at pornography

In reply to your article on Playground Pornography by Phil Morse in August's issue, I would like to say that with the spread of porn, bulletin boards should adopt a general code of practice.

If they don't police themselves then others, who are less informed, will probably draw up poor and restrictive laws that will be forced upon us.

All artwork and software download by bulletin boards from other sources should be examined before being placed for public downloading.

In regard to what can be done about material from Europe, some countries will help, others will be obstructive.

With the European Commission failing to reach a common policy on defence – look at the Bosnian people – the question of porn, ethics and computers will escape most commissioners.

If the young of today grow up in this kind of morass, what form of society will evolve from this?

The article was well thought out and its questions needed to be

asked. Children need to be taught the dangers and the moral dead end that some forms of pornography lead to.

Adults have to be the ones who set the example, and those who digitise the porn from magazines and videos stopped – how I'm not sure.

We must be careful not to walk a witch-hunt and those who make money from this will away.

I'm sure your articles will draw a response from many, from the anti-censorship groups to the morally outraged. Let's have the better replies responded to, perhaps with further articles.

J N Holland, Harrogate

Since the article appeared, it has been announced that there will be a Government inquiry into the spread of computer pornography.

A Home Affairs Committee will review the matter and their findings will be aired by the end of the year.

£25
Prize
Letter

giving away the same software? Only last month the editor of *ST Review* was going off the handle because of someone's letter complaining about similar matters.

Please feel free to do the same over this one if it gets published, after all, it will not be the only thing that the two magazines have in common!

Mr J Bamber, Hampshire

Most of our disks contain software that has been sold for around £50 or more, and these programs take a large amount of disk space.

If we duplicated these pieces of software with any other magazine then you would rightly have reason to complain.

But we then ensure that none of the disk is left unused by filling it with useful public domain and shareware utilities and games, of which *Speed of Light* is a good example.

It took less than 55k of the total 800k disk space available, and was probably enjoyed by the several thousand readers who don't buy our sister title.

Banned!

First, let me say how much I enjoy the magazine. Now for the moans.

After four pages condemning pornography, how can you then accept New Age PDL's advertisement for the same? Surely, it must be a case of put up or shut up.

You can't condemn on one page and then take money for advertising on another.

A Beveridge, Edinburgh

Full marks for your observation. Atari ST User has a policy of not accepting advertisements which promote material such as that carried by New Age PDL last month.

It was very unfortunate that this one slipped through the net on the very month that our article appeared, but you will notice that we have since removed it from the magazine.

Porn - a user's right?

After reading your feature Playground Pornography in August's issue I thought I must write to defend those users who use their computer to view these images.

Why should they be denied the right to look at whatever they want on their own computer screen?

Many of the pictures are taken from top-shelf magazines or films which can be picked watched up in Britain by anybody with a suitable satellite dish.

So the ST is not being used to spread new types of porn, but rather as an alternative method of distribution.

If these pictures and animations were not available on disk, people would buy them on videos or magazines with better quality.

The argument that images such as these incite rape and other anti-social behaviour does not stand. European countries that allow

them haven't had an explosion of sexual crime.

D Cookson, Swansea

If computer images were limited to soft pornography such as photographs of topless women, I doubt they would be considered a problem - that type of picture appears daily in newspapers.

But quite often they go much further than simply copying photographs from top-shelf magazines, and feature young children or animals.

Law prevents this type of picture from being broadcast on television or printed in magazines, and these are the images that cause most police concern.

Game nightmare ends

I read about Paul Clemen's problem with too much memory when he plays some games. I have a Mega STE with 4Mb of memory and had the same problem with *Knighmare*.

That was easy to solve using a RAM disk, such as Maxidisk. Make the smallest RAM disk you can - in Maxidisk that is 50k - then change disk and put in *Knighmare* disk A.

When you reset the game will load properly.

I must say that I like to read *Atari ST User*, as it gives lots of ideas and help and it is nice to see all the advertisers with new programs.

I am sorry to say this, but in Sweden almost all stores have changed their products to PC and Apple Macintosh - I think that is about three stores who have Atari as a main product.

That means that we have problems to get our hands on new products and we rely on foreign magazines to find out what is happening in the Atari market.

Kent Andersson, Sweden

Many thanks for the game tip. The situation in Sweden is unfortunate, but could perhaps be anticipated following Atari's decision to close their Stockholm office.

But it's nice to read that you enjoy *Atari ST User* so much and that our advertisers are producing plenty of products to keep you hooked to the ST.

Seeking games

I enjoy every issue of *Atari ST User*. The magazine has helped me to choose which products to buy and how to get by with my 1040STE for several years.

But I have noticed that you give less space to games than many other magazines, and rarely give away demos of new games on your CoverDisk.

Do you have any plans to increase the size of your games coverage in the near future?

A Walls, Swindon

On page 47 we have published a Reader Survey. Once the results have been analysed we will get a clear picture of what our readers want in the magazine.

The more replies we get the better - it's the only way that we can find the views of a large proportion of our readers and shape our content accordingly.

Make sure that you get a say about the games content by sending us a completed form - it's free to send and you'll be entered into a free draw to win subscriptions.

ATARI ST USER

It's not what you know - it's
who you know!

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

We are happy to answer your technical problems in our Advice Service section. Send your letters to **Advice Service** at the address below

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If you have a news story, send it to **John Butters** at the address below. If your story is URGENT call him on **0625 878888** during office hours

GALLERY

We are always on the lookout for good ST art. Send your work to **ST Gallery** at the address below

WRITE NOW!

Got something to tell other *ST User* readers? Send your general letters to **Write Now!** at the address below

COMPETITIONS

Enter competitions using the details on the form. If you have any enquiries connected with our competitions, contact **Anu Oliver** on **0625 878888**

PUBLIC DOMAIN SUBMISSIONS

PD libraries are welcome to submit their latest releases. Submissions should include a detailed list of what each disk contains. Jiffy bags to **Jonathan Maddock**

ASPECTS

Our Aspects authors can be contacted via *Atari ST User*. Please mark any correspondence clearly and send it to the address below

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COVERDISKS

If your CoverDisk is faulty send it to: **PC Wise**, Dowling Top Park, Merthyr CF48 2YF

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Except in the situations listed above we cannot accept telephone enquiries. Please write in to one of the departments listed in this panel

SAVE THOSE SAEs!

Please don't send us SAEs, we can't promise to reply to every letter so it really is a waste of your stamp. Sorry!

ATARI ST USER
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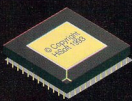
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DataLite 2 is a sophisticated, yet extremely simple-to-use, utility that effectively doubles the capacity of your disks by using a combination of advanced compression/de-compression techniques in the background.

Some of the key features of this remarkable package are:

DataLite 2 Features

- Compresses all types of files; data files, applications etc.
- Works with both hard disks and all types of floppies; single-sided, double-sided and high density

- Can be installed automatically from the AUTO folder or just when you require its services
- Wide choice of compression algorithms so that you can optimise for size or for speed of access
- All functions are controlled from an easy-to-use desk accessory and you can even configure all the dialogs!

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SpeedoGDOS™ Font Packs

To complement the new SpeedoGDOS outline font system, we have prepared two packs of extra fonts - the Writer's Pack and the Designer's Pack. Both packages contain 25 extra fonts for use with SpeedoGDOS together with a useful manual that contains many hints & tips for using fonts within your documents as well as details of how to install them.

The Writer's Pack is intended for use by people who deal with reasonably large amounts of body text and contains a wide variety of easy-to-read serif and sans serif faces, useful in manuals and letters. The Designer's Pack is for the more artistically-inclined and includes many striking and provoking fonts, ideal for posters, catalogues, brochures etc.

The Writer's Pack

Bell Centennial name/no
Bell Centennial address
ITC Eras medium
ITC Eras bold
Futura medium
Futura medium italic
Futura bold
Futura bold italic
Classical Garamond roman
Classical Garamond italic
Classical Garamond bold
Classical Garamond bold italic
Zapf Humanist bold italic

ITC Italia book
ITC Italia bold
Lydian Corsive regular
ITC Newtext regular
ITC Newtext regular italic
Zapf Calligraphic roman
Zapf Calligraphic italic
Zapf Calligraphic bold
Zapf Calligraphic bold italic
Zapf Humanist roman
Zapf Humanist italic
Zapf Humanist bold
Zapf Humanist bold italic

E59.95 each

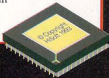
The Designer's Pack

BREMEN BOLD
Della Robbia roman
OCR-a
Aachen roman
Aachen bold
BALLOON LIGHT
BALLOON BOLD
Blippo black
Bodoni book
Bodoni book italic
Poster Bodoni roman
Poster Bodoni italic
ITC Zapf Chancery medium

ENGRAVERS' GOTHIC ROMAN
ENGRAVERS' ROMAN REGULAR
Formal Script regular
Fontinal 575 regular
Hobo regular
Impress regular
INFORMAL ROMAN
ET. Beatum regular
Revue regular
ITC Souvenir bold
Succato regular
Wedding Text regular
ITC Zapf Chancery medium

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E39.95 inc 16 fonts

SpeedoGDOS brings the beauty and simplicity of outline fonts to your Atari computer. Gone are the days of folders full of different sizes of screen and printer fonts - with SpeedoGDOS each font is scaled as needed to give exact results on all compatible output devices. Some key features are:

- Requires remarkably little memory with flexible font caches
- The simple installation program provides a painless set-up
- Two powerful utilities/desk accessories give complete control over fonts and drivers once the package has been installed
- Compatible with most existing GDOS applications - you can even continue to use the older GDOS bitmapped fonts

Az

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MultiTOS brings the reality of pre-emptive multitasking to your Atari computer, allowing you to run as many programs together as can fit in your computer's memory. Some key features of this powerful package are:

- Easy-to-use installation program makes it simple to get started with the system
- Adaptive prioritisation gives the most processing power to the program that needs it most, thus minimising 'lumpy' response
- Memory protection prevents one program from interfering with another e.g. if one program crashes, others will continue to run



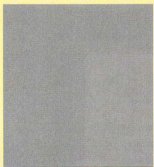
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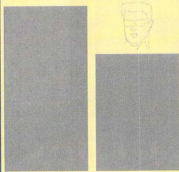
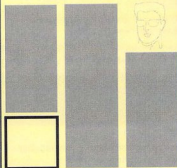
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NEWSLETTER**This is the headline**

Single column grids are best for formal documents like reports and proposals

NEWSLETTER**This is the headline**

Two column grids are fine for traditional newsletters but when graphics and scanned photos are required the layout just isn't flexible enough

**NEWSLETTER****This is the headline**

Three column grids represent the most popular layout - two or more pictures can be placed on a page and the page which can be split into primary and secondary stories

NEWSLETTER**This is the headline**

Four column grids are equally flexible but unless the text is very small, there will be too few words per line to make reading comfortable and sentence structure will be spoilt



Publish grand!

Andrew Wright looks at the next step up in DTP with the first in a two-part series for those past the beginner's stage

There can't be many ST owners who haven't got at least one DTP package and most will have tried their hand at the odd poster or leaflet - perhaps even a newsletter.

The trouble is that the manuals for the cheaper programs are invariably aimed at beginners while those that come with the so-called professional DTP packages could well have been written for people on another planet.

Very few seem to cater properly for the intermediate desktop publisher - the ones who do know what a font is and how to import graphics but couldn't care less about colour separations or PostScript fills.

Happily, that's what our new two-part series aims to do - we'll take you out of the beginner's arena and show you how to improve your desktop publishing and design techniques.

We're assuming that you're using a package that supports outline fonts, like Calamus or PageStream, though the techniques are equally applicable to the low-end packages like Timeworks.

The first thing to do is sit down and

plan your work. If you skip on the planning and don't put enough thought into your publication, all the technique in the world isn't going to help.

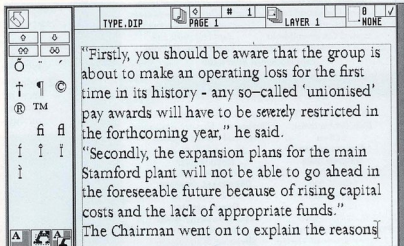
The quickest and easiest way to start is still to use a pen and paper - giving yourself something to work to can make your task much easier.

Don't be afraid of looking through other magazines or similar publications to the one you are planning. There is no shame in using other designs taken or adapted from magazines or dedicated DTP source books as inspiration.

PAPER TYPES

Other considerations are the material ones. What sort of paper are you going to print on? How is it to be reproduced? You should be aware by now that most dot matrix printers simply don't have the resolution and output quality for serious DTP but that doesn't mean dot matrix owners are out in the cold.

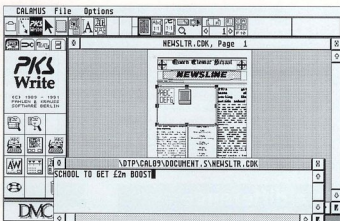
You can still print out proofs on the dot matrix and send PostScript files to a bureau for output on an imagesetter. At



Pay attention to proper typographic conventions - use search and replace if necessary, to remove double spaces, add ligatures and put in proper quote marks

and be

Once you've designed your document, save the skeleton as a template file. You can then add text directly without cutting and pasting. Even if it's a one-off, you never know when you'll need it again



around £5 a page, the results are well worth the extra effort, even if you're only going to photocopy it.

Reproduction needs careful consideration too. Photocopying is quite expensive – for small jobs 10p a sheet is the norm though it does drop for larger jobs.

If you have access to a photocopier it helps enormously, but remember to include the time spent sorting out jams, picking misprints out of the rollers and the extra aggravation in your equations, especially if you're doing it on a professional basis.

I once spent three hours designing a newsletter and the best part of a day trying to copy 200 sheets using a friendly company's copier that had a malevolent mind of its own. I'd have

been better off spending the day in bed....

If at all possible, try and use a commercial printer for anything over a 200 or so copies – places like Printaprint are quite competitive at this level. For 500 and above copies, I'd try a litho printer instead. All you do is provide the master and collect the finished products. Believe me, it's much more civilised.

The overall appearance of a document is vital. We tend to identify documents by their physical appearance like the position of the text, the margins, page size and so on. Deviating from these fixed ideas can actually confuse.

For example, I once saw a company report designed like the front page of a newspaper – it drew a lot of comment

and, though undeniably clever, it failed to do its job.

Firstly, margins need to be the right size for the job. If the document is being bound, left-hand margins should be larger than right-hand ones. If your document is going to be read, it will have to be handled and the side and bottom margins are the natural handles, so make them wide enough.

Half an inch or 12mm is the smallest margin you should use but if you are producing a single column page, margins could be double that without looking too wide.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Don't be afraid of white space – trying to cover an entire page with text and graphics can be counter-productive. White space can be used effectively as any rule or graphic to guide the reader through the text – a wide left-hand margin can be especially effective in a text-heavy proposal or report, as text placed right across the page would soon become tiring to read (the optimum number of words per line between six and ten – any more and concentration becomes difficult).

With long documents you have to decide how to break up the text. Extra blank lines at the end of a section is one way while rules (black or grey lines) is another.

A simple, innocuous graphic can sometimes work, or perhaps a combination of the two. If using just space and single sub-headings, remember to put most of the space before the sub-heading and less afterwards to avoid splitting the sub-heading from the section it relates to.

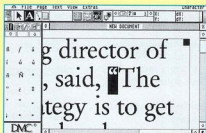
Newsletters come in all shapes and sizes, from sedate ones to loud ones with glaring headlines like tabloid news

Applying the professional touch

There are some aspects of good typographic practice that set a well desktop published document apart from the crowd.

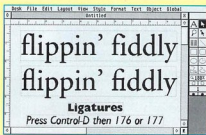
1. Putting double spaces after full stops and other punctuation marks is a nasty typists' habit. Get rid of it.
2. Replace all the feet (') and inch (") marks with true curly quotes
3. For some character combinations, particularly "fi" and "fl", you should use what are known as ligatures instead – especially in headlines and logos. Didot and Calamus users will find it easier as they can browse through the font to select the right character. PageStream users will have to use the reference tables to find the Alternate key combination.
4. Use proper en and em dashes where appropriate. The en dash should appear in places where a full stop is too strong but a comma is too weak – just before this phrase is a good example. Leave a space on either side of the dash too. The longer em dash can be used in dates or times without a space either side such as July–September.
5. Don't underline words or phrases unless necessary – italics look far more professional while other options include bold, a different, contrasting font and small capitals (if you don't have true small

caps, and most fonts don't, try capitals at about 70 per cent of the normal point size).



Calamus lets you get at the odd characters quickly and easily – just remember to do it!

Using ligatures in PageStream (this is Adobe Garamond) – the "fi" ligature is a big improvement



papers. Space and margins are equally important but as the text is invariably divided into separate stories, a slightly different approach is needed.

Some stories can be set in smaller point sizes if less important and can even be placed in separate boxes or columns. The main aim is to present the reader with a number of options but guide them firmly to any lead story while still making it obvious where the others start.

One of the best ways of putting any publication together is to use a fixed grid. PageStream and other programs have user-definable guide lines that you can use to divide up the page. Some people even advocate dividing the page horizontally as well as vertically into columns, although others find this

too rigid. A few years ago, almost all computer output was in rather ugly monospaced typewriter-style fonts like Courier, but with the spread of DTP, proportional typefaces became more widely used.

SATURATED

Unfortunately the world is so saturated with desktop published information that documents with headings in Helvetica and Times or Palatino as body text faces literally scream DTP! And unoriginal DTP at that.

The world is moving on and the price of top quality type is plummeting, thanks to intense competition. My advice is to avoid Times and Helvetica like the plague and look for replacements – choosing a less common type

face for your document will give you a definite edge.

You'll find that when you start offering your DTP services around, any office computer operator with a word-processor and a laser printer can produce reams of documents in Times and Helvetica.

Show them a report done in Garamond and Franklin Gothic or Perpetua and Antique Olive and they'll look at you with a healthy respect. There's no mystery to it – just don't tell them how you did it!

While choosing the right typeface for a job is vital, there's often very little advice beyond the basic "serif for body text, sans serif for the headlines" rule.

Research has shown that serif faces are far more readable than sans serif ones and this is mainly because of the

Documents with a difference

Newsletters

Just what is a newsletter? There are several different types of newsletter from the drama society broadsheet that gives details of the next rehearsal dates spiced with a bit of gossip to the professionally produced subscription newsletter such as those that offer investment advice from well-known City watchers.

In the middle are the in-house newsletters produced by many companies to keep employees up-to-date with developments and, more often than not, for use as a marketing tool as well.

Whatever their function, newsletters need to be carefully targeted, both in terms of their content and their appearance. If your publication is intended primarily to inform, it needs to be plain and direct – clip art and anecdotal stories don't go down well with busy executives.

If it's aimed at promotion, it can be much more varied in order to attract readers, but good quality layout becomes even more important.

Photographs and other graphics can be used to break up the text and create a readable publication that can be dipped into, rather than read in one sitting.

A newsletter needs a masthead to give it identity and a sensible, easy to read layout that will encourage readers. What it doesn't need are lines, graphics and bullets all over the place as these distract attention from the main stories.

Any of the ST DTP packages is capable of producing good newsletters.



Posters and adverts

As far as posters and adverts are concerned, you can really let your imagination run riot.

There are no rules for this type of publication except for one – grab attention and get the message across in any way you can.

However, you need to be careful to ensure that the message doesn't get lost in fancy graphics and added text. It's no use spending ten seconds plonking the words CAR BOOT SALE in the middle of a poster, only to bury it with cleverly rotated text and scores of imported graphics – posters need to be read from a distance and the average human being walking past has only a few seconds to take it in.

SECONDARY POSITION

If the passer-by is interested, of course, they'll close in and read the details, so these have to be placed in secondary positions.

Programs that can handle scalable fonts are the best bet for this type of work as you will probably have trouble finding bitmapped fonts in large enough sizes to be useful.

The ability to rotate the text and apply special effects is useful too. PageStream, Didot, DA's Vector and Calamus are all good for this type of work whereas Timeworks is rather limited.

Business paperwork

Much of the routine work of a desktop publisher is taken up with business documents of one sort or another, from letters, memos and fax covers to annual company reports, marketing proposals and press releases.

Most business documents have to present a common style, perhaps to match a corporate identity, and there isn't much room for variation or embellishments like clip art.

Good typography is vital in long documents, partly to maintain readability but also because they are often prestigious documents to be read by senior executives.

Reports and proposals have to be well-structured so that browsing is easy and you need to consider indexing and tables of contents. Graphics frequently have to be included these days, particularly graphs and charts, and tables are often required too [something that most ST DTP programs can't handle at all well].

Forms are also in demand because, jokes about bureaucracy apart, well-designed forms can make even the smallest businesses run more efficiently.

Designing a good form isn't a quick job either. A lot of thought has to be put into the way a form is laid out – if it isn't easily understood, it won't be used.

Most DTP programs are quite at home designing business documents though Calamus SL scores heavily with its tables of contents and indexing.

I'd choose Timeworks and PageStream before the heavyweights for forms. Timeworks' templates are especially valuable and the multiple copy function in PageStream makes grids and tables very easy to create.



small serifs which enable us to identify letters quickly but too many of them – as with some true italic typefaces – and you get the opposite effect.

Typefaces have a character of their own and you can choose which to use to suit the document you are going to produce. Typefaces like Garamond, Caslon and Baskerville are impressive and confident when used as body text though not too formal.

Charter and Nimrod, on the other hand, were devised specially for 300 dots per inch laser and inkjet printers. The latter are good for faxing too, as are fuller, exaggerated faces like Bookman and Rockwell.

Finally, don't be tempted to use too many typefaces in a document in the hope that it becomes more interesting. If you want variation, go for different weights of the same typeface or perhaps extra or ultra bold versions for the headings – you don't have to stick to sans serif.

Use italic and bold forms sparingly – they should be used for emphasising words or phrases, not to make whole sections stand out.

RECOGNISING SHADES

Long upper case sub-titles should be avoided too – most people read by recognising the shapes of words and the all important features are the ascenders (as in the letter "d") and descenders (as in the letter "p"). Upper case characters provide no such visual clues and reading becomes a chore.

Contrary to popular belief, though, there is no reason at all why you can't use two or even three different typefaces for body text in the same document, especially when it is a newsletter. The choice of face has to made carefully and it would be silly to include two typefaces of the same classification. For example, mixing Caslon and Garamond (both Old Style serif typefaces) on the same page would look odd but mixing Bodoni (a Modern style serif) and Garamond would work.

If you wanted a third, a plain sans serif typeface could be used for smaller boxed areas of text.

- *Andrew Wright concludes his exhaustive guide to successful desktop publishing next month.*

Ten useful typefaces

Type is important – so important you couldn't do any DTP at all without it! I've selected ten typefaces that will give you the basis of a good, all-round collection although I'm bound to say that type preference is still very much a matter of personal taste.

The format you choose will depend on your program and you may be able to pick up PD equivalents, rather than the real thing. Many are available from Compo Software (0480 891819) in both Speedo and PostScript formats and others direct from vendors like Monotype and Adobe.

Garamond

Garamond remains one of the most beautiful serif typefaces the world has ever seen – and that's not just personal bias! It comes in at least a dozen slightly different variations but it is one of the most readable body text faces available.

Century Schoolbook

Century is a heavy serif body text face that works well when photocopied on poorer copiers. It is very clear and readable at larger point sizes (keep it over ten points). GDOS users will find a good set of Century fonts supplied with Fontkit Plus from the ST Club.

Bitstream Charter

Bitstream Charter is excellent on low resolution output devices like faxes and inkjet printers. If you're producing masters on a Deskjet or equivalent, Charter is a good choice for the body text typeface.

Joanna

This one squeezes in against all the odds but it goes so well with Gill Sans (it was designed by the same typographer) that it deserves far greater popularity than it has so far achieved. It is a delicate typeface that should be used in larger sizes but it is very readable and looks very classy.

Rockwell

Rockwell is known as a slab serif (or Egyptian) typeface. It is ideal for use in headings, subheadings and titles and contrasts nicely with sans serif faces like Swiss/Helvetica as well as traditional serif faces like Times.

Revue

Flicking through a source book of logos the other day, I was struck by the number that had used Revue as the basic typeface. It is a modern, very flexible and extremely attractive display typeface that deserves a place in everyone's collection.

Gill Sans

Gill Sans is enjoying the peak of popularity at present and you can see examples virtually everywhere. It is a versatile sans serif face that can be used to good effect in any situation – headings, displays or even body text. It is also very readable at small point sizes.

COPPERPLATE

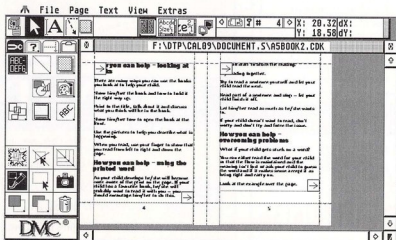
Copperplate is another popular typeface which is great for logos and mastheads. It has its limitations – it doesn't always work as a headline face, for example – but the elegant shape of the letters is very pleasing.

Cooper Black

Cooper is a warm, rounded display typeface that has plenty of impact, especially at bigger sizes. Individual letters also make good logo components.

Zapf Chancery

OK, so it's over-used, especially on wedding invites, but if you need an all round capable script typeface, Zapf Chancery is both readable and decorative. The lovely swash capitals are very nice on their own too, as logos or drop caps.



Set up your margins and stick to them – never worry about leaving too much space, it's too little that ruins documents

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DISK OF THE MONTH

WPR 09 LEXICON. A pure word list containing 46,209 words without slang, americanisms or other rubbish. Needs 1Mb to run with SPELLONE (spellchecker) also provided on this disk.

ARC 20 BLAT. Superb STE ONLY filled blocks game. 10 fun filling levels. Superb DMA sound, will work with 512k but is a real treat on 1Mb machine. Great graphics.

BRD 16 COURSE FISHERMAN. Superb treat for any angler. Needs 1 Mb to run. 12 different venues. Whole host of variations in tackle. A great way to whittle away the hours when you can't get to the bank.

ADV 01 DDST, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. Role playing adventure. PARANOIA, ENCHANTED REALM and ELBOZO CITY. 3 more good adventures also on this disk.

BRD 04 CHESS. Excellent game. DECODER, chess mastering, SUPER SIMON, computer version of hang ten game. DOMINOES, puzzle game. GOLF card game. Also on this disk DRAGON MAZE, 2 game. SENSDORI BACKGAMMON BRIDGIT, ST ARTREK, BATTLESHIPS.

ARC 14 HOME. and L'Ord 2 super pinball game. GALIC RANGER, unusual shoot em up. MONIKES & BALLOONS, bounces the clown and bursts the balloons. FIRESTORM, another good arcade game rescue the humans. LAZERBALL, super game and interesting version on the pinball theme. Also on this disk LOST TREASURE, WIDOW MAKER, SLALOM & BREAK OUT.

AST 01 PLANETARIUM simply the best PD Astronomy program. SKYMAP another great Astronomy program plus aStronomer.

BRD01 MONOPOLY, LAZER-CHESS, OTHELLO, CHECHERS, WHEEL OF FORTUNE and more. A superb collection of BOARD GAMES.

WPR01 ST WRITER V4.2 and FIRSTWORD. The best word processors for the STE! plus a spell checker, print spooler and a selection of ready to use letters.

ARC12 BELUM INTERACTUM - Good galaxians clone. BLOCKADE, HAUNTED HOUSE. AMORTRACK, BOING. INVADERS, MANIA. Another superb selection of arcade games.

WPR03 ALICE. Super text editor up to 10 docs in memory at once. EDITEXT. Super little text editor. Ideal for beginners. NEWWORD 400v3. Easy to use text editor, again good for beginners. NOTEPAD. Make temporary notes from within any gem program. PHONEPAD. Pop up telephone book. FLOFOX and ORGANISER. Everything a paper filofax would have and much more in these two programs. TYPEWRITE - Turn your ST into a typewriter.

ART 07 Superb art package, ideal for simple DTP. 23 built-in fonts. A4 size paper works in monochrome for best quality of print. Ideal for leaflets etc. OS Disk.

BRD05 AMERICAN FOOTBALL, DALEKS, STARTREK, DELTA 3, CELESTIAL CEASERS (versions 1 and 2), SPACE VARS, RED ALERT, MATCH HANK, OGRE, 11 Board and Strategy Games. SPLENDID SELECTION!

BRD05 CONQUEST. Graphic adventure. Should take weeks to complete! (Shareware).

ADV06 BLACKDOWN. Good text adventure with excellent graphics. DUNGEON MASTER NEW LEVELS. Needs original DM disk to play.

UT134 SAGRANTO. Must be the best virus killer around. V.KILLER v3.84. Another excellent virus killer. EXORCIDIST. The latest version of the V.Killer. HD RESTORE. Repairs hard drive boot sector. RIPPER and PROBE. Two programs to grab music and graphics from disks and more....

UT120 ZX SPECTRUM EMULATOR. Needs 1Mb SPECTRUM to ST DOWNLOADER. Gives details on how to transfer Spectrum games from tape to disk for the above emulator. ZX81 EMULATOR and 85 PROGRAMS.

ARC15 CYBERTECHNICS Fast & furious arcade game. CRAZY ERBERT fast Q'bert clone. SLUG to fill the disk.

BRD09 MILE EXCEL board game. D FISSION. Super Othello type game. TUNNEL VISION Excellent maze game. 3 jigsaw puzzle games. ST TIC TAC TOE, HIGH-LOW. BLACKJACK and more on this disk.

BRD12 TOWER POWER Super strategy game runs on 512k. 1Mb and 2Mb machine. Optional data disk available as BRD13.

ARC37 LAMATRON and REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CANELES. 2 superb games from Jeff Minter. These are a must for any game collection

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Part 1 – Getting to know you

• Are you?

Male
Female

• How old are you?

Under 16 years
16-23 years
24-34 years
35-54 years
55+ years

• Where do you live?

Southern England
Midlands
Northern England
Wales
Scotland
Northern Ireland
Europe
Rest of the World

• What is your annual income?

Less than £10,000
£10,000 to £15,000
£15,000 to £20,000
£20,000 to £30,000
£30,000+

• Which national newspapers do you read?

The Times
The Guardian
The Daily Telegraph
The Independent
The Sun
The Daily Mirror
The Sport
Today
Daily Star
Daily Express
Daily Mail
Financial Times
Daily Record
Other (please state)

Part 2 – You and your Atari

• What Atari system/s do you own?

ST
STF
STFM
STE
Mega
MegaSTE
TT
Falcon
Lynx

• What memory does your main system have?

0.5Mb
1Mb
2Mb
4Mb
8Mb
Other (please state)

• What hardware do you own/intend to buy over the next year?

	Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Intend to buy <input type="checkbox"/>
Extra floppy drive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hard disk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Memory upgrade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Printer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Genlock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digitiser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sampler	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Midi set-up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Printer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accelerator card	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emulator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

• Do you use your Atari computer for any of the following? (More than one item may be ticked)

Games
Wordprocessing/DTP
Music
Graphics
Home accounts
Education
Databases
Communications
Business
Other (please state)

• Which display do you use?

TV
Colour monitor
Hi-res monitor

• How regularly do you buy new games?

Less than one a month
One a month
Two to three a month
More than three a month
Don't buy games

• How much time do you spend using your computer each day?

Less than one hour
Up to two hours
Up to three hours
Up to four hours
Up to five hours
Five hours or more

• How long have you owned your Atari?

Less than one year
Up to two years
Up to three years
More than three years

• Is it your first computer?

Yes
No

• Do you intend to buy a new computer/console in the next year?

Yes
No

• If yes, please say which one

Falcon
Jaguar console
Sega Mega Drive
Super NES
PC-compatible
Apple Macintosh
Amiga
Other (please state)

• How much do you intend to spend on your computer and related products in the next six months?

Up to £50
Over £50
Over £100
Over £200
Over £300

Part 3 – You and Atari ST User

- How often do you read *Atari ST User*?
 - Every month
 - Regular (over six times a year)
 - Occasionally
- Where do you obtain your copy of *Atari ST User*?
 - Newsagent
 - Home delivery from newsagent
 - Subscription
 - Read friend's or relative's copy
- Do you ever have difficulties finding *Atari ST User*?
 - Yes
 - No
- Which of the following subscription offers would you prefer if you were to subscribe in the future?
 - Reduced price subscription
 - Extra magazines and binder
 - Game gift
 - Accessory gift
 - Savings on hardware
 - Savings on software
 - Other (please state) _____
- How long do you spend reading each issue of *Atari ST User*?
 - Up to ½ hour
 - ½ hour to 1 hour
 - 1 hour to 1½ hours
 - 1½ hours to 2 hours
 - 2 hours to 3 hours
 - 3 hours or more
- Will your purchase of any item of hardware or software be directly influenced by what you read in *Atari ST User*?
 - Yes
 - No
- If you buy the product by mail order, will it be from an advertisement from *Atari ST User*?
 - Yes
 - No
- How many other people regularly read your copy of *Atari ST User*?
 - None
 - One
 - Two
 - Three or more
- Do you consider *Atari ST User* to be good value for money?
 - Yes
 - No
- Do you usually buy *Atari ST User* for
 - The CoverDisk only
 - Mainly for the CoverDisk, but also for the magazine
 - For both the CoverDisk and the magazine equally
 - Mainly for the magazine, but also for the CoverDisk
 - The magazine only
- Would you like to see more of the following on CoverDisks?
 - Full-priced game demos
 - Full-priced application demos
 - Full-priced fully-working software
 - PD and shareware utilities

- On average, how do you rate the quality of the CoverDisks on *Atari ST User*?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Satisfactory
 - Poor
- Please rate the following Aspects pages in order of interest. Mark them one to five – one being of the most interest.
 - Midi and music
 - Emulation
 - Communications
 - DTP
 - Business
 - Falcon
 - Not interested in any of the above
- Which are your favourite sections of *Atari ST User* (More than one item may be ticked)
 - News
 - Euro news
 - CoverDisk pages
 - Gamer
 - Public Sector
 - Advice Service
 - Letters
 - Hardware reviews
 - Software reviews
 - Buyers' guides
 - Product round-ups
 - General interest
 - Adverts
 - Aspects
- Would you like to see more or less of the following in *Atari ST User*. Indicate preference with + or -
 - News
 - Euro news
 - Hardware reviews
 - Software reviews
 - Disk coverage
 - Letters
 - Technical advice
 - Public domain
 - Games
 - Buyers' guides
 - Beginners tutorials
 - Competitions
 - Reader offers
 - Adverts
 - Special round-ups
 - General interest articles
- How far is your choice of software and peripherals influenced by *Atari ST User*?
 - A great deal
 - A little
 - Not at all
- How computer literate would you describe yourself as?
 - Below average
 - Average
 - Very
- Do you find *Atari ST User's* editorial style
 - Too simple
 - Just right
 - Too complicated
- How important to you is our games coverage?
 - Not at all
 - Important
 - Very important
- How would you rate the following types of game?

	Very interesting	Quite interesting	Not very interesting	Boring
Action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Puzzle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adventure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
War/strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Role playing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 4 – You and other magazines

- Which of the following magazines do you read – please also indicate whether you buy them or read someone else's copy

	Read	Buy	Read someone else's
ST Action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ST Format	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ST Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer Shopper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Which of the following elements influence your choice of magazine?
 - Front cover
 - Single CoverDisk
 - Double CoverDisk
 - Free supplement
 - Other cover gift

Part 5 – Written answers

- What do you like most about *Atari ST User*?

- What do you dislike about *Atari ST User*?

- Which has been your favourite issue to date?

- Why?

- What changes would you like to see in *Atari ST User*?

Your details

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Telephone: _____

Send your completed entry to:
Europress Enterprise (STUS),
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 The closing date is November 12

One of the least useful parts of the ST's desktop is the way in which it handles files such as text and graphics. Most of us have hard or floppy disks full of odd text files and an assortment of pictures of doubtful origin.

Keeping them all tidily packed away in folders and partitions is a big enough nightmare on its own, but to do so efficiently you need to identify them quickly and the only way to do that is to look at the contents.

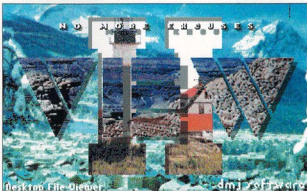
This isn't helped by the ST's inability to display anything on the screen but an ordinary text file – and even then in a pretty unfriendly way.

To view a text file, for example, you can double-click on the filename or icon to reveal a three-option dialogue inviting you to print it, show it or cancel.

Selecting the Show option brings the text up on-screen but you can't scroll backwards and whenever you reach the end you're dumped back on the desktop. If you wanted to read those last few lines, it's just tough.

Try doing the same with other types of file and you're likely to give your ST a nervous breakdown. Double-clicking on Degas pictures or archived files simply results in screens full of garbage. The only way to view most files is to load the application that created them and for floppy drive users it is particularly slow.

Happily, an American programmer



Images like this Spectrum pic can be viewed from the desktop

View II is a new utility from the ST Club. Andrew Wright wonders how he got by without it before...

TOP.INF file just as any application can be installed by adding the extender that applies to its working files.

This means there is no accessory or AUTO folder program and the program uses absolutely no memory whatsoever when it isn't in use. However, floppy drive owners in particular will want to speed up access and View II can be configured to run from its own small, custom-designed RAM disk, making file viewing almost instantaneous. All this

and the mouse scrolling is a little awkward to control, even on standard 8MHz STs. Sixteen different type of graphic file can be displayed directly on-screen, including all three Degas resolutions, compressed and uncompressed, Tiny, Neo, Doodle, Art Director and Spectrum 512.

You can even view images with an STE palette on an ST! If you're using a mono monitor, the pictures will be dithered, and there are one or two minor options for changing the way the pictures look.

Clicking on ARC or LZH files displays the contents of the archive and you can extract any or all files as required, provided you install the appropriate programs. This means you can use the latest versions of LZH as and when they are released.

Getting into more esoteric realms, View II supports sound and animation files too, including those in AVR, SND, SPL and SAM sound formats (but not 16-bit samples) and SEQ and DLT animation formats.

The PC WAV sound file format is also supported. Animations that can't normally be played on a standard ST (due to lack of memory) can even be played straight from the disk using View II. Not only that, you can play sounds meant for the STE's DMA sound channel on a humble ST too!

View II is easy to recommend, particularly if you sort lots of data files of one sort or another. It is fast, simple to use and it makes hunting through software collections ten times easier.

You can view too

has come up with a brilliant solution that is now available in the UK through the ST Club.

The program is called View II and its sole objective in life is to display the contents of just about any type of file on the screen quickly and easily. No longer do you have to load applications or viewers to look at files – the contents are only a double click away.

View II is supplied on a single disk and comes with a special installation program that lets you get it up and running straight away. It works in any resolution on any ST and is also Falcon compatible (though I couldn't make it work with TOS 4.01) and Falcon NVDI, which is rather worrying).

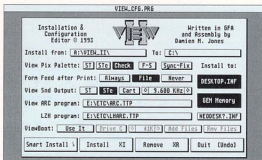
The 20-page manual isn't a triumph of clarity but nonetheless it tells you all you need to know to get the most from the program. Configuration offers scores of options but for most of us the "smart" installation option will be best.

This copies the appropriate files on to the boot disk (hard or floppy) and installs the main program in the DESK-

can be done from the configuration program.

Once View II is installed, you'll be amazed at what it can do. It can display text files, of course, scroll backwards and forwards using either the mouse or arrow keys, search for certain phrases, jump to the start or the end or print a single screen or the whole file.

Disappointingly, but understandably, it won't display wordprocessor/files



View II's configuration program

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Handy if somewhat quirky replacement for some dull GEM functions.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

Not the easiest program to set up but persistence pays off.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

At this price, who can complain?

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

Product: View II
Supplier: ST Club, 2 Broadway, Nottingham NG1 1PS
Telephone: 0800 410841
Price: £14.95
Configuration: All Accounts, any configuration

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GAMES

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	No. 4 in December + STR PD Game Top 10	
GAM-98	Bubbles McGee/Viking + 5 more	D
GAM-07	Crows & Missle (8-bk clothes)	D
GAM-22	Atm/Jodge/Subham + 10 more	S
GAM-28	Question of Snooker/Fingger + 1	D
GAM-34	A. word/Bugs/Warrior + 2 more	D
GAM-36	Klaxtra/Emmed/Mt. Price + 2	D
GAM-38	Caves of Rigel/Froggy/Harris	D
GAM-45	The Alien Blob (very addictive)	S
GAM-51	Battleships (with speech) + 2 more	D
GAM-59	Dangerous/Gravily/Maze + 3 more	D
GAM-62	Armour/Haunted/Quizzical + 3	D
GAM-62	Bermala Races/Geozax + 2 more	D
GAM-67	Battle for the Throne/Video Vegas	D
GAM-68 to 70	Adventure Stories... Solutions to	
	well over 100 adventures on 3 disks for £3.00	
GAM-73	Lateches/Time Bandit + 7 more	D
GAM-74	Chess Nut + over 90 game cheats	D
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GAM-83	S.T.C.G. Adventure Writer Demo	D
GAM-84	Terri's/Duchan + 4 (MONO games)	D
GAM-85	Mutant Cannon/Lamorton (1 meg)	D
GAM-88	Odeus & Sir Kamee Hobbs (adv)	D
GAM-93	Mars Maze	S
GAM-95	Larabee III/Lazer Racer + 3 more	D
GAM-23	Go-Up/Novus/Target	S
GAM-30	Mix & Match + Match Crazy	S

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MXB-12	Grammar checker, On Calc & 10	S
MXB-10	Dukedown/Inst Jan + 11 others	D
MXB-21	Quark... 30 SCS F's notes on disk	D
MXB-18	Professional Astrology	S

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	Inc. Archive prog, Assembler to GFA STD code, Link, Format prog, HD-Utility, Data Salvage & more	
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UTL1-34	Mega Utility... (31 useful utilities)	D
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UTL1-20	Archive Suite... (compression prog)	S
UTL1-21	Sticker III... (best disk labeler)	D
UTL1-22	100 prog's for printer owners	S
UTL1-05	7 suits of various label paper	S
UTL1-33	Address book/V.Lite/Packer... 12	D
UTL1-32	MINT... (font type system)	D
UTL1-33	Superboot 7.2 + 7 others	D
UTL1-04	Disk catalogue & Labeler + 10 more	S
UTL1-06	Formatter/Randisk + 12 more	S
UTL1-10	Gemini, alternative, Desktop	S
UTL1-19	18 user'd disk accessories	S
UTL1-16	17 user'd disk accessories	S
UTL1-24	Dok Double/Dual Format + 12	D
UTL1-27	Sagron (Virus killer, very good)	D
UTL1-38	Vault (best HD backup) + 3 more	D
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MUSIC

MUS-31	Megawave (extra long Race track)	D
MUS-28	Energy for You (5 Dance tracks)	D
MUS-27	Handcore Director (NOT STE)	D
MUS-21	Hi-Fidelity, Intrans	D

As reviewed in March STR, you have just got to hear this! Better on a set of E. Amiga ext got your heart out!

MUS-22 to 27	Peaks & Pikes 1 to 6	D
--------------	----------------------	---

All these tracks in the same quality as Hi-Fidelity, Deemus (MUS-21)

MUS-30	Musical Wonder Demo	D
--------	---------------------	---

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EDU1-20	Phygnine (6 activities for very young)	D
EDU1-20	Star-gazer (astronomy - 3 programs)	D
EDU1-19	Rip It Up (learn Highways Code-Demo)	D

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The public domain is a funny old place for games. Some are really good, high quality and well presented pieces of software, whereas others are the worst you'll ever lay your sweaty mitts on.

Brilliant original PD products are harder to find than the proverbial needle in the haystack, but every so often you'll prick your finger on one - if you look hard enough...

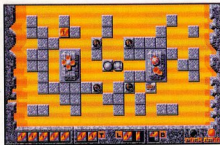
Rush 2

Programmed by: Mikkel Lundberg
Available From: LAPD • Disk No G.300

Leisurely wading through this month's selection I found a delightful gem of a game entitled Rush 2. The concept is a strange one, but once you've played it more than a couple of times it starts to get very addictive.

There aren't any instructions included in the package, so I'm going to tell you myself. Rush 2 uses the bat and ball system, but for all intents and purposes takes it to a different level and twists it a bit.

Start the game and you'll be presented with the main screen. On it there are several squares, of which some are linked whereas



A bat and ball game with a difference. Rush 2 is a happening and interesting PD product with oodles of playability and is well worth spending a few bob on

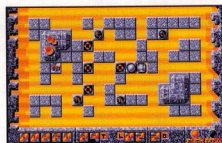
some are not.

You control a ball which can move about these squares and also a bat, or pusher. The pusher "pushes" the squares about the screen, thus enabling you to get around the level.

I know this sounds slightly complicated, but take a gander at the screenshot and you'll get a rough idea of how it all works. The objective of all this ball/bat/square tomfoolery is to collect discs with letters on.

You must collect them in alphabetical order, and this is where the puzzle element rears its head because the discs are liberally strewn all over the place. As you progress the levels get more hectic and need a fair bit of brainpower to work them out.

Rush 2 has great playability, is strangely addictive and has brilliant graphics to boot. Well recommended.



The second level of Rush and things are starting to get a bit complicated!

PUBLIC

**Jonathan Maddock casts his eyes
over some high quality PD stuff that
won't break the bank...**

MovieLog

Programmed by: Brendan Dawes
Available From: Warzone • Disk by name

Nowadays videos are big business. Due to the amount of unadulterated rubbish on television, people are quite happy to run down to the shops for a decent video.

Of course there are two kinds of buyer. The first buys videos occasionally when they can't be bothered going out, and the second can't stop buying them!

Yes, the film buff is in their element. You can now happily watch your favourite films over and over again until you go bleary-eyed and fall asleep.

When you have a video collection, it's not very easy to keep track of all your tapes. Whether you have lent one to a misguided friend or just plain mislaid one there is no way of telling... that is until now.

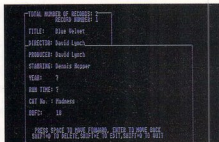
If you've got an ST up and running then all your problems are saved thanks to Brendan Dawes and his brilliant PD program, MovieLog. This, as you might expect from the title, keeps a log of all your movies for you to gaze and ponder over at your leisure.

Like many programs of this genre, it is just a modified database. There are fields for you to enter the film's name, director, producer, stars, year, running time, catalogue number and classification.

Once you've entered all your film details, MovieLog will let you add more records, search for a film and print out your records.

MovieLog includes the ability to store up to 1,000 films and alphabetically search through titles, as well as the ever so handy option to print VHS video labels.

It may not be packed with features, but it's got everything that most self-respecting video buffs will need.



Enter all your favourite films and then go and hassle all your friends who have kept them for months on end

STOS Graphic Adventure Creator

Programmed by: Dean Sharples
Available From: LAPD • Disk No L.46

I don't know about you, but I yearn to go back to my youth (oh about three months ago then? - Ed) and play on my dear old delightful rubber-keyed Spectrum.

Yes, it was rubbish, but I, like many others, liked it in a strange kind way. The graphics were as a rule blocky and abysmal, but as far as playability went it could not be beaten.

I remember desperately trying to complete the Hobbit and, err, not being very successful at all. "Type-in" adventures weren't exactly my strong point, so I wasn't awfully

Polyfilm

Last month we incorrectly printed H Tilley as the programmer of Polyfilm. The real programmer's name is Martin Brownlow. We promise never to let this happen again and if it does Jonathan will throw himself off the nearest railway bridge...

Operation Garfield

Programmed by: David Brankin
Available From: Frappshop • Disk No GAM.3738C

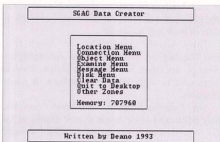
Think back a couple of years and try to remember a really massive game from that time. There are plenty to choose from, but one which pops up in the old memory banks larger than most is Operation Wolf.

This incredibly violent shoot-'em-up was a huge hit in the arcades and on the home computer format. The sequel, Operation Thunderbolt, was just as popular if not more so thanks to its improved graphics.

Killing, maiming and blowing things up were ideal factors for a brilliant piece of computer software the kids loved every second of it and I'm sure a few adults out there were just as taken by the series of Operation games.

If only there were a product out on the market where you could blow up your worst enemy or better still celebrities. Operation Jeremy Beadle/Bobby Davro/Terry Christian/Les Dennis (delete as applicable) would sell by the bucketload. You can't have everything

sector



The state of adventure games is now in your hands thanks to the STOS Graphic Adventure Creator

fond of them, but I knew plenty of people who were.

One incredibly boring day, a chum and I decided to make our very own adventure, but we didn't get very far — in fact to put it bluntly we didn't get anywhere at all.

The author of the STOS Adventure Creator has returned with the STOS Graphic Adventure Creator, helping current-day souls like my friend and I to get further than we did.

The SGAC enables you to use the mouse rather than enduring the long-winded task of typing all the text in. The program is really simple to use and you'll soon get into the swing of things.

You can't really create a decent adventure without planning on paper beforehand, so it's always good to get some ideas down before you start.

Your adventure can only look as good as your artistic skills, so if you're not too hot at drawing then your game is going to suffer.

This problem can be solved in two ways. Firstly, get a chum who is reasonably talented with the mouse and thus get a polished product.

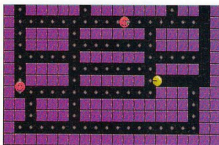
Secondly, do all the drawings yourself no matter how bad they are. The second option is much more fun obviously and personally speaking I like it because it makes your game look so much more cheesy.

The STOS Graphic Adventure Creator is one of those programs that you can sit down with on a rainy day and while away the hours quite satisfactorily.

though — or can you? Operation Garfield is a spoof on the famous shoot-'em-up extravaganza and features the orange and black striped cat. I don't have anything against Garfield, in fact I thought he was quite funny, but obviously the creator of this game didn't think so.

The graphics are well drawn, the sound generally isn't too bad, and the sampled Terminator background music is a nice touch. The gameplay is a bit rropy a times, but you'll ignore it in your blood-crazed psychopathic rage, err probably.

If you hate Jim Davis' creation then you might want to buy this well-presented piece of software. Even if you don't hate him you can buy it anyway because it's quite a good blast and well worth playing if you've got a couple of quid spare.



A brilliant Pacman clone that is superior in many aspects to the original. No powerpills in this version!

H-Mec

Programmed by: Jon Garry

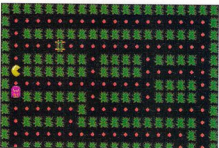
Available From: LAPD • Disk No G.293

I can't ever remember a decent Pacman-type game for the ST in the world of public domain. I mean, how hard can it be to write one? Err, probably very hard indeed, but hey, what would I know?

H-Mec is a Pacman clone and a really rather brilliant one at that. For those of you who've missed out on the last 20 years and haven't heard of Pac and his maze-type games on, I'll explain.

Pacman is a yellow circle with a mouth whose job is to run around a maze collecting pills. Once the pills have been collected you progress onto the next level.

It would be easy if it wasn't for the middle-some ghosts who chase you trying to make you lose one of your lives. In the original game



Yet another level in H-Mec and the ghosts are still on your tail. Yikes!



Take out your pent-up frustration and anger on Jim Davis' creation.

there was the opportunity to get your own back on the ghosts by eating one of the four powerpills and chasing and eating the pesky little blighters.

H-Mec differs from the original in a variety of ways. Firstly, all the levels are a lot bigger. To make your life even harder there isn't the ability to turn on the ghosts and kill them.

This means you have to just simply avoid them which does make it a lot harder than its original counterpart.

The graphics are a lot more fancy than you'd expect and it all looks very professional. It's as playable as bits you shouldn't be playing with and as addictive as things you shouldn't be addicted to. H-Mec is a damn fine example of a good piece of PD software and is heartily recommended.

Ponds and Watergardens

Programmed by: George Butler

Available From: Floppyshop • Disk No UTL 3765C

Sometimes I have to scratch my head and wonder just what is going on in this world of ours. The PD world can be as confusing as the real world!

I can live with PD products like games, databases and wordprocessors, but now and again you get a disk which just throws you completely off the track.

Ponds and Watergardens is just such a disk. It is a mix of text and pictures that describe how to build a pond or watergarden. What you've basically got is a DIY pond manual!

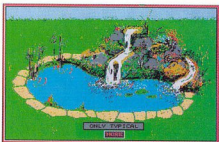
I have a couple of queries and questions. The first is why? Who on this earth would want such a piece of software? Err, someone who wanted to build a pond or water garden is the answer, but that isn't the point.

What was the programmer thinking of? It's not exactly going to appeal to everyone and I feel that the program's creator is going for a niche market...

The software doesn't just tell you how to build your pond, it also says how you can save yourself considerable expense while doing it.

The good thing about it is that it is strangely interesting. You might not think so, but at least it's different! The actual software is a series of picture and text files. It's all laid out very comprehensively, easy to understand and well presented.

OK, this is only going to appeal to a certain section of ST owners. Which section I haven't a clue! If ponds and watergardens are your thing then I guess this is the ideal PD program for you.



If you've ever wanted to build a pond then this is the perfect program for you. If you ever do build one then send me a photo of it!

Galaxians/Rayoid

Programmed by: Sinister Developments
Available From: Aquila PD • Disk No ACT 47

As many of you will have found out, there are a lot of games out there which are imitations of classics such as Pacman and Asteroids.

Galaxians isn't just an imitator, it's more or less a direct full-blown copy. The only difference is the fact that your starship is slightly bigger than the one found in the original.

For nostalgia junkies this is prime material that just jumps up and down and begs to be sitting proudly in your collection. You can forget about the games that contain 256-colour



Ahh those were the days. Galaxians is now forever immortalised on the ST. Shoot things, then die and then repeat the process

graphics and CD-quality sound because Galaxians still provides hours of entertainment and all this for a couple of quid.

The object of the game, for the less clued-up readers out there, is to shoot down a formation of aliens that move horizontally at the top of the screen.

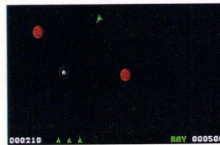
At random points in the game, alien ships will fly down towards you and try to bomb you to pieces. Your job is to clear the screen of these troublesome aliens while desperately trying to survive.

No end-of-level baddies or guardians can be found here though – the final objective is to simply get a higher score than your previous go. Just goes to show that the simple ideas always work the best.

Also included on the disk is a variant on Asteroids called Rayoid. This version has been updated for the 90s and thus has better graphics and sound than the original.

The playability and addiction factors are still there in abundance and both games are more than worth spending a bit of that hard-earned cash on.

If I could only get the rest of the Atari ST User crew off the ST then maybe I'll be able to get a go myself!



An updated version of Asteroids. Fancy graphics and sound, but it still contains tons of playability and addiction

Attention all PD libraries

If you wish to feature in Atari ST User, just send any of your titles which you feel worthy of review to:

Public Sector,
Atari ST User,
Europress Enterprise,
Europa House,
Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Please include a list of the contents of each disk detailing the program name/s and what they are. This ensures quick assessment and inclusion into the magazine.

If you are a shareware author, send in your latest creation along with a list of libraries who will be distributing your program/s thereby achieving maximum publicity.

Puncher 2

Programmed by: Mark Lancaster
Available From: Emerald City PD • Disk No SN26

It certainly seems to be the month for strange and puzzling PD programs. First I had a DIY pond maker, now I've found a knitting pattern simulator! Just what is going on?

Well, if Auntie Ethel insists on knitting you that "tasteful" jumper for Christmas, you now at least have a fighting chance of improving the style of your sweater by giving Auntie your very own knitting pattern.

Puncher 2 will let you design and print out patterns. It is designed for craft workers who require a coloured grid pattern and is suitable for knitting machines, rug makers and such like.

The design of your would-be rug or jumper is entirely up to you and all you need is a half-decent art package. This program then converts the picture into squares and will let you output it to a printer.

I know this piece of software won't appeal to the majority, but the public domain is there for the little things in life. It's well put together and uses a menu system which is easy to use and understand. May Puncher 2 ease some of those jumper-related nightmares!



Revitalise Auntie Ethel's knitting patterns with a few of your own. The Mona Lisa is just one of the examples provided with the program

Award Maker

Programmed by: Sculptured Software
Available From: AWF PDL • Disk No UTIL 28

I remember the day when I received my ten metres swimming certificate – how happy I was! How proud my parents were of me!

When all's said and done, I can look back fondly at my school career, and especially that day. What if certificates were to die out? What would happen to kids, if they achieved something and did not receive some kind of notification of their achievement?

They would probably, in later life, get loaded up on drugs and run rampant through the cities, breaking into shops, stealing cars and turning into serial killers. It could happen...

Yes, I can spy disaster, but hark! I can also spy hope and once again it's all thanks to the ST – and a utility program called Award Maker.

The software in question is a very good and easy to use award maker, as you can guess from the title. It allows you to create your own certificates, thus making it very handy if you run or help to run a club, whether it be at school or Cubs/Scouts/Guides.

You are able to create an A4-sized certificate complete with choice of fancy border. Also included in the package are 12 ready-made pictures or, if you have an artistic desire, you can draw and import your own.

Once you've chosen the border and picture you may enter text such as the name of the certificate, the receivers' names and so on. This is an excellent utility program which is well put together and really simple to use.



I must thank my producer, my director, my co-stars and most of all, you, without whom etc etc

Where to get 'em

- Aquila PD, 190a Mackenzie Road, Beckenham BR3 4SF
Tel: 081-778 0844
- AWF PDL, 123 Hazelwell Crescent, Stinchley, Birmingham B30 2QE
Tel: 021-458 4345
- Emerald City PD, PO Box 28, Southampton SO9 7HS
Tel: 0703 672577
- Floppyshop, PO Box 273, Aberdeen AB9 8SJ Tel: general/technical queries 0224 586 208; Credit card orders only 0224 312756
- LAPD, PO Box No. 2, Heanor DE75 7YP
Tel: 0773 605010 or 761944
- Warpzone PDL, 53 Ropewalk, River Street, St. Judes, Bristol BS2 9EG
Tel: 0272 553758

Auto breakdown

Please could you tell me how to get some of my programs to automatically load when I turn on my ST? I have a 1040STFM which I have had for two years now.

I am aware that if you create an Auto folder you can put programs you want to run automatically in this but I am having some problems getting most of my software to do this.

For instance, I have the First Word Plus wordprocessor which, when placed in the Auto folder, simply locks up the ST when I boot up. Is there something wrong with my computer?

P Blakely, Shropshire

The only programs which you can put in the Auto folder are those that do not use GEM. In other words, programs which use the mouse, menus and windows will just crash your ST.

If you invest in an operating system upgrade (the latest version is TOS 2.06), there is an added facility for specifying a GEM program for automatic execution.

There are also a couple of utilities in the public domain, such as Startgem, which allow you to automatically execute GEM programs.

ST on TV

I want to record pictures from my ST onto my brand new Panasonic video so that I can add titles and graphics to my home videos. What equipment will I need to do this, and how much will it cost? I am a student, so I can't afford anything too expensive.

My setup consists of a 1040STFM connected to a TV and an external double-sided disk drive complementing the internal one.

K Simpson, Sheffield

All that you need is an ST-to-Scart lead which is available from most computer stores and consists of a standard ST monitor plug on one end with a Scart socket on the other.

Simply plug the Scart end into your video's Scart socket and you should be able to record the screen output of the ST.

What you should realise though is that you cannot mix graphics and TV pictures together on-screen. This is where expensive genlock hardware comes in and pushes the price up considerably.

Duplication dilemma

I have been buying your magazine ever since I first purchased my Atari 1040STE in December of last year. Unfortunately, after many attempts, I am still unable to copy any of the files from the CoverDisks onto a blank disk.

On page 14 of your June issue you describe how to copy files in two steps. Even my manual does not give a good enough description on how to complete this process and that covers two pages.

I would be very grateful if you would print a more descriptive version in easy to follow steps so I can complete this operation.

D C McCabe, Doncaster

The only things you need to know are how to format a disk and how to drag files or icons

using the mouse. Both of these actions are explained in the CoverDisk pages but for the sake of being thorough, let's go through the operation step by step starting with how to format a disk.

1. Put the disk to be formatted into the ST's disk drive.
2. From the File menu item at the top of the screen, select Format.
3. A message box will appear. Heed the warning then if you are sure you want to format the disk, click on OK.
4. Another box will appear. Here you can select which drive to format (A or B) and how many sides to format (DOUBLE OR SINGLE). Simply click on OK and the formatting procedure will begin.
5. A box will appear when the formatting procedure is complete showing how much space is available to the user. Click on OK and then click on Cancel to return to the desktop.
6. Remove the freshly formatted disk from the

technical letters • problems • suggestions

ADVICE

drive and put the CoverDisk into it.

7. Open the disk by moving the mouse pointer to the filing cabinet icon marked A and then clicking the mouse button once. The icon should turn black.
8. Move the mouse pointer up to the File menu item and select Open. A window will appear showing the files on the disk.
9. Move the mouse pointer to the file you wish to copy, press the left mouse button and keep it pressed.

10. If you move the mouse (keeping the left mouse button held down) you will see an outlined box moving along with the mouse pointer. Simply move the outlined box to the filing cabinet icon marked B.
11. You should see that cabinet B turns black. You should now release the mouse button.
12. A box appears with the words Copy File(s) at the top showing number of files and folders to be copied. Simply click on OK.

It is then simply a matter of following the on-screen instructions bearing in mind that references to disk B mean the formatted disk you prepared earlier and those to disk A mean the CoverDisk.

Got a problem?

Are you at the point of taking an axe to your ST? Do you want to pulverise your printer? Well just count to ten and relax. Then, jot down the problems you are having, along with a detailed description of your setup.

Include information on the type of ST you have, the TOS version (if known), what peripherals are attached and any extra hardware that lurks inside your computer (accelerators, graphics cards and so on) and I'll do my very best to come up with a solution.

For those who have had problems and overcome them, chances are that someone somewhere is having the same problems and would benefit from your advice.

So, get in print and send any tips or suggestions that other users may find helpful.

Send all tips and cries for help to: Darren Evans, Advice Service, Atari ST User, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Memory

I have a 1040STE computer and have been given two 1Mb SIMMs. I already have a 1Mb SIMM fitted but when I have inserted the other two and do a memory check, I only have 2Mb available.

Why don't I have the full 3Mb available considering there are three 1Mb SIMMs in there?

K Barton, Kent

Unfortunately, the only possible RAM configurations are 0.5, 1, 2 and 4Mb. This is due to a limitation imposed by the memory management unit (MMU) in the ST.

However, the latest memory limit has been increased thanks to Marpet Developments (0423 712600), who have

Racing ray-tracer

I have always been interested in 3D modelling and ray tracing on the ST and have the complete Cyber range of 3D graphics software as well as the GFA Ray Trace package.

So you could imagine my excitement when I took delivery of my brand new Falcon last week and also discovered the Persistence of Vision (POV) shareware ray-tracing package with a dedicated program that takes advantage of the 68030.

After many, many hours of getting to grips with POV (it's not very easy to use being a TTP program) I am now eager to pump up the speed of my rendering even further by acquiring a 68882 maths co-processor.

I would be grateful if you could tell me how

management

developed a memory upgrade that can add an extra 8Mb to your existing memory. This means you can increase your memory up to a massive 12Mb.

The upgrade is only available for STEs or the Mega ST and at the moment only supports machines with TOS 2.06 ROMs. However, support for earlier ROMs is imminent.

Prices vary depending on machine and whether you require a populated (8Mb) or unpopulated (0Mb) version, so call for availability and cost.

There is also a rumour of an impending worldwide shortage of RAM chips, so you may see prices for upgrades increasing. So, if you want a memory upgrade, buy now.

and do decide to do it yourself, fitting one is extremely easy, but be warned that you will invalidate your warranty, and that you will need to take precautions against damage to the FPU by static electricity.

To fit the FPU, simply open up the casing - having totally disconnected the Falcon from the power supply that is - unscrew and remove the metal shielding, which has the internal speaker attached to it, then locate and unscrew the power supply unit which is held in place by two screws, and underneath this you will see the square PLCC socket awaiting your newly acquired mathematical powerhouse.

If you look at the PLCC socket on the Falcon's motherboard, you will see that one of the corners (probably the top left, if you have the Falcon oriented with the ports on the back facing away from you) is squared off as opposed to the others.

Now if you look at your shiny new 68882

installed. However, at the time of writing, version 3.0x is in beta testing stage, with improved features over v2.5.

Added features include Falcon and MultiTOS compatibility. It also recognises and tests any FPU which may be fitted. This latest version should be available by the time you read this.

If you send Ofir a blank formatted disk along with your registration fee, you will receive the latest version and some other, programs written by him. The address to send off to is Gembench registration, 3 Downs Road, Beckenham BR3 2JY.

CGA hook-up

I have recently obtained an old CGA monitor from a friend. I was wondering if it is possible to connect this to my ST as I am currently using a TV which does not provide a very crisp display.

I am quite familiar with soldering and making cables (I have made many modem and null modem cables for friends) so all I need is the correct wiring information.

K Richardson, Worcs

SERVICE

Darren Evans, Advice Service, Atari ST User, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

I'm afraid that you won't be able to use the CGA monitor with your ST. This is because the ST's video signal is analogue RGB while the CGA monitor uses digital TTL signals.

Allen inkjet

A friend of mine recently sold his Amiga setup in order to buy music equipment to enable him to produce and record his own songs - one such piece of equipment was a 1040STE, by the way.

However, he was unable to sell his Commodore MPS1270 inkjet printer so he's offering it to me at a very cheap price. At the moment, I only have a 9-pin Citizen printer which I regularly use with Protex 5. Will I be able to use this inkjet printer with my ST and Protex setup?

T Harper, Kent

As far as our pals on Amiga Computing are aware, the MPS1270 incorporates Epson LQ and IBM Pro-Printer emulations. So, all that's required is to select the Epson LQ printer driver from within Protex and you have yourself a big improvement in print quality over that provided by your 9-pin Citizen.

easy it is to fit the 68882 in the Falcon and where I can get one from. I would also be grateful if you could tell me of any speed test programs which work on the Falcon so that I can test overall speed performance.

M Livingstone, London

Three-dimensional modelling and rendering is one of my favourite pastimes too, and I can understand your need for the extra power a 68882 FPU provides. The rendering times can be drastically reduced indeed.

System Solutions (081-693 1919) provide a 68882 for £69.95 and a fitting service for £20. The fitting service should be taken advantage of by those unsure about dismantling their Falcon or invalidating their warranty.

If you have a little electronics experience

FPU, you should also see that one corner of this too is marked in some manner, either by one of the corners being squared off, or a printed marker on the surface of the chip itself. Make sure that the FPU is fitted with those corners aligned and you are ready for action.

Testing the overall performance of your Falcon requires the use of a benchmark utility. The best utility available at the moment is Gembench, written by Ofir Gal.

The program is shareware, so if you find it useful, send off the registration fee (a paltry £5). This ensures that Ofir will continue to develop Gembench and encourage him to write other useful utilities.

The current version - v2.5 I believe - does not operate properly on the Falcon and does not recognise any maths co-processors

Programming games for the Jaguar

I have heard that Atari's new 64-bit games console - the Jaguar - has a 32-bit expansion port to enable connection to a host of peripherals.

Will this mean that it will be possible to connect an ST to it via an interface so that can be games programmed for it using the ST and appropriate software?

I have always wanted to program games for the consoles, but as far as I am aware, expensive PC's and software are used for such cross assembling.

S Auja, Newcastle

That's quite an interesting thought Mr Auja. However, Atari are very tight lipped about the Jaguar at the moment so it is a little early to spec-

ulate. In theory, it is quite possible, given the correct software and interface, to be able to use the ST to program the Jaguar and I would think it would be quite a good idea to boot.

Hopefully, the general philosophy adopted by Sega and Nintendo, whereby anyone who wants to create games for these machines has to gain a licence to do so, or be subjected to legal action - the recent Codemasters case being a prime example - will not be adopted by Atari.

It is my belief that the more programmers who are out there creating games for a machine, the more popular the machines will be, due to such a large software base being available for it. All we can do is wait and see I.

Hand-held scanners are one of the cheapest add-ons you can get for your ST, so it's not surprising that they are extremely popular, especially with those involved in desktop publishing and graphics.

Scanned line art images and photographs can make an enormous difference to your documents, whether you're including photographs and clip art in your monthly newsletter, adding a signature to a mailshot or placing a simple logo on your letterhead.

To date, the best hand-held scanner for the ST has undoubtedly been the Naksha model, introduced late last year. The combination of a steady scanner head and the marvellous Touchup software made it far and away the best buy, but Ladbroke Computing have just launched a new all-in-one kit with the recent firmly on flexibility and value for money.

Compo have also added another product aimed at existing hand held scanner owners - a tray that steadies the scanner head, noticeably improving image quality, and lets hand scanner users scan full A4 sized pages in two easily joined strips.

POPULAR

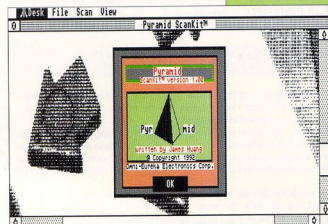
Ladbroke Computing previously offered the Golden Image scanner but the popularity of the budget multipurpose art package, Silhouette, has led them to put together a completely new bundle.

It consists of a Pyramid hand-held scanner, two separate scanner drivers and a revised version of Silhouette itself, v1.4. As Silhouette alone sells for £60, this is one scanner package that really offers good value.

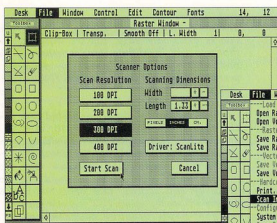
The hardware comprises a Pyramid 105mm scanner head that looks similar to the Marstek one used by many companies like Power Computing and Evesham.

On the left-hand side are the four mode switches from which you can select line art/text mode or three dither patterns of varying coarseness. The on/off button is on the left hand side too.

On the right is the brightness wheel for altering the output intensity and



The Pyramid ScanKit - basic but it works

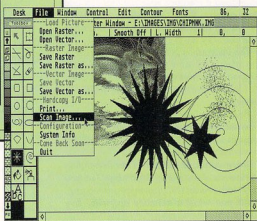


compensating for images that are too dark or too pale. There is also a resolution switch that gives four resolutions - 100, 200, 300 and 400 dots per inch.

The upper surface has a small red light that warns when you're moving the head too quickly but what you can't see is the little bleeper inside that gives the same warning, which is an excellent idea.

The scanner connects to the ST via the cartridge port as usual but this time the method is different. There is a small

Scanning can be carried out from within the program - this is Silhouette's own dialogue that calls the ScanLite accessory

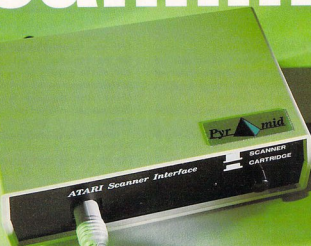


Direct scanning adds to Silhouette's already long list of features

cartridge interface with a very useful through-port that leads directly to a switch box.

This means that other cartridge applications such as programming modules, dongles and Midi interfaces can be left

Scanning



attached while scanning, saving wear and tear on the port and irritation on the part of the user. The scanner head and power supply connect straight into the switch box.

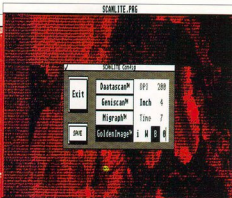
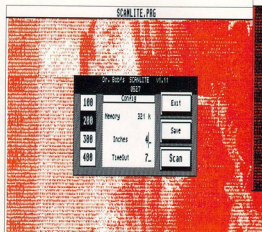
This isn't the most aesthetically pleasing thing I've ever seen and it will never be seen as an *objet d'art* but let's face it, most desks are a fine old mess anyway.

Mine certainly is – a neat desk is the sign of a disorganised mind, as they say. The scanner is also compatible with Migraph's Touchup (1.8 onwards) and another scanner software.

SMOOTH

Where the scanner head really stands out is the smooth rolling action. Turning it upside-down reveals just why – where most scanner heads have a wide roller near the sensors and a small wheel at the back to balance it, the Ladbroke scanner has two wide rollers, one at the front and one at the back.

The end result is a stable scanner head that rolls from side to side much less than its competitors and which runs smoothly over the page without jerking



ScanLite supports many ST hand scanners

and creating those irritating lines in scanned photographs.

The software includes three components: The ScanLite accessory which can scan from inside applications; a basic standalone driver program called ScanKit; and Silhouette.

ScanLite comes on a single disk and the documentation is short, sweet and to the point. Actually it consists of a piece of A5 cardboard that covers the disk

ScanLite's main dialogue – note the image is displayed in red in medium resolution

with another A5 sheet with some additional notes. It's so easy to use, however, that further detail would be superfluous.

ScanLite works in any ST resolution, including lo-res and big screen modes. It works with any memory configuration though 1Mb or more is recommended for larger images.

The program's interface is a small, utilitarian dialogue box from which the scanner settings can be configured (in common with most scanner drivers, though, the settings have to match those on the hardware itself).

The program displays the amount of free RAM and other settings like the length of the scan (in inches), the time-out period (after which control passes back to the program) and the type of scanner attached.

ScanLite supports the Daatascan, Geniscan, Migraph and Golden Image scanners, according to the dialogue, though the Pyramid worked fine on the latter setting.

BARE BONES

Images can be saved in compressed or uncompressed IMG format and there are settings to vary the colour plane used (for colour systems) and the colour of the scan background.

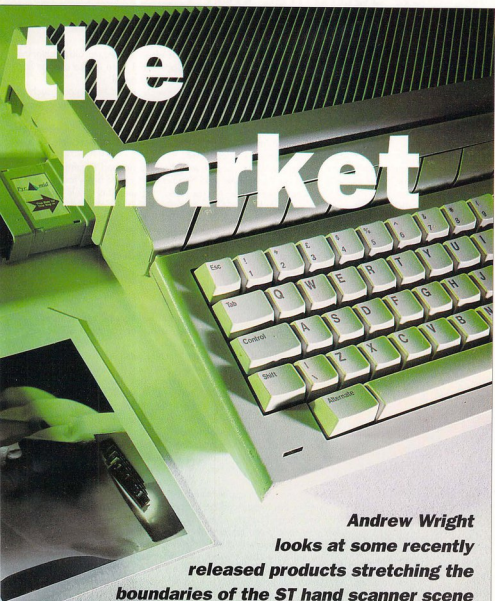
ScanLite is a bare bones program or accessory that does a very good job. There's very little else to say about it except that it works and it only takes up around 20k of memory when installed.

It needs more when it's being used, of course, but with such a small overhead, you can afford to keep it continually installed. There's a small utility supplied that lets you set up a scan buffer (minimum 64k) but the default option (no permanent buffer) is probably best.

ScanKit is a second driver program that is supplied with the scanner itself. It is a lot less useful than ScanLite – though it functions exactly the way it was intended – and has very few features apart from scanning and saving images in IMG format and viewing them in either full or actual size view.

The third part of the software package is Silhouette v1.4. It is a mono-only graphics program that requires at least

Andrew Wright
looks at some recently
released products stretching the
boundaries of the ST hand scanner scene





The same image scanned at 300 dots per inch using the scanner's three dither settings, fine, medium and coarse

1Mb of RAM and will handle both bitmap and vector graphics, though not at the same time.

It can also vectorise the more simple bitmap images and turn them into vector graphics which can be resized or manipulated without losing any detail or distortion.

Font handling is excellent – it

supports SpeedoGDOS outline fonts – and although it does have some weaknesses, notably the lack of zoom modes in bitmap mode and poor block handling, it makes a very good all-round graphics package.

Version 1.4 isn't much different from versions reviewed in these pages before but it does fully support the ScanLite accessory which means you

can quickly and easily scan clip art or greyscale images without leaving the program.

The only problem I found was that on 1Mb machines, it kept asking me to remove accessories. While it would still run and even scan, it quickly ran out of memory on larger images so if you're serious about needing direct scanning, bank on at least 2Mb.

Migraph scanning tray

Compo's scanner tray is aimed at hand-held scanner owners who want to get that little bit more out of scanning. The limitations of hand holds are fairly obvious – they tend to wobble when they are dragged across the photograph or page and they can only scan images around 4in wide.

They don't support true greyscales or colour either, but this can be fairly academic for most ST owners limited to publishing or printing in mono.

The scan tray is designed to make hand scanning much more accurate and it consists of a large white plastic tray with a separate cradle for the scanner head which moves on rails on either side of the tray itself.

The scanner head can only move in one direction, the direction that you want to scan, and not from side to side, thus eliminating the annoying lines that invariably mean you have to scan the image again.

As a result, images (particularly photographs) are much improved and the whole process is quicker, having to be repeated for less often.

The tray itself is some 54cm long and 30cm wide so you're unlikely to want to make a permanent home on your desk for it. It is very sturdy and has rubber feet to protect polished surfaces.

Both the tray and the cradle are made of hard, attractive white plastic and there is a depression running along the centre of the tray that is 218mm wide. This corresponds to one of the standard US page sizes but

it takes A4 sheets without any difficulty, provided you line up the left-hand edge carefully.

A sheet of square gridded paper is also supplied, to aid positioning photographs and smaller sheets of paper, and there is also a large flap of clear plastic sheeting to cover the source material.

This serves a dual purpose – it protects valuable originals such as photos and provides a smooth surface for the scanner to roll over, again improving scan quality.

The cradle is designed to take several different scanner heads including the Golden Image, Marstek 105/108, all Logitech models, Genius DFI and, of course, Migraph's own.

I had no problems using it with the Naksha and Pyramid scanners either and, as the Marstek 105 head is used as the basis for the Power Scanner and the Evesham Micros Handy Scanner, this should cover most models available for the ST.

The software supplied with the tray is of good quality too – Scan & Save is a fairly basic but useful scanner driver that works either as a standalone program or as a desk accessory while Merge! is a clever little program to join together two images to make an A4 page.

STRAIGHTFORWARD

Scan & Save is supplied on a single disk with a manual on the disk itself. It is a straightforward program that can be renamed with an *ACC extender for use as an accessory or run as a normal GEM program by double-clicking on the icon.

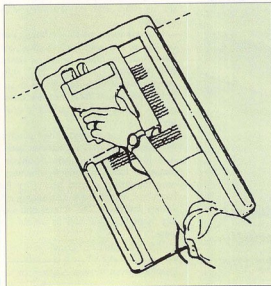
It is very similar to Migraph's Touchup program except it has only the scanner functions and no editing or image processing features.

Scan & Save is a GEM program with drop-down menus and a toolbox on the left-hand side of the screen. Images are scanned and appear in the main window from where they can be saved as mono IMG or IFF files or converted to various greyscale formats including 32 level TIFF, 16 level IFF or extended IMG format (Hyperpaint style).

There is also an option to create 31 apparent greys by converting each 6 by 6 pixel grid into a 2 by 2 pixel grid. Obviously the greyscales end up much smaller than the mono originals but at least you can use software such as Retouche to alter them and increase or decrease the brightness or contrast.

Parts of the image can be clipped and saved separately and there are two magnifications – normal and full size. Another useful feature lets you specify the amount of memory the program can use, thus avoiding conflicts with other programs.

The software should work with most scanners such as the Golden Image, Migraph and Genius scanners normally supported by Migraph. It worked with the Ladbroke Pyramid scanner reviewed earlier but not



Line art scanned from the manual, showing the tray in action

Earlier this year I recommended the Naksha hand scanner as the best buy hand scanner for ST users. The excellent scanner head and superb Touchup software were unbeatable – at least they were until now.

NEW GROUND

The Ladbroke package breaks new ground as far as the ST market is concerned. For just under £120, you get a good quality scanner head with great stability – a real smooth operator – plus some excellent scanning software that runs from within other packages.

You get a through-port for connecting other cartridges simultaneously and to cap it all you get the latest version of a useful graphics package that can do everything from edit Bezier curves to vectorise bitmap images. If that isn't good value, I don't know what is...

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Good scanner and supporting software.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

Low on documentation apart from Silhouette but very straightforward to get up and running

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

The best buy in hand scanners, full stop.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

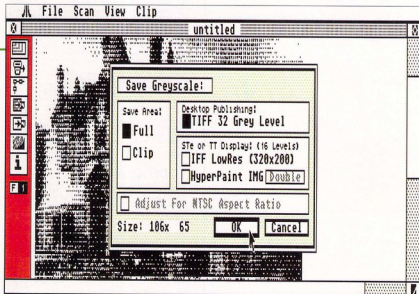
Product: Ladbroke Hand Scanner

Supplier: Ladbroke Computing,
33, Ormskirk Road,
Preston, PR1 2QP

Telephone: 0778 803118

Price: £119.00

Configuration: Any ST/STE with 1 MB and mono monitor for Silhouette.



the Naksha. The other half of the software is Merge-It. This too comes on a single disk but there is also a 16-page printed manual. It is a simple GEM program with the standard Migraph toolbox on the left of the screen and a GEM window for viewing the image. There are no drop-down menus, however.

Merge-It lets you load two images at once, first the left-hand one and then the right-hand one, and then fit them together by moving them pixel by pixel until a perfect fit is obtained.

Clearly it will only work properly with something like the scanner tray as normal "free" hand scanning wouldn't have the accuracy but it makes light work of scanning A4 images and text, making it perfect for a low-end OCR solution when used with software like Migraph OCR, also available from Campo.

This has to be one of the best add-ons for a long, long time – the tray is extremely good value and the software makes scanning a lot simpler too, particularly the desk accessory version.

Not only can you improve the quality of all your scanned images, both photographs and line art, but you can scan full A4 pages too.

If you're using your scanner regularly and can't afford a flat bed model, it's got to be the next best thing. Together with the Ladbroke scanner, you'll be well equipped for anything.

Saving a scanned image as a greyscale

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Turns an ordinary hand scanner into something ten times better.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

Minimal documentation but all the important stuff is there.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

Beats spending £800 on a flatbed any day. Seriously, though, it's well worth looking at if you're a hand scanner user.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

Product: Migraph Scan Tray

Supplier: Campo Software, 7
Vinegar Hill, Alconbury
Weston, Huntingdon PE17
5JA

Telephone: 0480 4891819

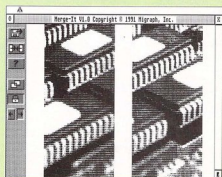
Price: ETBA

Configuration: All ST/STE models, any resolution.

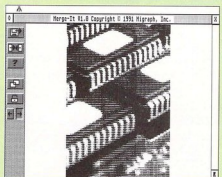
Four steps to merging



Using the arrow keys the two halves are brought together pixel by pixel



The two halves of a scanned image are loaded into Merge-It – this is part of a 8in by 6in photograph of a Mega ST motherboard



This is as close as we can get but there is still some interference as both images are transparent and the scans can never match completely



Turning off the transparent mode makes a big difference. Here the right image is superimposed on the left and the join is only a memory. Saved on disk, we have a scanned 8 by 6 inch image!

If you've been experimenting with the example source code, then you've probably become annoyed by its size – particularly the time it takes to recompile after you make a change.

Well, C is designed to have its source code split into as many different files as you want, so when you change a file you only have to recompile that one file, rather than the entire program. It's easy to do, but – as usual – we'll need a little background first, OK?

We've already come across the idea of variable types in C. What we haven't discussed up until now is the idea of variable scoping.

The scope of a variable refers to the part of the program which can use that variable. Or, to put it another way, if the scope of a variable is limited to a single function then only that one function can "see" that variable.

You've probably already come across this idea – it's the difference between "local" and "global" variables. A global variable can be "seen" – used – by any function because it's declared outside any function.

If a variable is declared inside a function then it is a local variable, and can only be "seen" inside that function. As far as other functions are concerned, that variable just doesn't exist.

The scope of a local variable is limited to the function it was declared in, but the scope of a global variable extends to the entire program.

In C, a local variable is just a special case of something called an "automatic" variable. An automatic is declared immediately after you open a set of braces – curly brackets – and its scope lasts until you close that set of braces.

In the case of a function, the variables you declare at its start – including its arguments, even though they are declared outside the opening brace have a scope which lasts until the closing brace which marks the end of the function. In other words, those variables are local to the function.

No doubt you've already noticed that these automatic variables can be used to limit a variable's scope to a single block of statements. For example, consider the scope of our faithful old variables, `(int)foo` and `(int)bar`, in this small program:

```
main() { int foo; int bar = 17;
      for ( foo = 5; foo < 23; foo++ )
      { int bar = foo + 17;   printf (
        "%d\n", bar );    };
      printf ( "%d\n", bar ); };
```

What's the significance of local and global variables, and how can they be used in your C programs?
Roy Stead has some answers



speeding up your final program. You see, whenever you call a function from within another one, the values of all the currently declared automatic variables have to be stored – in a place called the stack – so that they can be restored to their former values when you return back into the calling function.

The fewer automatics there are, the less there is to store. The less there is to store, the less time the program will take. And one way of cutting down on the number of "active" automatics is to limit the scope of any variables which are only used in a very small part of the function.

Speaking of speed, there is another thing you can do to speed up your program, and that's take advantage of the microchip itself.

You see, when you use a variable your central processor unit – CPU – has to look up where in memory that variable is stored, and obtain or change the value at that address.

Things would happen more quickly if the CPU already knew the value of the variable, something it could only do if the variable was stored within the microchip itself – rather than on a separate (memory) chip.

Now, every CPU has its own internal registers, which can store numbers, and we can take advantage of this fact by telling the compiler to store our variable's value in a register, if one's not being used. And we do this by placing

Home and away

In this example, there are three ints declared. As well as the `foo` and `bar` declared at the top of the function, there is another int – which also happens to be called `bar` – declared, whose scope is limited to the block in which it is declared.

Since the most recently declared version is used for preference, this little program will print out the numbers 22 to 39, but once the block is left then the `bar` inside the block ceases to exist, and the function can "see" the original `bar` again. So the final number displayed is 17.

Note, however, that it is very bad programming style to use the same name for variables whose scopes overlap – as I have done in the example – because it can be awkward to keep track, when you are debugging, of which version of the variable is being used in which block of code.

The major use of automatics is in

the word "register" in front of the variable's declaration, like so:

```
register int foo;
```

`foo` must be an automatic variable, and it acts exactly like any other int, but the final program will execute faster. Of course, there are a limited number of registers on the chip, so it's a good idea to declare your register variables in order of importance – declaring the most frequently accessed variables first in the list – to get the most benefit from this technique. A popular choice for this kind of optimisation is to declare pointer variables to be register class variables.

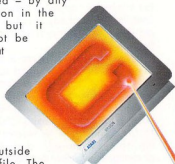
Now that we've covered a little background, I think we can talk about splitting our program into different files.

A variable can be visible to the entire



program, to a single function or to a single statement block within a function. One level we have missed out is a single file.

Yes, a variable can be visible to just a single file. Such a variable will behave just like a "global" variable, in that it can be "seen" - its value used or altered - by any function in the file, but it cannot be seen at



all outside that file. The way to declare such a variable is to put "static" in front of its declaration - in the same place as we put "register" earlier.

Statics are usually - though not necessarily - declared outside of any functions. For an example of a static array, take a look at the [int]drrn_ary[] array in the DO_MOVE.C file on the CoverDisk.

Of course, we'll also need to declare some variables which are visible to our entire program, known as "extern" variables. The way we do this is simply to declare our variable in the usual manner, but we declare it outside of any functions, as we have done with [int]end_othello in the MAIN.C file.

Now, consider this: We have a variable declared to be an extern [int]foo in FILE1.C, which is used in FILE1.C and FILE2.C. We need some way of telling FILE2.C that this [int]foo we want it to use has been declared in a separate file. Our course is clear. Since [int]foo is like a parameter to be passed to the second file then we put a line at the top of FILE2.C which says:

```
extern int foo;
```

This will tell FILE2.C not to panic, because [int]foo really does exist. [int]foo is not quite a parameter, of course, because if we change its value in FILE2.C then the value will also be changed so far as FILE1.C is concerned...

All of which brings us to The Fancy Bit. A function is a variable. You can take the address of a function, point to

it and pass it around - we'll be discussing how to do this (and why you might want to) later in the series, but for now...well, you've guessed again, haven't you? Yes, that's right - since a function is a variable, then a function has a scope as well.

Of course, a function can't be an automatic variable. But it can be - and is - either a static or an extern. If it's an extern, then you will have to declare it in any other files which use it, just like you have to declare a function when you use it within another function.

So if you have a function foobar(), which returns a pointer to a char, defined in FILE2.C and you want to be able to call it from FILE1.C then you should put, at the head of FILE1.C:

```
extern char *foobar();
```

It's also a good idea to precede all "globally visible" function definitions with "extern", as well as putting "static" in front of those used only within the file, so that it is obvious when debugging what the scope of any particular function is. This is done in all of the files on the CoverDisk.

And that's about it as far as variable scoping is concerned. Except for the fly in the ointment, of course.

This time, just for a change, the fly has nothing to do with C as such, but has to do with HiSoft C, which, unfortunately, handles functions in a very peculiar manner.

The practical upshot is that you must not precede any function names with either "extern" or "static" when using that package, and must never declare extern functions at the head of modules for use with that package.

When splitting programs into files, it is traditional - and convenient - to place all #define statements, typedefs and struct definitions which are used by more than one file together into a single file, called a header file.

You then put a line at the head of each file which will include all of this code at the head of your source code file before it is compiled, and so allow you to use of some standard definitions in all of your files.

The way you include the file FOOBAR.H [it's traditional to use a ".H" file extender on header files - it helps keep track of which files are which] is with:

```
#include "foobar.h"
```

Notice the quote marks around the name of the header file. This tells the compiler that the first place to look for this header file is the current folder - or

"directory". Had I used "angle brackets", as in this line:

```
#include <stdio.h>
```

then the first place searched would be a directory specially set up by your compiler to hold system header files, which contain all of the macros and definitions used by various C library functions, like printf() and malloc().

The ways of re-combining your files into a single final program vary from compiler to compiler, but one common method is to use a "make" program. There are lots of these in the public domain, and a makefile is provided on the CoverDisk to help you to combine that source code using a "make" program.

One final word, about the ternary conditional operator - you have already seen this in the source code. It's a shorthand way of writing "if[...]else...". Its syntax goes like this:

```
(condition) ? (do_me_if_condition_is_TRUE) : (do_me_if_FALSE);
```

which is exactly the same as writing:

```
if ( condition )
do_me_if_condition_is_TRUE; else
do_me_if_FALSE;
```

The ternary conditional is most useful in passing arguments, such as in the printf() call in function lookahead(), or defining a macro to take arguments. There're examples of the latter in the source code, and we'll look at this more closely in a future article.

● Next month, we will start to convert Othello into a mouse-using program by taking our first look at GEM.

Getting to grips with C

Did you miss out on a free copy of HiSoft C, given away with the April issue of *Atari ST User*?

Or maybe you missed one or more parts of this guide to programming in C?

If so you can still get hold of back issues by telephoning your credit card details to 051-357 1275.

Alternatively, send £3.50 for each issue required. Cheques/Eurocheques should be made payable to Europress Direct and sent to Freepost, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 3EB.

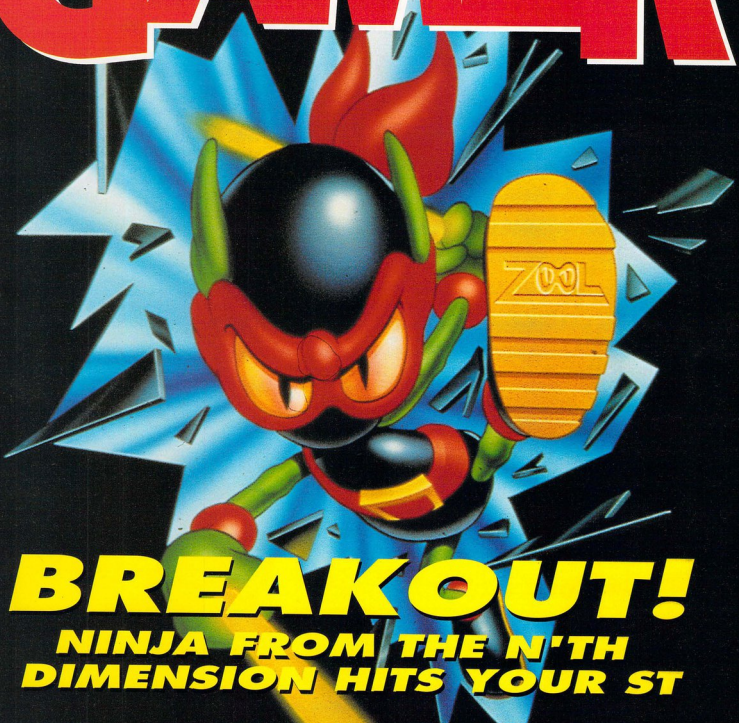
Please state clearly which issue/s you require.

Turn to page 92
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offers

Swing ya pants, it's

OCTOBER 1993

GAMER



BREAKOUT!

**NINJA FROM THE N'TH
DIMENSION HITS YOUR ST**

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Gamer GLOBE

Oh yes, it's cheery, it's cheesy, it's chewy not chalky, it's the latest news from the world of ST games. Enjoy!

A rippin' tale

Ezra Sidran, the programming genius behind the hugely successful Universal Military Simulator (UMS) and UMS 2 has, after nearly four years of development, just announced the launch of his latest epic, *Jack the Ripper*.

Jack the Ripper is a heavyweight murder mystery game that simulates the events that took place in the Whitechapel and Spitalfield boroughs of London in 1888.

Like all Sidran games, *Jack the Ripper* is heaped with accurate information based on years of research. Every known fact, person, object and detail that has been uncovered in the 105 years since the commission of these heinous crimes have been included in the game.

Skilled pen and ink artists have been commissioned to draw reconstructions of the infamous locations and to create portraits of the unfortunate residents

MIRAGE

who lived there. Whenever possible the artists have worked from actual photographs, maps, blueprints and contemporary descriptions.

Because the Whitechapel Murders were never solved, a number of important clues have been planted in the game so that a conclusion can now be reached. This also means that every time you run the program you may well discover a different solution to the murders.

Jack the Ripper is full of hard evidence and solid clues; there are no contrived puzzles or riddles. You'll need all your logic and skills of detection to pick up on vital leads when searching the different locations, interrogating suspects and reading up on the latest reports in the daily newspaper.

The game utilises the easy-to-use Graphical User Interface (GUI) which comprises of movable windows, scroll bars, drop down menus and a point-and-click cursor controlled by a mouse.

Jack the Ripper will be available later this year and will be distributed in Europe through Mirage Technologies Ltd.

Competition!

Just on a whim this month we've decided to run an infamous *Gamer* competition. It's a fantastic caption compo and if you are clever and lucky enough to win you can have a couple of smart games from our overflowing cupboard.

All you have to do is put a caption to the picture of the world's sexiest staff writers.

Actually, on this particular photograph they seem to have gone missing and left Jonathan and Simon in their place.

But send your entries anyway to "Gamer! God damn, I lurve it to bits caption compo" at the usual address.



Zool's Gold

It's not arrived for the ST yet, but here's some interesting news about everyone's favourite Ninja from the Nth Dimension. The pyjama-clad platform hero has gone gold. European sales of *Zool* are now in excess of 180,000 units across the Amiga, PC and Archimedes. Now that there is a ST version coming out you can fully expect those sale figures to go on rising.

Gremlin are also publishing the game across all leading consoles including Nintendo, SNES, Gameboy, Mega Drive, Master System and Game Gear. Yes, I know that last snippet won't interest ST owners, but at least you can brag to your console-owning chums that you had the game first.

Worldwide sales for the nifty ninja by the end of the year are now conservatively expected to top the one million mark. *Zool* will also be appearing on your TV screens as Gremlin introduce their first ever major pan-European TV advertising campaign as part of their comprehensive launch activities.

In the meantime PSL, Gremlin's exclusive licensing and merchandising agents, are soon to announce a whole range of new licensees. You can expect your shops to be packed with merchandise from toys to T-shirts. The first product is expected to be ready to support the launch of the coin-op from Bell Fruit in September.

ALTERNATIVE



SOFTWARE

I hate those meeces to pieces!

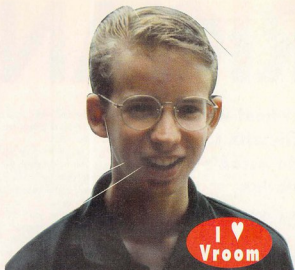
Everybody's cartoon favourites *Huckleberry Hound* and *Pixie and Dixie* are about to star for the first time in their very own home computer games. UK Publisher, Alternative Software – already famous for their wide range of children's programs and arcade favourites such as *Dalek Attack* – have released two games featuring the famous Hanna Barbera characters at a low price of £9.99.

Huckleberry Hound (Oh my darlin') takes centre stage in *Hollywood Capers* – a colourful and highly entertaining platform game, while *Mr Jinx* still hates those meeces to pieces in *Pixie and Dixie* – the computer game.

Hollywood Capers features five worlds, extra bonus levels and includes a bouncy cartoon-style soundtrack while *Pixie and Dixie* includes favourite ingredients such as hidden rooms, sub games and pick ups.

Both games are specially designed for the increasingly important four to ten-year-old age range (ideal for *Gamer* staff then – ed) and you can expect a review very soon.

Hanna Barbera is a brand new addition to The Children's Range. The range consists of a number of low-cost home computer games designed especially for the fast growing four to ten-year-old games-playing market. It will also be one of the first to be presented in a new A5 slim dummy box, a style that offers increased protection and attractive display.



Techie alert!

You may have noticed another writer's name appearing at the bottom of reviews over the last couple of months. Dave "Techmeister" Cusick is back and this time he's brought his RAM boards with him.

Our one-time work experience lad has turned into a summer work geezer and is churning out pages and pages for your entertainment. The techie one has a strange fondness for the office Maxpax tea and the music of Weird Al Yankovic [who?], They Might Be Giants [excuse me?] and more recently the Lemonheads [huzzah, he's got it right at last!].

The boy is utterly devoted to the ST and would rather spend a weekend fiddling around with its innards than have a randy night out with a foxy babe!

Try not to get used to Dave Cusick's scribbblings though, because by the time you read this he'll have wandered his merry way back to whatever he does!

To be honest we don't know exactly what he does because we try to keep away from him and his infectious techie "awww"s.

Satan takes over at Virgin!

Virgin Games is to change its name to Virgin Interactive Entertainment. Not only does this make their name longer, but the abbreviated form is VIEL which when you re-arrange the letters spells EVIL. Is Mr Branson starting off his very own Satanic cult? I think we should be told.

Virgin Interactive Entertainment's chairman Robert Devereux explains all: "This reflects the coming of age of our games business and our belief that the game industry will be at the fulcrum of the multimedia revolution. We intend to leverage the skills and assets we have developed as a games company into a much broader and larger entertainment business."

In addition, Martin Alper, president of Virgin Games Inc, announced the appointment of Tom Allen, previously chief financial officer of Fox Broadcasting Inc, as chief operating officer of Virgin Games Inc. Allen will also join the board of Virgin Interactive Entertainment, the holding company for Virgin Games' worldwide interests, as executive vice-president and chief financial officer.

Allen had this to say on his new appointment: "I am looking forward to becoming part of a wonderful entrepreneurial team at Virgin and hope to make immediate contributions towards their expansion plans.

"Virgin's international presence in the interactive games business clearly gives them an advantage and diversity in an increasingly competitive marketplace."

Err yes, thanks Tom.



INNARDS

When you go down Pigeon Street, here are some of the games you might meet...

REVIEWS-REVIEWS-REVIEWS

PATRICIAN.....68

New guy Adam checks out Daze Marketing's latest release, a trading game. Cor, the excitement is building!

NICKY 2.....70

The original was an enjoyable platform romp and now Nicky returns in this sequel. This time he's brought along his goose!

REGULARS-REGULARS-REGULARS

DRAWING BOARD 1: BART VS THE WORLD71

The yellow skinned one is back to infect your screens in Virgin's forthcoming platform extravaganza!

DRAWING BOARD 2: ZOO72

Oh yes hold onto your pants because it is almost here. It's fab. It's cool. It's great. It's [yes, that's enough thank you -Ed]

CHEAP SEATS74

Simon, Gamer's very own budget expert, casts his eyes over this month's selection of bargains that won't break the bank

BLAST FROM THE PAST77

Dave takes a long squint at days gone by, sighs a bit and reviews two damn fine pieces of software from yesteryear

CHEAT MODE: ISHAR 278

The first part of our complete solution to Ishar 2 for your perusal and enjoyment.

CHEAT MODE: LEMMINGS 280

Via the cheating talents of Harry Maton, we bring you a comprehensive guide to the Egyptian and Medieval levels.



THE PATRICIAN

Greed is good... money, buying, selling, bribery, social standing, marrying into the right family, treachery and blackmail while trying to avoid bad publicity...

It's a little depressing to think that we haven't changed that much from society in the 14th Century if the historically accurate dealings in *The Patrician* are anything to go by.

The game centres on the Hanseatic League, a co-operative born out of economic, socio-political and cultural upheavals to protect merchants and their goods from outside interruption.

To the layman, after ploughing through a 120-page manual, it's a bit like a medieval common market stretching from London in the west to Novgorod in the east, down to Germany and up to Sweden in the north.

Anyone in business will tell you with a touch of pride in their voice that "starting off my new company is right tough lad, and you gotta purra a lotta 'ard graft in tut make ends meet." Never a truer word could have been said about this game.

You and up to three other people play lowly merchants with just a boat and a little money to your names.

PARTY TIME

Your main goal in life is to build up a successful and profitable international trading empire while beating off the competition in the most politically correct way.

Having done this epic task, it's onto high-flying parties and kissing baby competitions as you try to become mayor of your home town and eventually onto the mother of all elections, Alderman of the entire league (that's Mr President to you).

This can be achieved by any means possible as long as you keep your darker dealings well and truly locked up with the other skeletons in the closet or else the tide of public opinion will turn so viciously against you that you'll start to feel like a Tory MP.

The basic structure of the simulation is played through a series of screen stills representing the various locations that are visited. By clicking on certain points within the picture, you select a particular option.

For example, the town square scene contains the church, bath house, scribe's

Sail the high seas, wheel and deal and share a bath with two consenting adults in Ascon's historical simulation



Ahh, for the sunny shores of Bournemouth

office, a cart and two sets of crowds. Click on the left-hand crowd and you're asked if you want to throw a feast for the town folk to improve your popularity (if you underfeed them, they aren't going to vote for you in a hurry).

If you click on the right-hand crowd, they'll tell you point blank how popular you are and in my case, I was politically a nobody but perseverance pays off eventually.

The game begins properly after your coat of arms and home town have been selected. The boatyard is the first port of call where your one boat fleet sits in the dock waiting to be renamed.

Simply type in the new name and you're ready to move into the high-flying world of making money. The next move is to check out your plush new office (just up from the local

armoury and town hall) where you'll be presented with a picture of a desk, two books and a map on the wall.

Clicking on the smaller of the two books will bring up your current status, that is the amount of money owned or the lack of it, and in the larger book, a list of the commodities to buy and sell in the town.

On closer inspection, you'll notice with horror the expense of these goods, realise how closely art imitates life and rush off to the "money lender" to borrow, borrow, borrow...

After agreeing to pay Treve the carpenter back his 250 thalers with an interest rate of 45 per cent over the next year, it's time to put on your cap and alskins (or the 14th Century equivalent), buy some goods, press gang a crew from the local pub, click on the map where you want to go and take to the seas, signing an old shanty or two.

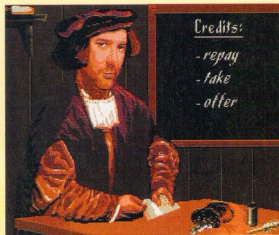
From there, you're presented with a diary scroll which tells you the date your boat left the port and to which town it is heading. Other than you, there are other competitors out on the rolling seas whose dealings are shown as well.

Throughout the sim, you'll see them doing incredibly well; buying new boats, becoming mayors and so on. A real feeling of contempt built up as I seemed to be stuck in a constant state of recession. On your travels, you'll

length: 16 m	43 burden
width: 8,5 m	speed: a hogge kn
crew: 8 men	price: 12611

If you can buy one of these, you're doing all right

Would you buy a second-hand wife from this man?

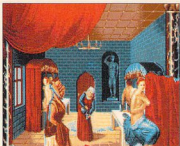


Take the money and run...

ware	oun	ship	price
pepper	8	8	759
turs	8	8	492
fish oil	176	8	38
pig iron	451	8	36
wool	856	8	47
salt	8	15	37
leather	8	8	98
hemp	8	8	29
pitch	69	8	62
sell	13	Max:	15

The bible of business

The bath house where all the big-wigs hang out. Try sharing a bath with one of them...



The corridors of power... you have to be elected to enter all three doors...



1043 That would be good

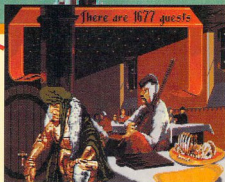
...and slip him a bribe for a lift up the political ladder

Ye Olde Eastenders



The hub of a gossiping community

Organise a knees up but expect plenty of gatecrashers



There are 1677 guests



In the church where all your sins can be forgiven... for a price

Click here for the 14th century's equivalent of Dot Cotton

attend auctions, bribe officials at the local baths, marry someone, throw feasts, create a convoy of ships to make attacks from the more shady characters of the sea harder, join guilds, have dealings with pirates, trade in illegal arms, help the poor, give money to rebuild a burned-down town or give aid to plague sufferers – all in the name of political gain.

It can be quite addictive play, amassing money to buy more and more ships to add to your fleet, but it's very common for your strategies to fall flat on their faces so you've got to be patient.

Sometimes I found myself losing money by people just borrowing from me without asking at very low interest rates, or having to cough up for a huge bill to repair my sea-torn ship.

Consequently, it'll be a while before you scratch the surface of the political side to the game, because of the constant struggle to pull some money together just to keep your company afloat.

If this sounds appealing then you'll probably enjoy the challenge and with more

time, it is possible to learn the basic needs of each town (there's an option to print out each town's list of goods and prices) and have a more successful attempt at making it into the big league.

As with most titles of this genre, The Patrician follows a very set path – go to town, buy goods, sail to other town, sell goods and so on, and even though it does offer different and spontaneous events, I did question how long it would take for the thrill of making money and gaining political respect to wear thin.

The other problem is the graphics; it's a real shame that they are all static (apart from an arcade sequence where you beat seven shades of bodily wastage out of pirates). Some kind of sprite movement would at least offer variety.

Each town is rendered in exactly the same layout with slightly differing backgrounds and this just adds to the feeling of the entire game being samy.

A music soundtrack runs throughout and I

recommend that you turn the volume right down and put your favourite classical CD/cassette on to fill the aural gap because the "tune" provided is just a tiny bit grating on the ear lobes after ten minutes let alone a couple of hours...

Overall, you can't help thinking that if as much attention had been given to the gameplay as has been paid to the historical accuracy of the package, The Patrician could have been excellent.

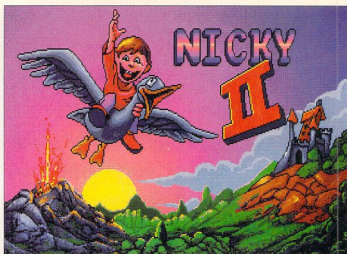
As it stands, the title offers a solid but slightly repetitive challenge. If you're a patient person who doesn't expect instant results and enjoys trading games, this will suit your tastes ideally but for me, me laddie, it just didn't quite "shiver ma timbers".

ADAM PHILLIPS

VISION	GGGGGGG
AUDIO	GGGGGGG
DIFICULTY	GGGGGGG
LASTABILITY	GGGGGGG
Had it been more dynamic and offered more variety. The Patrician could have been a classic. As it stands though, it does offer solid gameplay but requires a good deal of patience.	75%
Publisher > Daze Marketing Developer > Ascon Disks > 3 Price > \$32.99 HD Install > Yes Size > 1 meg	



Grab hold of goosey goosey gander to reach higher plains.
Nicky mounts up in a classic birds and bees scandal



Guide Nicky through the caves while keeping an eye out for hidden back passages. Ooh! the "bear" cheek of it

Oh no, it's another romp into platform world. Why, why, why can't software houses come up with something new as a recipe for a title? How many times have you idled through your local software store in search of something new to titillate your frustrated brain cells?

Then, after 30 minutes of agonising shelf-searching, how many times have you left your games haven, the only thing in your hands being your shattered head?

Let's not let any confusion arise about matters. There have over the years been some classic platformers which have been landmarks in our floggy lifetimes. But it's still a little like having steak every day for dinner. The first time you think "this is brilliant", a week and you're feeling samey and maybe slightly critical about your slaughtered carcass. A month later you've returned vegetarian and never want to see another piece of bland beef in your entire existence.

So, when a purple platformy-type cardboard box emblazoned in French turns up in the office, it's tired eyes that glance over another level's frolics.

Anyway, I don't know if any of you out there remember the first foray into the trials and tribulations of Nicky - if not, I shall enlighten you.

Back in February this year came the first chapter in the young Parisian's adventures, in which the onion-breathed mite fought against the powers of a nasty witch to save his beleaguered grandad.

Well, after all the effort remedying that situation, it seems that all is still not well in the forest. It appears that the evil witch has a sister up to no good in the wood. The cruel heartless hag is using her dark powers to cause mayhem.

Evil monsters roam around the fairy glen terrifying the inhabitants, roads and paths are cut off by forcefields and ladders through the undergrowth have been blocked.

To make matters worse, someone has scattered Nicky's toys all over the place. The basic plot is to overcome all the obstacles, rid the enchanted forest of the nasties and defeat the bitch witch. Hmm, nothing new there, in fact this plot's more cheesy than a kilo of Brie on a sunny day.

Fortunately Nicky, or to call him by his full name Nicky Boom, is aided in his quest by a magic goose who giggles by from time to time. Nicky's adventuring is spread around

NICKY 2

Bonjour, tout le monde. After some time away, the onion wielding, garlic-powered French super 'ero returns in another platform romp. But, is it the frog's legs or what?

four different graphical worlds. These alter between forest, jungle, volcano and cloud levels.

Lurking within these rather large lands are plenty of tasks for petit Nicky to accomplish. For one, there are a host of nasties to contend with.

These change from level to level, but don't be surprised if you are attacked by an enraged mushroom, swarmed on by psychopathic bees or overcome by marauding slugs and leeches.

The puzzle element for our garlic-coated garcon arises when he must find the vast number of secret passages and ladders which are littered around the lands.

Revealing ladders is accomplished by making the froggy one jump and smash his bounce into different areas of the landscape. Secret passages can be revealed by shooting balls from Nicky's Chanel-slinger fingers at

various pieces of wall.

Also sewn delicately into the plot are such items as magic mirrors and logs which all have an effect on our EEC-sized person. However, perhaps Nicky's greatest ally is the goose. This Euro-fowl comes in extremely handy for negotiating Nicky through levels quickly. The only problem is that it is somewhat temperamental.

It has to be said that Nicky 2 comes pretty much into the cutesy platform genre. This I find immediately distressing especially as for some reason I find that I actually quite like the game.

I have to confess that there's something extremely bizarre and silly that appealed to me about guiding a French kid around on a flying goose.

However, the graphics are nothing to write home about, in fact all of the animation really is rather bog standard, and the

scrolling is fairly appalling. The sound is average, although there are a few quite neat sampled "yippee"s littered throughout.

It has to be said that our friend from the other side of the Channel really is nothing new at all. It's a recipe that has been mixed up and cooked with far superior results than Nicky 2 many times before.

Really, this one's only going to appeal to absolute platform freaks. All you others are going to give old Nicky a gentle shove off the Eiffel Tower while exclaiming "au revoir, you petit minkel!" in a rather Peter Sellers-type Clauseau voice.

SIMON CLAYS

VISION	GGGGGGG●●●●●
AUDIO	GGGGGGG●●●●●
DIFFICULTY	●●●●●●●●●●●●
LASTABILITY	GGGGGGG●●●●●
Listen I shall say this only once. Nicky 2 is nothing fresh to eyes that have gazed upon a million of the same type of olaf. But it does have odd moments, sporadic as they may be. However overall it's a bit of an escargo.	62%
Publisher > Daze Developer > Microids Disks > 1 Price > \$25.99 HD Install > No Size > 1/2 meg	



Nicky has "Stars in his eyes" to become a monster of rock

ON THE Drawingboard

BART VERSUS THE WORLD

Many moons ago in the United States during a series of the Tracy Ullman show, an idea was conceived. That idea spawned the birth of one Bart Simpson.

At first the small yellow person appeared only in cameo, but such was the response from the great American public that soon Bart was beamed network from coast to coast.

When satellite TV launched itself onto the unsuspecting British public, so followed the Bartmans to rapturous applause. An instant hit, Bart soon became the most goggled-at show to bounce off the dishes of the UK.

Riding on the back of his Sky popularity came a hit single and all the trimmings the marketing machine could pump into the bowels of the ordinary punter.

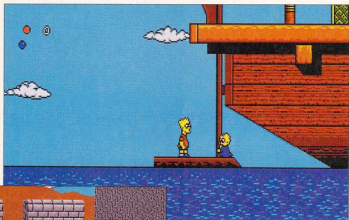
Perhaps most astonishing of all was the release of a computer title which featured the precocious one. In his first foray inside a microchip, we found Bartholomew defending his home town of Springfield against a bunch of particularly nasty space mutants.

Bart versus the Space Mutants, riding on the back of the hype, was an overnight success. So it's no surprise to find that plans are afoot to return the Simpson family to the silver silicon screen.

This time around, Bart and his psychologically abnormal family are going to be enjoying a well-earned rest. According to Virgin, the story will go something like this.

The Simpson tribe are enjoying a world cruise, but unbeknown to them this is going to be no ordinary trip. Fiendish Mr Burns, the well dodgy owner of the local nuclear power plant and Homer's employer, has other

The yellow peril looks set to maraud our monitors once more, this time taking on the world. Simon Clays warms his Cryptonics, checks his trucks and tightens his sealed bearings to give a skateboarding chase to the Bartman



Bart and Maggie clamber aboard a floating restaurant in Hong Kong harbour to savour some junk food

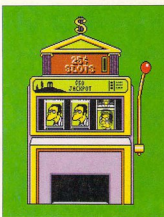
plans. It's his bizarre intention to rid the world of the Simpsons, although I for one wouldn't be too bothered if the cheeky little... (easy boy! - Ed)

Anyway, the nasty Mr Burns in his bid to annihilate the Simpson clan has enlisted the help of some of his nefarious relatives from around the globe.

Which means, folks, what we basically are going to have here is a neat excuse for the 'places around the world platform scenario'. For example, in China Bart will visit The Great Wall of China and a giant junk boat. Here he'll be forced, armed only with his trusty skateboard, to fight off Fu Manchu Burns and his horde of oriental minions.

Also, as Bart skates his way around the earth holidaying his little socks off, he's destined to encounter a whole range of Burns.

It's early days yet but we're reliably informed that Bart will encounter the



It's your last dime and you bet it on old ugly mug here, what a sucker

Abominable Snow Burns in the North Pole and rub bandages with Rameses Burns who haunts The Great Pyramid and the Valley of the Kings.

Meanwhile, waiting on the casting couch in finis town Hollywood, waits Eric von Burns. Before you scream at us that Hollywood's not a country, please remember that these are software licences we're discussing and any cheesy tenuous link will do.

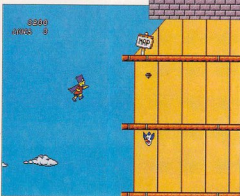
Anyway, on his jaunts Bartman - under the wily control of your good selves - will be asked to pick up cheapo Krusty the Clown memorabilia and rare one-off Krusty licensed product.

You will also be asked to engage yourselves in strange bonus levels, such as sliding puzzles and slot machines and answer tricky trivia-type questions on the Simpsons, like who is the founder father of Bart's home town, Springfield?

Apparently all will be revealed as regards this particular character when the title hits the shelves.

Virgin are billing Bart as more than just a platformer and more than an arcade adventure romp. It's the Simpsons at their very best in a mixture of madcap mayhem and arcade action.

So, if that's your cup of soda and you enjoyed 'havin' a cow' with the Bartman last time out, watch this space for more in the near future.



Skate or die. It's Bart versus Clifford off the Listamint advert

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's an annoying little yellow git!

ON THE Drawingboard



ZOOL

He's an alien! He's a ninja! He's from the Nth Dimension! He's wears girly black pyjamas! Who is he? Jonathan Maddock knows and I think you should too thanks to that massive headline above. Tutt!

OK, before we start this divine preview I want to check your eyesight. Read for me the name of the game on this page. Z...O...O...L. What does that spell? Zool! Apart from having damn fine eyesight, your brain will now cloud your thoughts with sheer and utter disbelief.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, coming to a small screen near you soon is Zool. Zool is an alien from the Nth dimension and also the biggest smallest star you'll see anywhere.

Starting from now your whole life will change and it's all thanks to a one inch high ninja from the Nth dimension. Even as you read this page I can imagine smiles appearing on your faces. OK, it's not like we're solving global problems and disasters, but hey it's a start.

Although Gremlin was considering the

option of leaving the ST in the cold, they seem to have had a re-think and for the time being are going to produce ST software such as Zool.

Zool will be the biggest and most important ST game that you'll will have seen in quite a while. Everybody should have heard about the daring pyjama-wearing alien by now. I can't possibly believe that any of you don't know who he is, so I'll assume you have at least some knowledge of our platform-prancing chum.

POPULARITY

Technically, Zool will push the ST to the absolute limit and Gremlin have been very brave to even think about doing it on the ST. For starters, if it isn't as good as the Amiga version then people are just going to refuse to buy it on the grounds that Gremlin are just using the character's popularity to make

a fair bit of cash. Luckily this is definitely not the case and sir, madam, members of jury I can conclusively prove this with the following evidence (damn, I should stop watching *LA Law* late at night!).

I have a very nearly almost finished version of the game and it is (and you can quote me on this!) gobsmackingly good. Not only does it look great, it also moves very smoothly.

I, for one among many, could not believe it! You will see what I mean when you get a copy of the game. The Gremlin team have really put the effort in to bring the alien ninja to our monitor screens and I ask you stand up wherever you are and applaud them in appreciation.

The ST version is as near as it could get to the Amiga version and as far as the Gamer team can see the only things missing is loss of a certain amount of colours. The ST

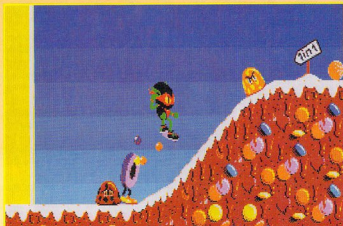
does have one up on the Amiga, though, and that is the cuteness factor.

Several Amiga owners criticised Zool for not being cute enough. Just name me one time when any insect creature has been "cute"! They normally have impen eyes and hairy limbs and buzz about and bite you.

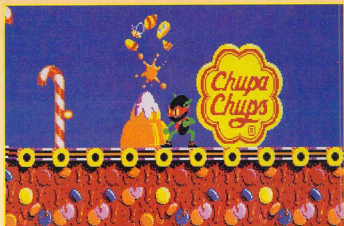
FORTHCOMING

Oh well, you just can't please people these days. Rather than use the allegedly "un-cute" Zool, the programmers and graphic artists decided to re-design him for the forthcoming Amiga sequel, the aptly named Zool 2.

Once he was designed and rejigged the creators thought "what a good idea it would be to incorporate the new Zool into the ST version!". You see, you might get the game about 18 months later than everyone else,



The pyjama clad ninja gets some hassle from one of Bertie Bassett's relatives...



I don't know why, but I just fancy one of those fantastic Chupa Chups lollies



Take note! Here's Zool on the music level and via the use of a rather large trumpet he's about to jump 20ft in the air!

but you do get the benefits of a cuter game sprite!

The graphics in Zool are impressive, especially the background parts from the various levels. There are six worlds of three levels, each with different maps and puzzles to complete.

The worlds are Sweet World, Music World, Tool (it begins with W) World, Fruit (can you guess what comes next?) World, Fun Fair (Yep you got it) World and finally Toy (oh go on surprise me) Warthog, err I mean World.

INSTRUMENTS

Each level is adorned with various elements from that particular world. For example Sweet World features candy and lollipops liberally sprayed all over the place while the whole level is one massive fruit cake. Music World shows you various instruments from trumpets to cymbals to massive amplifiers and keyboards.

The enemies also keep in with the theme of the world. On the music levels you will encounter creatures made entirely of notes while on the sweet levels you'll meet several of Bertie Bassett's relatives.

Such themes are beneficial to potential advertisers and as such on the Sweet World while battling various beasts you will also be distracted by the advertising hoardings for Chupa Chups lollipops.

In addition to the levels already mentioned there is the bonus Shoot-'em-up (sigh) World which consists of four hidden sections. Zool, himself all-round top ninja and good bloke, is wonderfully drawn and

well animated.

The Ninja from the Nth Dimension can perform several moves and will run, jump, punch, kick, spin, shoot and slide, if you so wish him to do so.

Another factor which is a major talking point for ST owners is speed. Of course I don't mean the narcotic, but the actual speed of the game. In the Amiga version Zool prances, dances and leaps all over the place at an alarming turn of pace.

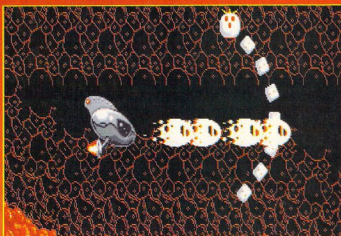
If the game was slow on the ST, then Gremlin would have a dead duck on their hands, but I can happily report that the ST version is as good as the Amiga's. There is a slight bit of slow-down, but don't worry because that was there on the Amiga version and it didn't make it any less playable.

BEST SELLING

Zool is a massive arcade adventure with stunning and highly addictive gameplay. It will be the best selling game on the ST this Christmas. Morally and technically Zool - Ninja from the Nth Dimension - is a major achievement.

You know what I say to people who say the ST is rubbish and hasn't got one decent game? Not only do I say something unprintable (you wouldn't like me when I get angry), but I also smile at them.

For one it annoys the hell out of them, but now Zool is on its way too and there ain't nothing they can do to stop it. Is it time for the ST to rise again? I don't know, but I know it is time to drool at Zool!



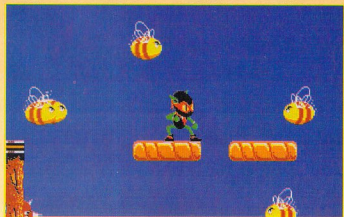
The bonus shoot-'em-up level in all its glory and splendour. This level provides a welcome break from the fast platform action



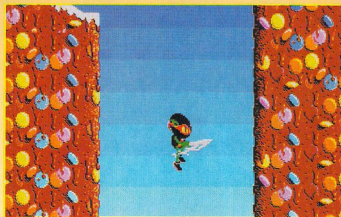
The end of level one and the ninja with the "spock" ears takes on a vicious bee who is out of sorts or should that be allsorts!



And now ladies and gentlemen Zool will perform his daring one footed balancing act while perched on a block of orange jelly. Quick get him on Pot of Gold



Hmm, now there's a predicament. How would you escape from four bees while suspended in mid-air by a flimsy platform? Answers on a postcard please



When falling down a rather large shaft with spikes at the bottom, the last thing you want to do is unsheathe your sword and start practising your fencing skills. Very silly!

The Cheap seats

Why bother with all this Dino-dung at the movies when you can have a Jurassic classic with Simon and the all-new Cheapus Seatosaurus

Ever fancied being totally reckless in a car? Would you like to travel at excessive speeds? Would you enjoy careering down the high street at breakneck pace jeopardising the lives of the general public? If all the answers to the previous posters are yes then it looks like you're only one choice. Join the police.

Yes indeed, if The Hit Squad's latest budget release Chase HQ II is anything to go by then this is where you get your kicks on the proverbial Route 66.

The plot is fairly simple and follows rather nicely on from the original Chase HQ scenario. You play two no-nonsense American cops who work for the Special Criminal Investigations department. They are complete upholders of everything judicial like truth and being nice; perhaps they could be compared with Britain's Serious Crime Squad - not!

Anyway, the brown stuff is firmly lodged in the wind machine as the mayor's daughter has been ruthlessly kidnapped by a band of vicious, gun-toting, drug-crazed, criminally insane fiends - hey, sound like my type of people.

The only information known about her is that she is being held somewhere in the south side - wherever that might be.

As you set out in your Miami Vice-type car, your only aid is the darling Karen at Chase HQ - who I know personally and could write a million words about, extolling her beauty and virtuous nature, but won't! Anyway, she sends a description of the vile perpetrators to your on-board computer and you're away. The basic principle of the action is



A slick chopper, those big arrows and hey, crime fighting's a doddle

Chase HQ II. Special Criminal Investigation

The Hit Squad = £9.99

extremely similar to HQII's older brother, the classic Chase HQ.

Once the delectable Karen has given you the word you must race against the clock through the highways and byways of the city to catch up with the dastardly villains.

Once you're on their tails you must use any means to apprehend the baddies. This is achieved by either ramming the rear of the criminals car by kicking in a turbo

boost or popping out of the top of your convertible and taking a shot at them with your pistol. Unfortunately there are quite a few hindrances which slow your justice-seeking do-gooders down. These include other cars on the streets, various traffic signs, roadside tundra and even a lumbering coach.

Throughout, there are six missions through different areas and landscapes to keep you budding Tubbs and Crockett salivating.

Overall, just like its predecessor, HQII isn't a bad conversion from the coin-op, but it's no classic. The graphic updating is a little jerky and some of the sampled speech is reminiscent of a gagged mute tied up in a sack.

At the full asking price, I'd say our stunt men for Starsky and Hutch should have been tried for daylight robbery, but as it's a shoestring affair it might be worth the Bill.



Here's Karen, she's lovely, assigns you your next suspect and she's also your contact with HQ



When I first picked up the box for Toki I thought it would be about a Japanese bloke indulging in a puff on a recreational cigarette. But I'm wrong. In fact, I don't think I could get much further from the upstanding morality of this tale of heroism and love.

Toki is a warrior. Proud, mighty, Gillette Sensor chin, tight clean pants and muscles to match. Like all hunks he has a girlie, she's called Miho. You know the type, singer, chesty, likes you to splash the cash, bit brassy and been around a bit (I made that bit up readers).

Anyway Toki loves her and that's what counts. Until that is, Bashtar, the villain of the piece, transforms Toki into a Neanderthal ape (or was it one of the Gladiators?) using his dark powers of spell-casting. Then just for jolly he makes off with Miho leaving Toki to monkey around in the jungle.

However, being a total hero and despite now having a four inch inside leg and 38 inch forearms, Toki is unrelenting. He sets out on his task to rescue his bird of paradise and defeat the evil Bashtar. Oh, and he's quite keen on progressing his look a few million years up the evolutionary scale.

So, guess where you tie in to the action? That's right, you become the other half of a simian duo and guide Toki around the platforms. There are six in total and these differ between mountain levels through to fire and ice sections. The action finally concludes in



Toki Monkey's around with a chimp and does some bhudda bashing

Toki

The Hit Squad = £9.99

a mysterious castle, but getting there is much easier said than done. To reach a chimpanzee-type conclusion you must fight your way past more than 30 different evil entities and the ominous guardians that lurk at the end of each location.

To aid the Planet of the Apes-type person around the nasty infested planet, he has several defences of his own. Now,

some would call spitting a dirty habit, but for Toki clearing his salivoid duct comes in extremely handy.

Especially so as littered around the levels are different phlegm-style power-ups. Some make him throw larger lumps while others transform into fireballs (yuk!).

Toki can also jump on top of his foes to eliminate them and can utilise other icons around the levels. For the platform genre Toki is first rate. The play is hectic and varied enough to keep your attention. If there's a criticism then it's only that the graphic style is a little out of date in comparison to new releases, but when it's only costing you ten of your gold pieces can you really complain?



It's end of level time and Toki must indulge in a little African god-deity mayhem



"They do what they wanna do, say what they wanna say... The Addams family!"

Well that's what God's favourite rapper the Hammer told us when he dragged his flagging, baggy-trousered career back from oblivion.

I'm sure you'll all remember this particularly sad effort of a track which featured heavily in the promotion for the movie. So, it was great news when the home computer adaptation decided to totally ignore this naff hip-hop effort.

Incidentally, it's worth pointing out that the tune used in this Gothic platformer is rather swanky.

Anyway, what about the plot? Evil Abigail Craven is anxious to lay her greedy hands on the Addams' secret fortune. In her bid to find their fortune she has kidnapped Morticia and put Uncle Fester under a spell.

Assisted by her cohorts, Tully and The Judge (two particularly nasty pieces of work), Abigail captures and imprisons Pugsly, Wednesday and Granny somewhere within the sprawling confines of the Addams mansion.

The only hope lies with Gomez. Taking control of the moustachioed one you must fight your way through hordes of fiends to find your missing family.

Your only aid through this huge platform chiller is the Thing, who hands (ooh, bad pun - Ed) you clues and information. Walking through various doorways spread through

Hammer House of Horror, Addams style



The Addams Family

The Hit Squad = £9.99

out the mansion takes you into different levels.

You must guide Gomez through the rooms, avoiding and killing nasties by jumping on them in a bid to reach the end of the stage. Here you'll have to defeat some rather large nasty demon to free a family member.

If things weren't tough enough, dozens of trapdoors and secret passages hinder poor Gomez on his ghoulish travels.

On the plus side, he can also discover a range of pick-ups which help him on his way. These include extra lives, shields and the legendary fez. This infamous artefact gives him limited flight capabilities in the Fezi-captor.

Addams Family, to all intents and purposes, is a platformer with a slight whiff of a puzzle element to it. We all know it's a medium that has been indulged in far too frequently, but it has to be said that this is a great example. Neat graphics, snappy music and compulsive

gameplay make the creepy, spooky family with a difference a winner.

"Blimey it's a bit cold and dark down here... What's that shiny, gilty, nasty thing?"



Ever fancied swinging a big stick around in bowl? Have you an urge to throw a large piece of hardened animal hide at a bloke in tight shorts? If you ever have, then you should not be considered abnormal and, cast into a darkened cell with the key thrown away.

It probably just means that, like a nation of burger-munching Americans, you're into baseball. Now, this particular sport has been attempted quite a few times on home computers.

The main problem with conversions is that baseball has incredibly complicated rules and involves a very quick interaction of a lot of people.

This has always rendered pioneering a successful playable system extremely difficult. For example, at any one time, three batsmen can be on bases. This - plus having a large number of fielders to control - has always posed problems for gamers and software houses alike.

In Haraball you take on the mantle of both manager and player. In the first instance as manager you make all the decisions regarding the team. You pick the batting line up, alter the field and ultimately change pitcher - comes in handy when you're being

Haraball

The Hit Squad = £9.99

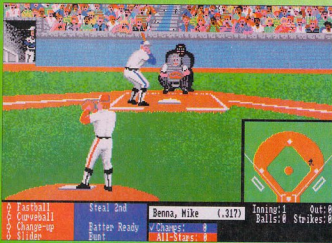
dispatched all over the park. These decisions can be altered after every ball, whether you are batting or pitching, so a tactical aspect is involved.

The play aspect is dictated by whether you are batting or pitching. When pitching you can select a variety of different pitches and directions in which to

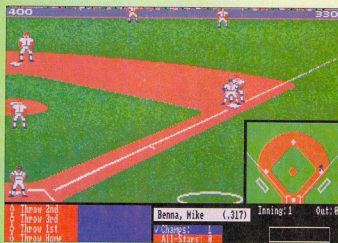
aim the ball. You also have control over your field, whether you be catching or throwing to base.

As with pitching, batting is controlled by joystick. A simple click on the Fire button can send the ball whizzing towards a home run. Alternatively, a mistime can leave you tied in knots on the batting plate, exasperated.

In most respects Haraball deals with a difficult sports sim admirably. It's playable and it interacts well enough to give a feeling of involvement to the players. Graphically it's a bit of a no-ball, but it's still well worth pitching in with a tenner.



As the pitcher winds up a fastball, the titchy bloke behind you puts you off



Give the ball a firm spanking with your big wooden stick (scoring a scorching home run), stroll around the bases and watch the fielders sweat

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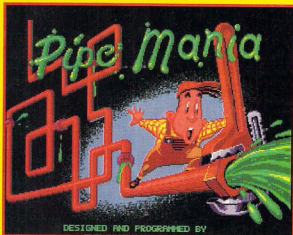
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BLAST from the PAST

In true Alan "Fluff" Freeman manner, Dave Cusick plays two more golden oldies..

Pipemania

For a long time now, programmers have been trying to produce a puzzle game which is not only simple to play but also incredibly addictive.

The vast majority of these are mediocre products, not worthy of more than a cursory mention in the volumes of history. But every so often there'd be a release such as Tetris, a truly exceptional game just because it was so playable. Pipemania falls into this category.

The concept of the game is beautifully simple. Pipes are looking all over the place, sending flooze all over the shop. Your task, as the somewhat harassed plumber concerned, is to lay pipes to channel the flooze down. Sounds weird, I know, but it makes for a frantic and exciting game.

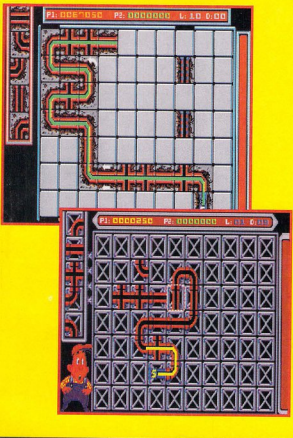
The pipe segments appear at the side of the screen, dropping down a dispenser so that you can see the next four segments that will come. You place them anywhere you want on the screen so as to form a continuous pipeline that the flooze

can follow. Once the flooze has flowed through the target number of pipe segments, you move on to the next level, although of course the longer you make the pipeline the more points you score.

The game uses passwords every few levels, and you need them because it becomes really tough, what with one-way pipes and so forth.

And the fun doesn't stop there. Pipemania features a wonderful simultaneous two-player mode in which you and a chum try to lay as many of your own pieces as possible for the flooze to flow through. The fast and frenetic action of this mode still can't be beaten to my mind.

Pipemania was also something of a landmark in terms of graphics and sound. The music is excellent, and the sampled sound effects are of equal calibre. I have fond memories of the hours I used to spend hunched in front of the monitor, desperately trying to lay that one last piece of piping that would earn me a new password.



Formula One Grand Prix

Goeff Crammond had long been acknowledged as the premier programmer of 3D driving games, with a track record that included Revs on the BBC B and Stunt Car Racer on the ST.

After beavering away for years on his next project, he finally unleashed it to the world in March 1992, and it was a stunner if ever I saw one.

It was the first driving game that was truly realistic in every facet of gameplay. You could compete against real drivers, on real circuits, completely

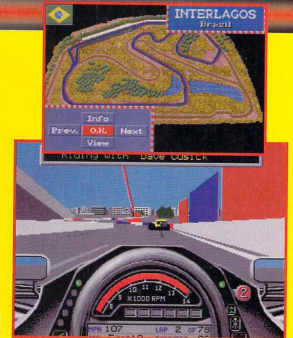
mapped so that they were identical to their real-life counterparts. You could search for that perfect set-up which would give you a distinct advantage during qualifying. The lap times were realistic, the control system was realistic, the different teams' cars behaved realistically... well, you get the picture.

Technically it excelled. It all flowed smoothly, with an impressive frame rate, and unlike some otherwise great games the enjoyment was not marred by excessive disk accessing.

Granted, it wasn't the easiest game to pick up and play straight away. Driving successfully took practice, but if you persevered you could work your way through the difficulty settings from rookie right up to ace. On top difficulty setting you could compete an even terms with the world's best drivers.

While F1GP is a relatively recent game compared to other products which have featured in Blast from the Past, it is undoubtedly worthy of a mention because I believe it to be possibly the best game ever released for a home computer.

That it is still riding high in software charts over 15 months after its release is surely a testament to its durability and lasting appeal.



cheat mode

A bumper tip-tastic dollop
of hints and solutions for

Ishar II

Messengers of Doom

Irvan's Island

You begin very close to a fight - avoid this because otherwise you'll end up dead before you know it. Go west, then north. Enter the village. Play with the pump-handle if you like. Then recruit Kudzac, pick up his possessions and kill him (nice, eh?).

Visit the two inns to recruit four characters (preferably, pick a scholar - Elandar, a magician - Zaloran, an archer - Fandhir, and a warrior). Buy a sword and a bow and arrows from the armourer and food from the shopkeeper to recover physical strength after fights.

Then go to the harbour (S-SW) and try to force your way onto the boat. You'll be taken prisoner and handed over to the village chief who tells you your mission.

Return to your starting point: S then E. Kill the three thieves and find the dead woman. Pick up the pendant. Eat some food if necessary (for physical recovery), then return to the village to recruit, buy helmets and shields.

Go extreme east into the forest, then north to pick up black and white mushrooms, then dandelions (surrounded by stones) to the extreme north. Fight the wasps. Enter the forest clearing on the south side, kill the ores and the chief orc (using arrows if possible). Pick up the necklace.

Return to the village, hand the necklace to the chief. Recover the boat. Eat, sleep, buy arrows, arms and food. Go to the harbour, select the town landing-stage.



Jon's Island

In the mountains you must put on the fur coats (take off armour) and attach the ropes to avoid falling. Move E. Pick up the cauldron in the snow. Set off again in the opposite direction following the mountain road along the precipice. Go into the mountains. Find a rhinoceros. Kill it and take its horn.

Return to the landing-stage. Select mountains, landing-stage to NW. If necessary, make a return trip to the town for "repairs".

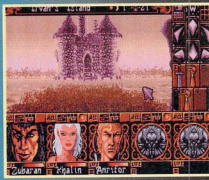
On leaving the harbour, travel E. Follow the coast, then take the passage to the W. Fight the two giants. Pick up the living sword in a mountain hollow. Leave the passage again.

Continue northwards. At the end, find a priest in a cul-de-sac. Prepare the Humbolg potion and give it to him. Pick up the tree island parchment.

Return to the harbour. Select the tree island. If necessary, make a return trip to the town for "repairs".

Zach's Island

Go right through the town to the library at the extreme NE. Pick up the fortress parchment. Kill as many enemies as possible (to gain money and experience). Buy arms, helmets and food. Recruit if necessary, go east and sleep to recover physical strength, then return to the harbour in the direction of the fortress.



Zach's Island (2)

Buy fighting gear, arrows and as much food as possible, because big fights are coming. Buy two monks' habits and five fur coats from the clothes shop (not far from the harbour, in a road leading to a little square to the north). Go to the library. Examine a parchment on potions.

Go to the bank (W of the library), enter the street with guards. You must kill all the guards in one go (you can't make a return trip), using arrows and spells. Take the door opposite. Pick up 100,000po. Deposit 10,000po in the bank (on the other side).

Go shopping. Buy a magpie, a monkey, an eagle and a parrot from the pet shop (extreme SE of the town). Opposite is a super-armourer; depending on your budget, buy arms, helmets and shields. Go down to the south, after the bend.

Buy five ropes from the shopkeeper. Move W, buy potions for the "troublesome priest" (Humbolg) and "Ent Reviver" (Jabolu). Continue to the W, and you'll come to three cross-roads. Go N, then W, then first E. Kill the giant-guard (he's difficult to get rid of). If necessary, regain strength because there are more fights to come.

Enter the "Blue Velvet" night-club (only open at night). You'll get thrown in prison. Release the magpie through the bars. Pick up the key. Open the cell. Put on the five monks' habits. In the fortress take the passage (open between midnight and 4am). Pass the monk. Enter the sacrifice.

Recover the prison key from the monk's belt. Leave the passage again. Find the invisible wall and cross it (where one of the characters notices a draught). Leave the prison. Fight the guards. Return to the harbour. You will need at least 10,000po and an iron shield. Take the boat for the island where you started.

Irvan's Island (2)

Go extreme E. Follow the E coast. Find a magician. Give him 10,000po, then send out the eagle. Pick up the mountain parchment.

Return extreme W, along the coast. Find the standing stones, continue to the W end. Pick up the relic at the foot of the standing stone. Golem wakes up. Kill him (most spells won't work on him). Turn round and fight Golem a second time.

Return to the harbour. In the direction of the mountains, take the landing-stage to the S.

Akeer's Island

Follow the wall on the right trying to keep moving east all the time. Fight the skeletons. There's a passage to the south - here you should pick up the treasure in the cul-de-sac and the south end and the skull in the cul-de-sac to the east.

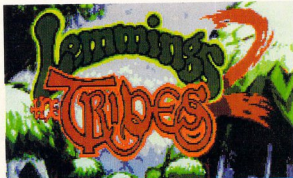
Leave the passage again, continue east, then south. You'll come to a large room. Take the extreme SE, then S, E, and follow the corridor to the north to activate two handles - one on the right hand wall, one on the left.

Continue due north into the passage, follow the corridor into the large room. Activate the handle on the wall to the north. Leave the passage again, take the extreme SE, follow the corridor and pick up a skull in the cul-de-sac.

Re-enter the corridor with the handles. Walk round the west wall. On the other side, enter the room, and pick up the treasure, skull and arms. Return to the landing-stage. Return to the town.

Gamer guide to Lemmings 2

Don't despair if you're the worst thing since Abba when it comes to aiding those cute little rodents. Help is at hand, courtesy of Mr Harry Maton of Croydon



Egyptian Tribe

Two's Company...

Go through bottom two brick walls. Lemmings on top left go through to right. Stomp down through destroyed wall.

Glued to the Goal!

Pour glue to fill gap on top level. Go through two walls to exit. On bottom level, run one lemming, go through pillar and build platform over water. Pour glue twice to fill big gap over Sphinx. Wait for lemming to turn around at far right and build platform. Go through wall to right of exit. Stomp lemmings down from middle level.

Labyrinth of Fun

Build platform over first gap. When lemming hits pillar and turns, stomp down. Let lemming turn around after hitting wall to left of Sphinx and fence through to Sphinx. When lemming turns, scoop down to exit, stopping by building platform if necessary. Fence through pillar to exit.

Spiralling DNA

Spin lemming and blow him up to the left of the exit. Build platform over pit and dig through block.

Echo of Light

Dig through palm tree. Climb and slide one lemming and dig through bottom of deep pit. Make lemming run and jump gap. Just before the brick wall, stomp down a couple of times and then dig right. Jump the final gap.

Meanwhile, stomp another lemming down through the sand at the start (only one clear gap) and as lemming goes right pour glue once. Dig through walls to second gap and pour glue to fill the gap. Glue will run to fill last gap if there is no lip on hole dug by first lemming.



Ruper'z Questing

Run one lemming, pour twice to fill four holes, platform over water and pour again to fill next hole. Platform or pour over booby-trapped pit. Meanwhile fire ruper from pit next to water to edge of point by exit. Lemmings walk up rope to exit.

The Egypt Cottage

Balloon one lemming up to the left. Parachute down. Blow to slope on left of right-hand water trap. Superlem/rocket up to top of Sphinx and laser up to free the block. Stomp lemmings down on right of Sphinx.

Heroe'z Quest

Jump one lemming to the left. Stomp down twice. After lemming has dropped right, jump over hole at bottom to land on small block (below eye and to left of scarab) while facing right. Stomp down and before bottom, fence right. Jump left

from ledge below urns and when at far left (block next to eye) balloon straight up.

Blow to the right at the torch to pop balloon. Platform over gap at bottom of slope. Fence right and walk up slope to small block. When lemming turns, platform to the left and fence to the exit. Stomp down with one lemming from the flock and fence right.

Wave Pathway

Dig through block. Stomp down with first lemming before booby-trapped pit. Second lemming should fall into pit. Stomp this lemming down before he hits booby-trap switch. Meanwhile, build platform to stop first lemming.

Dig with the second lemming to the right past the metal block and then stomp down. Detonate a bomb as far left as possible when lemming stops at metal block. Stomp down as far left as possible and again detonate a bomb to the left of the metal block. Dig left.

Stomp down on thin bit of ledge, allow lemming to turn and build platform to right. Dig right, stomp down a couple of times and dig right again to exit. Dig right with the other lemmings to join up with pathway.

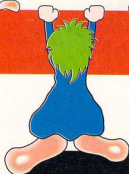
Pyramid of Despair

Hop one lemming via little blocks over first pit. Rest of lemmings get trapped in this pit. When first lemming drops and turns, pour glue twice to fill holes. Pour sand over booby-trap in pit and when lemming is facing right change to climber. Let him climb, drop and climb.

Change to shimmyer at top of wall and before he reaches far left, add slider. Shimmy to left again under next block and lemming drops onto ledge. When he turns, pour sand at end of steps to turn him. When in big gap to left of flock, pour glue to fill holes if required and fire mortar to free the rest of the lemmings.

cheat mode

Next month we complete our guide to the game's four levels



Medieval Tribe

Lemming of Nottingham

Scoop through two right-hand corners. Fly one lemming and pour sand up to ledge above shields. When done, scoop down to exit. Fill pit trapping flock with sand to get them home.

Sir! I kid ye not

Twist down to right and flame through two pillars. Fill pit with sand. Build ramp of sand over block. Stomp down and bash right to exit.

All in a Knight's work

Jump one lemming to the catapult (far left position). After landing on ledge, let him turn right and then stomp down. Change to exploder just after middle of short platform and he will explode at the wall leaving a gap (RIP Brave lemming!) Jump another lemming onto catapult and jump him over hole made by his deceased comrade. When he turns right allow him to fall and after passing destroyed wall build a new wall. Platform over water and release flock with stomp.

Watch that Last Step

Build wall with first lemming on the first platform. Two lemmings should get by. Build wall with second lemming on second platform and third wall with the last lemming before the gap. Pour glue with this lemming to bridge the gap. Surf over water.

When he reaches the pit, pour sand to the left to allow him to climb out. Pour glue to form bridge over the water. Walk back and pour sand to right of pit to form ramp out of pit. Bash right with flock to allow access to glue bridge and the exit.

King Arthur's lemmings

Detonate bomb by trees and bash right beneath them. Use



attractor to hold the flock. When basher reaches the gap, build two bridges to cross and then detonate one or two bombs at far right of T-shaped block to reduce height from the exit. Turn attractor into jumper to release the flock.

Let's Play Twister!

Turn first lemming into Climber and slider. At top of castle by the start change him into twister and blow down to ledge with butterfly-shaped centre. As he slides down to the left, change to runner. Jump right at end of slope to ledge above exit. Platform over the water at the right.

As he runs back, twist him down towards exit and jump over existing hole. Let him drop down as he walks back to the right. Twist one lemming from flock down towards hole over platform and again down to platform.

Underground

Fence one lemming right through towers. Attract one lemming to stop the flock. Platform to the trees and fence right.

Twist one lemming from flock down towards hole over platform and again down to platform.

What shall we do now?

Platform left to right across starting cave at highest point possible. Detonate bombs at right until wall is destroyed. Use attractor to stop the flock and platform right twice with one lemming to bridge gap. Jump down twice to reach the exit and change attractor into stomp down.

Lemming in Distress

Run the first lemming and attract the second. Jump the first lemming from block to ledge and immediately change to archer. Fire two arrows into right end of ledge to form small bridge over water. Change to roper and rope to rocks to right of ledge.

When lemming turns, fire two more arrows into block by water to form another bridge. Build bridge slightly to the right of the centre of the dragon's nest and then change attractor into jumper.

Just jousting around

Polevault the first lemming immediately he touches the ground and then turn him into a floater. Make the next lemming run and build a couple of walls in the middle of the dragon's pit. Fire rope from top of this wall to right side of pit.

Move catapult to left centre of track (four links showing to the left and six to the right). When floater is catapulted he should land on the top of the J-shaped rock. When he walks left, pour glue to form bridge over water. After he turns, move catapult to far left and pour glue at right of ledge to form bridge over catapult. When all the other lemmings are in the dragon's pit, detonate a bomb above the thin part of the floor to allow the flock to fall onto the glue bridge. The wall in the middle prevents blasted lemmings becoming dragon food.

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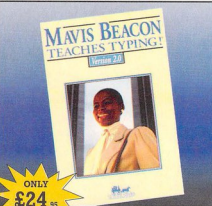


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The first release of NVDI probably did more for the ST's usability than any other product. Not only did it make the screen redraw between 50 and several hundred per cent faster, but it provided a quicker, more compatible version of GDOS too.

With NVDI installed, the ST's dialogue boxes and GEM windows positively fly along, opening so fast you can hardly see them. Virtually all other screen operations are speeded up too, including text and graphics.

How does it work its magic? NVDI itself stands for New Virtual Device Interface, in recognition of the fact that it completely replaces some parts of the ST's operating system - which were originally written in C - with optimised machine code that does exactly the same job but far, far faster.

The product has been updated continually over the last year or so - the version we reviewed back in August last year was v2.03 and there have been at least eight minor fixes and updates since then, until the arrival of v2.5.

This latest version claims to be faster still and has a number of new features, perhaps the most important being that this version is Falcon compatible, important because the Falcon is actually slower than the ST in some of the higher colour modes.

NVDI v2.5 on a STFM is almost, but not quite, as fast as the earlier version but you would never be able to tell the difference in practice. On the Falcon, the results are even more impressive.

IMPROVEMENT

In the Falcon's fastest mono mode, text is displayed nearly 11 times faster while dialogues open three times faster. The biggest relative improvement is in the true colour mode, although it should be remembered this is still considerably slower than 256-colour mode.

In practice, adding NVDI to a Falcon means you can realistically work in 256 or even true colour mode without having to wait an age for screen redraws.

Other practical advantages of NVDI are that text scrolls much faster in editors and wordprocessors while filled graphics in programs like Easydraw appear on screen significantly faster.

Compatibility has dropped a little in the latest release - I had problems with other programs like View 2 and Video Supreme which were only solved by the late arrival of a small fix program.

However the vast majority of programs work very well indeed with NVDI and at the present rate of development any serious bugs and incompatibilities should be fixed in no time.

Two GDOS screen fonts are provided, one a Mac-like Chicago font and the other an IBM DOS font. Both can be used to replace the system font. They're great if you like that sort of

Screen test

Andrew Wright puts v2.5 of the NVDI screen accelerator through its paces

NVDI vs other screen accelerators

	Normal	GDOS	Warp9	TurboST	NVDI2.03	NVDI2.5	Timeworks
Dialogue boxes	100	78	281	290	289	287	155
VDI text	100	99	824	1367	887	879	837
VDI text effects	100	99	705	109	755	744	724
VDI graphics	100	98	99	127	350	363	345
GEM windows	100	90	240	261	252	253	196
VDI scroll	100	99	443	500	453	450	434

Notice the effect of GDOS on a normal system. The column labelled Timeworks shows results for both NVDI and the original GDOS installed to enable Timeworks to run - note the slight drop in performance.

● Notes: Tests were carried out on a standard 1Mb STFM with TOS 1.4 and mono monitor using the GEMBench utility written by Ofir Gal. Results in percentages.

thing but pretty useless otherwise, particularly as the Mac font installs by default and you have to edit the ASSIGN.SYS file to get rid of it.

NVDI also replaces GDOS entirely with a faster, more compatible version that works with most GDOS programs [except Timeworks which needs the real GDOS].

There's also a desk accessory - and CPX version if you use the control panel - for configuring NVDI, and a small program to restore the default settings.

As the latter work with most programs, there shouldn't be any need to make too many changes, which is just as well as you'll need a degree in the ST's internals to work out what to alter.

The manual hasn't been updated since the earlier versions so don't expect much help - although there is at least an English information file on disk.

If you've an ST, an STE, Mega STE or TT and don't already have a screen accelerator, NVDI has to be the one to go for. It outperforms the competition in most departments and it is by far the most compatible of the three main

contenders, being fully compatible with 99.9 per cent of all available software.

If you do own another screen accelerator such as Warp 9 or TurboST, whether you want to upgrade will depend entirely on your circumstances - the marginal improvement in performance and compatibility has to be set against the rather high asking price.

Whether you should upgrade from an earlier version of NVDI is a much harder question to answer. There's a £15 upgrade fee for existing NVDI users but the results of the GEMBench tests show that there's little to gain for ST owners at present.

If you've got a Falcon, it's a different story. It makes a world of difference to the Falcon's sluggish colour display. Get it or die trying...

BOTTOM LINE

FEATURES

Very, very fast - makes a new machine of your ST or Falcon.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

EASE OF USE

Needs a decent manual but there are few problems with installation or use.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

VALUE FOR MONEY

Expensive but well worth the cost.

Excellent
Good
Average
Bad
Appalling

Falcon speed increases

	Mono	16 colour	256 colour	True colour
Dialogue boxes	312	261	205	315
VDI text	1054	783	735	459
VDI text effects	842	683	428	570
VDI graphics	391	288	249	304
GEM windows	196	158	142	329
VDI scroll	100	153	154	142

● Note: Tests were carried out on a 4Mb Falcon030 with TOS 4.01 and an Atari SM1224 colour monitor (80 column mode, interlace on) using the GEMBench utility written by Ofir Gal. Results in percentages.

Product: NVDI 2.51
Supplier: System Solutions,
Suite 47/48,
Windsor Business Centre,
Vauxhall Road,
Windsor SL4 1SE
Telephone: 0753 832812
Price: £49.95
Configuration: All Atari models,
any resolution

Universal Midi

If we knew then what we know now, Midi would be a totally different system altogether.

One of the current problems many musicians are experiencing is with Midi file players and keyboards which can only read Standard Midi files in format 0. This format lumps all the Midi channels together on one track and is ideal for playing files but not so useful if you want to edit them.

Most musicians use a dedicated sequencer to record and arrange their music but they want to play it back on a Midi file player which can only read format 0 files - and not all sequencers can create type 0 files, can they?

Pro 24 users have another prob-

lem with Standard Midi Files - the program simply doesn't load SMFs correctly. Many musos have upgraded from Pro 24 by now (it's really showing its age) but there are a lot of die-hard users who don't want to give it up.

So Hand On To the rescue with a couple of SMF converters. Pro 24 Gen converts SMFs to Pro 24 Song format. Zero Gen converts

SMF format 1 into format 0.

Both programs work in a similar way and are very easy to use. You don't need instructions but you get them anyway. After loading the program, all you do is click on the area of the screen which shows the pathname.

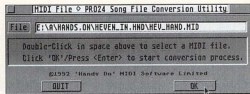
A dialogue box opens and you select the file you want to convert. Then click on OK. The pro-

gram does its stuff and you get the dialogue box asking for the name you want to save the file as. Easy.

Zero Gen also has Midi channel de-activation buttons which let you switch out any of the Midi channels from the conversion. Use it remove vocal lines, for example.

The programs performed perfectly with the files I threw at them. A simple job but a job well done. Altogether, a couple of useful utilities which support the ailing Pro24 and the sagging Midi file format.

● Zero Gen and Pro 24 Gen cost £14.95 each (plus p&p). More from: Hands On Midi Software, 3 Bell Road, Cosham, Portsmouth PO6 3NX. Tel: 0705 221162.



Zero Gen lets you switch out Midi channels during the file conversion process

Pro 24 Gen converts SMFs to Pro 24 format with two clicks of a mouse's whisker

Ian Waugh looks at some converters to help with Midi file transfers, and rounds up the rest of this month's ST music news

Let's get technocal!

That devilishly clever duo Heavenly Music have been at it again. This time they've come up with 15 Techno Grooves. My overriding impression of techno comes from a visit to a German nightclub in Frankfurt while I was covering the Frankfurt Music Fair.

Listen to Teutonic Techno music for four hours and you know you've been technoed! The paracetamol took a hammering that night, I can tell you!

I actually like these grooves very much. They're configured to GM yet they manage to produce the thudding bass drum and insistent hi-hat, the piano and the squelchy bass and other analogue-type sounds so popular in techno. They dredge up some really grungy sounds from the GM gear.

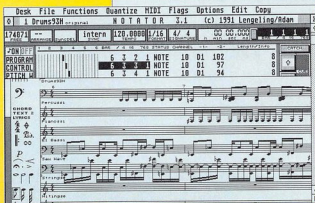
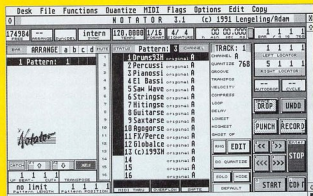
The pieces follow the typical riff-oriented Techno approach with the drums and rhythm section taking turns to solo over syncopated piano and orchestral hit lines.

They are quite good enough to feature on a record although the dedicated Techno muso would probably want to substitute some other sounds for the GM ones. As with all Heavenly disks, the Techno Groove disk contains lots of instructions.

Although 15 grooves may not seem a lot they are all over 20 bars long and typically 40 to 70 bars in length. They all use over ten tracks, too. The pieces are well-crafted - as you would expect from Heavenly.

If you're into techno but searching for inspiration, give these a spin. Very heavy, very hard-hitting, very inventive, very dancy, very good! And cheaper than Frankfurt!

Techno Grooves costs £16.95 (plus £1.50 p&p) from: Heavenly Music, 39 Garden Road, Jaywick Village, Clacton-on-Sea CO15 2RT. Tel: 0255 434217.



Getting heavy with Heavenly Music's Techno Grooves

There's a lot of detail in Heavenly Music's Techno Grooves

What synth?

I've received a couple of letters from readers who want to use their ST to playback Midi files. Mr A Wilson from Sheffield, for example, admits he's not a musician but would still like to "mess around with music files".

He has been reading our coverage of General Midi and thinks this would be an ideal system to use but he doesn't want to spend an arm and a leg.

Before looking at some budget-priced GM modules, we should look at a couple of GM parameters – the number of sounds and polyphony. A GM instrument should have a minimum of 128 sounds. Roland's GS spec allows an instrument to have more although in practice most Midi file producers map to GM.

A GM (and GS) instrument should also have a minimum polyphony of 24 voices. This has caused a great deal of confusion because the sounds on some instruments actually use two voices or sound elements.

It's possible, therefore, in a worst-case scenario for a 24-voice instrument to be able to play only 12 sounds or music lines at once.

Admittedly, that would be a rare case but in "average" use a 24-voice instrument could well only be 16-note or 20-note polyphonic. It's something to bear in mind if you intend playing big arrangements.

The cheapest GM expander I'm aware of is a fairly recent release from Westpoint Creative, a company you probably won't have heard of unless you're also interested in PCs because they specialise in PC sound cards.

The Midi Blaster MB10, however, is a standalone GM unit with Midi sockets which you can connect to any computer and at £199 it's the cheapest GM instrument around. The package also includes a PC sequencer which makes it even better value – although only to a PC owner.

It has 235 sounds and is 20-note polyphonic. Its main drawback is the quality of the sounds. They aren't bad but they do seem more at home coming from a



computer than a music studio and the unit has no reverb which can help beef up its output.

The GMX-1 with a RRP of £249 is another budget buy but again the sounds are workaday rather than brilliant and it has no reverb, either. It has 184 sounds and is 20-note polyphonic.

Roland's SC-7 has reverb and this really does make a difference to the sounds but even without reverb, the sounds are excellent quality. It only has the standard 128 sounds, however, and is 24-voice polyphonic. At £314 it's worth the extra cost, certainly

over the GMX-1, and I'd rather pay the extra over the MB10, too, although if you have to cut your cloth...

The Boss DS330 Dr Synth (made by Roland) at £339 has similar sounds to the SC-7 but it has 156 of them and it's 28-voice polyphonic. It also has a dial and buttons on the outside to twiddle and push. Worth looking at if you want a few more sounds and features.

Yamaha's TG100 at £379 is the most expensive of the budget buys we're considering here. It has 224 excellent sounds and is 28-voice polyphonic. It, too, has buttons on the front for you to tweak and twiddle. It costs a bit more but you get more for your money.

Yamaha have put together some bundles called Hello! Music! (yes, they come with two exclamation marks) based on the CBX expander which is essentially the same as the TG100 but without the exterior controls. The bundles include software but unfortunately they are for the PC and the Apple Mac.

Currently the CBX is not available separately although the option is being considered and would seem to make good sense. The bundles cost £359 which makes the CBX cheaper than the TG100 if you only want to control it from a computer.

So you pays your money and takes your choice. It's always a good idea to hear instruments before buying so contact the companies for your nearest stockist.

Westpoint Creative: 0743 248590
 Roland: 0252 816181
 Yamaha: 0908 366700

Are friends electric?

Nothing succeeds like a sequel, as they say in Showbiz. Station Records has had considerable success with Midi Busker, a collection of acoustic guitar patterns which we reviewed here in March. As mentioned at the time, a set of electric guitar riffs were in production and now they're here.

Just to remind you what it's all about – the Busker disks contain guitar riffs recorded in real time by a Midi guitar in order to capture all the nuances of a real guitar performance. The Electric disk contains 37 patterns in Standard Midi File format. They are configured to General Midi (GM) and will play as is on any GM module.

The patterns are divided into a handful of styles – mainly blues, funk, jazz, and reggae. Each pattern contains 18 chord types so you'll need a sequencer which can handle more than 16 tracks. The chord



Selecting the right chord from one of the Jazz patterns

types range from standard major and minor chords to 7/5b/9b and Power chords.

To use the chords in a sequence you simply select the chord type you want, transpose it to the required key and paste into your song. There are demos of the patterns so you can hear what they sound like *in situ*.

Although the pieces are configured for GM, you can use them with any instrument – providing it has a guitar sound. The documentation lists the instruments set up and drum maps. It also contains hints on how to use the riffs with Cubase, C-Lab and Hybrid Arts sequencers.

As with the Acoustic Guitar Busker disks, I would have liked a greater selection of rhythm styles. Also, some of the notes have the top velocity value of 127 – I'd rather they left a little headroom.

But the guitar riffs are very impressive indeed and you can hear just how good they are by listening to the demo files on this month's CoverDisk. Station is currently developing a collection of Latin riffs, and there's a Latin demo on the cover disk too. This is excellent!

If you've ever struggled to create good guitar accompaniment patterns using a keyboard – forget it! These will save you lots of time and trouble.

● **Midi Busker Electric Guitar** and the other **Midi Busker disks** are £14.95 each. More from Station Records, Station Road, Sudbury CO10 6SS. Tel: 0787 311500.



Part of the Blues demo which you can check out on this month's CoverDisk



Win

Prizes
worth over
£450

one of these super music composition programs...

This is your chance to win a tool for making music the easy way – a musical composition program. Do you find the idea of composing music daunting? Well, don't worry because this is where each one of these excellent prizes can help you. Composition programs, which do some of the work for you, are relatively new on the scene.

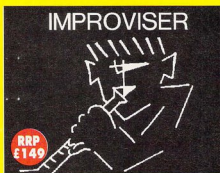
Four lucky readers will each win one of these great programs!

One of these fabulous composition programs could be yours for a quick phone call which should cost you under £1 at cheap rate. To keep the cost to a minimum try to avoid background noise, which may necessitate the repetition of answers.



0891 543392

The closing date is October 11, 1993. The prize winner will be drawn from all the correct entries received and will be informed in writing within two months of the closing date. Result information may be obtained by writing to our offices. No cash alternative to the prize is available. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Calls are charged at 36p per minute cheap rate and 48p per minute at all other times.

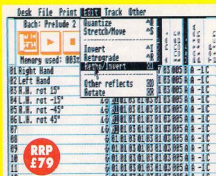


Improviser Pro from Creative Sounds

Improviser Pro offers dedicated and serious easy-to-use, real time, flexible software. There's full MIDI file handling, comprehensive chord recognition and a useful theory guide with notated examples explaining what is going on. Improviser Pro provides an intuitive interface which helps you to really learn and understand what you are doing.

Fractal Music v2.51 from Oscar Music

Fractal composition is a fascinating program to work with and is flexible and powerful, yet simple to use. A major asset of the program is looping, and it excels at manipulating previously created MIDI files, and in distortion facilities.



Session Partner from Newtronix

It bases its accompaniment around a structured musical pattern provided by yourself, in the form of details of chords, verses and so on. This highly powerful, real-time self-explanatory and very versatile piece of software is best described as an auto-accompaniment program. Session Partner will provide a constantly changing music backdrop to anything you care to play.

John the Composer from Newtronix

This excellent program is very simple to use despite its complexity, due to clear icons and screens, and it even works without MIDI equipment. John is full of inspiration – the less you want to do, the more he'll do for you.



HOW TO ENTER

You can enter by phone as many times as you wish. All you have to do is answer the very simple questions below. Please try to avoid background noise.

You will be asked to leave your answers together with your name and full postal address including postcode. Please speak clearly, spelling out any difficult words.

Which of the following is not one of the parameters that govern music?

- Time signature
- Melody
- Colour

How many prizes are there in total?

- One
- Four
- Two

Spashing out on Spectre GCR and one of the PC emulators is just the first step towards a "three-in-one" box capable of running Atari, Apple and IBM software.

All the emulators do, after all, is enable your ST to act like an IBM clone or Apple Mac, and real PCs and Macs, too, are pretty useless on their own without a few additional bits of software.

This point may be overlooked by ST owners accustomed to their plug-in-and-go solution - after all, you just switch on the computer and up comes the GEM desktop.

Even without any additional software, you can spend many a happy hour formatting blank floppies and reading empty directories...

But then STs come with their operating system and graphic user interface built into the computer in the form of chips known as Read Only Memory (ROM) and this is not the case with the machines we are seeking to emulate.

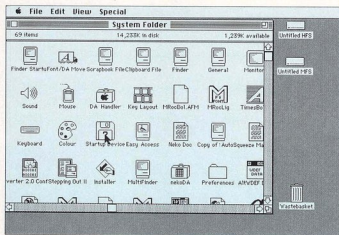
This is why virtually all PCs and Macs are sold with system disks which need to be inserted when the computer is started up. The advantage of this approach is that it is easier to update the operating system: bug fixes and new, improved versions can be distributed on disk rather than having to rip out the old ROM chips and replace them with new ones. But where do Atari ST owners get this system software from?

One important point to grasp is that, although included with every PC or Mac bought, these disks are not free but copyright and paid for by the purchase of the computer.

PC owners, in fact, are expected to pay when they upgrade to new versions of DOS. So you should not simply copy MS-DOS at work or from a PC-owning friend but, to stay on the right side of the law, drop into your local computer shop and buy a legit copy with manuals.

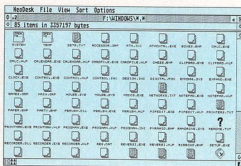
Most vendors these days offer to sell you a copy of DR-DOS, the Digital Research alternative to Microsoft DOS, along with the emulator and this is a trend to be encouraged in the interests of fighting piracy.

The Mac, as ever, is different in



The Mac System Folder holds not only the actual System file, but all kinds of other odds and ends: fonts, desk accessories, CDEVs and INITs. Time for some tidying up...

All systems go!



Even a simple Windows installation will take up over 30Mb, as shown here (TOS drive F becomes DOS drive C under emulation). Don't even think about it unless you have a large hard disk...

this respect. The core of its operating system is contained in ROM, but it still needs the - frequently updated - System and Finder files to work. The ROMs can be bought with Spectre GCR, and the software files, although not in the public domain, can be freely distributed so you won't break any laws if you obtain a copy from a Mac-owning friend.

Mac dealers are another source, but they don't take too kindly to hitherto unknown customers turning up asking for a free copy of a now obsolete version of the System and Finder for their Ataris - now obsolete, because all current and recent Macs run System 7 which the

Spectre GCR emulator cannot, in its present form, cope with. Version 6.xx of the software is the one to go for, although most previous ones will also work with Spectre.

The version count with the Microsoft Disk Operating System for PCs has reached six so far, but I have not as yet tried MS-DOS 6 on the ST (watch this space!).

Anything older than DOS 3.x should not be considered (although 2.11 will work), and DOS 4 and 5 seem to be most commonly used, in both their Microsoft and Digital Research incarnations.

Opinions on the relative merits of DR-DOS as opposed to MS-DOS are divided, but if you want to play safe in terms of compatibility you may prefer to go for the "official"

Microsoft product - although DR's rival is undoubtedly friendlier.

Increasingly, however, PC software is no longer content with plain DOS and requires Microsoft Windows to run. This is not, as you might think, yet another version of the operating system, but a user-friendly front-end sitting "on top" of DOS; a graphical user interface which represents Microsoft's answer to the Mac's Finder.

If you have a large enough hard drive, plenty of memory and an AT emulator, give it a go: chances are that you will find Windows a bit like swimming in treacle on anything less than a 486, but then again it's the only way of gaining access to some of

the best software around, like Word for Windows and Excel.

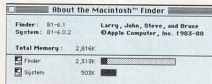
And make sure you get Windows v3.1; the old Windows 2 is an abomination unfit for any self-respecting ST, and Windows 3.0 is slower than 3.1, more crash-prone and - as I found to my cost - its version of the SMARTDRV.SYS disk cache doesn't seem to like ST hard drives.

Now to the nitty-gritty of installing the system software on your ST. Since the Atari floppy disk format and that of the IBM clones are largely identical, and Spectre GCR performs the considerable feat of being able to read Mac disks directly, you would not expect any great problems here.

But beware: most STs have double-density disk drives, a standard long left behind by recent Macs and PCs. So take great care to ask for DD disks when you buy the software as most dealers these days will sell you a high-density version as a matter of course!

If you are serious about PC emulation, it is probably a good idea to invest in an HD drive for your ST anyway, but this won't be much help with Mac emulation as current versions of Spectre don't support that format yet.

Next month we'll look into the mysteries of AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS, the twin pillars of any DOS installation, and how to configure your Spectre Mac for maximum effect.



If you're not sure which version of the Mac System and Finder you're using, click on About the Finder... in the Apple menu, and all will be revealed

Continuing the guide to the Atari STPCMac, Günter Minnerup explains the basic system software requirements

Destination: Acorn World

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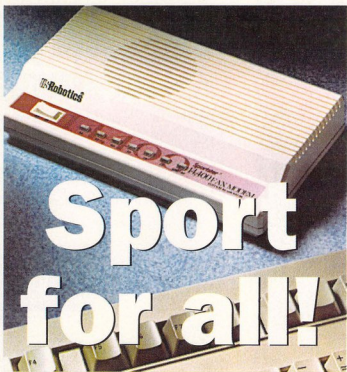
Acorn

Buying a fast modem has always been a difficult compromise. Either you find a cheap, but very well specified, import model – such as the popular Supra Fax models – or you pay through the nose to get the same specification, but with that all-important little green sticker which indicates it has received BABT approval and may be legally connected to the UK telephone system.

Until now, that is. Finally, you can get an all-singing, all-dancing approved model for the same price as many imported models. US Robotics, manufacturers of the definitive Courier and HST modem ranges, have now developed a home version of their commercial products – the USR Sportster.

It even comes with free communications and fax software – for the PC, unfortunately, but if you don't have any PC-owning friends who could make use of it, the disk would make a fine drinks mat, and the manual could be used as a convenient fire-lighter.

The specification list is impressive. The Sportster gives



File Edit Settings Options Dial Back/HLK Help	
1	HELP, Command Quick Reference (Ctrl-S to Stop, Ctrl-C to Cancel)
05	HELP, Important Commands
06	Report Last Command
07	Command Prefix
08	Answer Call
09	Send CDTT Answer Set
10	Reserved
11	Dial a Telephone Number
12	SMTP, Mail
13	Send Stored Phone Number
14	HELP, Dial Commands
15	Send 1
16	Echo Command Chars
17	Dialtone Echo
18	No Beep Echo
19	Off-Line (Ring) On
20	On-Line
21	Product Code
22	Checksum
23	RAM Test
24	Current Settings

◀ The Sportster has an in-built help system which reminds you of the operation of each AT command, and the internal switch system ▶

Product: Sportster 14,400 Fax Modem (BABT approved)
Price: £469, but shop around
Manufacturer: US Robotics Ltd, 224 Berwick Avenue, Slough SL1 4QT
Tel: 0800 225252 (free)

File Edit Settings Options Dial Back/HLK Help	
0	Stalker's Settings
1	HELP, 5 Register Functions (Ctrl-S to Stop, Ctrl-C to Cancel)
02	Ring to Answer On
03	Quartz # of Rings
04	Escape Code Char
05	Carriage Return Char
06	Line Feed Char
07	Backspace Char
08	Walk Line/Carriage
09	Carrier Detect Time (1/100sec)
10	Connect Time (1/100sec)
11	Dial Tone Timing (ms)
12	Escape Code Time (1/100sec)
13	Bit Number
14	Reset On DTR Loss
15	Do DS Do Reset
16	Reserved
17	Reserved
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99	Reserved

virtually every commonly used communications speed in one box. At its fastest, using a V32bis (14,400 bps) connection and the built-in MNP5 or V42bis data compression, the modem can transfer archived data at around 1,700 cps, and text files at well over 3,000 characters per second.

That's always assuming your ST can run that fast, of course; to do so, you'll need to be able to use a 38,400 baud setting on your RS232 port. However, the modem will quite happily lower itself to speak to an old V23 (300 baud) modem – or even a V23 (1200/75) unit, if you can still find one!

Not only that, but it also provides fax facilities to allow connection to any Group 3 fax machine at up to 9,600 bps. The interface standard is known as Class 1, which is not currently supported by the Tele Office or STraight FAXI packages, but I've been sent a beta test version of STraight FAXI which supports Class 1, so that should be

generally available soon.

The Sportster's command system is the industry-standard Hayes AT set, which means that it should perform well with most standard comms packages. Certainly it functions quite happily with Stalker, CoNnect and CixComm.

The factory default configuration is not set up to use the CTS/RTS flow control protocol, which for a high speed unit such as this seems a little odd. I would strongly recommend any potential purchaser to enable this mode straight away, as 14,400 communication without hardware flow control could be prone to data loss.

Basic settings can be controlled via a bank of DIP switches on the

rear panel, or via software, and then saved into the modem's non-volatile RAM for future use. There are two configuration memories, along with space for up to four regularly dialled phone numbers.

So much for the theory, but how well does it perform? Generally speaking, very well indeed. Most of my online time is spent connected to CIX, and it worked flawlessly on all of my V32bis lines.

Very occasionally the transmission speed seemed to drop slightly from what I would have expected, but I think that says more about the quality of my phone line than it does about the modem.

The automatic retraining system, used to slow down the link in the

event of excessive line noise, may not be quite as intelligent as that provided on the more expensive USR modems, meaning that it could take a little longer to return back to full speed when the line clears, but in my experience the data transmission itself has always remained flawless.

I also tried connecting to other types of modem, including an old 1,200 baud unit, and the reliability was well up to scratch – certainly very much better than many competing modems I've tried of late. I did find occasions when the software would miss the final acknowledgement after completing a fax page, but I'm certain that is a problem in my beta test software rather than the modem itself.

The box itself is... well, how can one put this politely? Think of Rolf Harris's Stylophone, or perhaps a cheap £4.99 baby-minder intercom from the local market, and you wouldn't be far from the aesthetic design of the Sportster.

The more cynical among us might even think that this was a deliberate policy decision on the

part of USR, to dissuade commercial users from buying this highly specified little modem in preference to the far more expensive Courier models, with their executive-looking sleek black cases...

Another corner-cutting item may be the internal loudspeaker, which sounds very tiny when compared to other modems in the range. However, it does its job efficiently enough, so perhaps that's an unfair criticism, given the price.

Although USR's official RRP is £469, this seems to bear little or no relationship to the price the customer is likely to pay for the product. Give Demon Systems a call on 081-349 0063 if you'd prefer to pay £293, or S/E/G Communications on 081-959 3377 if £288 sounds even better.

At those prices, this modem is manna from heaven to anyone who wants a reliable, BABT approved unit that can communicate about as fast as current technology allows.

André Willey looks at the Sportster
modem, cheap enough to open up
high-speed comms to a whole new
group of users

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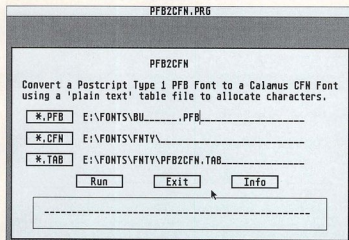
Name

Address

Postcode Daytime phone

Tick this box if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies

Allow 28 days for delivery



Converting PFBs with Fonty..

Borrowed plumage

Potentially the most useful type format for ST users is the PostScript Type 1 - fonts in this format are much more widely available and can be used with PageStream, Didot Professional (now called DA's Layout) and DA's Vector or converted across to Calamus format. They can even be reconverted from Calamus format into various bitmap formats.

PostScript Type 1 fonts can have several components, only two or three of which are useful to ST users. The PFB file (PostScript Binary File) contains the outlines themselves, including the hinting information.

The AFM file (Adobe Font Metric) is an ASCII text file containing kerning pairs, character widths and details of the font weight and family.

If you try and obtain PostScript fonts from PC-based PD libraries, more than likely you will end up with PFB and PFM files. PFM files (Printer Font Metrics) are binary versions of AFMs and can only be used with Adobe Type Manager, a scalable type manager for Windows on the PC that does much the same job as SpeedoGDOS now does for the Atari range.

Other files you might find, especially if you buy a font from one of the main vendors, are INF and FON files, neither of which are at all useful on the ST. One much

rarer component - so rare I haven't actually found one yet! - is the ABF file (Adobe Bitmap Font). PageStream will apparently use these if they are present, instead of scaling an outline, so they are likely to prove faster in everyday use, though they won't give such as accurate representation on screen.

PFMs present a slight problem - PageStream needs AFMs or it can't use the font at all while DA's Vector

ST gets dedicated packs

Should you want to be a little more sure that what you get will be usable, Gate Seven - the London-based typeface specialists with plenty of ST expertise - have just launched three font packs in both Calamus and PostScript Type 1 format.

The packs cost £24.95 each and contain around 70 fonts and 30 or so different typefaces. The fonts are all of very high quality and represent extraordinary value for money.

Pack 1 has more body text faces, including proprietary versions of Bembo, Bookman, Caslon, Palatino, Times Roman and Century Schoolbook plus dozens of display faces including equivalents of Caslon Open, Hobo and Cooper Black. Also included are versions of Optima, an attractive modified sans serif face, and six weights of Eras, a stylish headline face.

Pack 2 includes versions of body text faces like Baskerville, Garamond and Century Old Style plus a number of sans serif faces in different weights including Univers, Futura Condensed, Copperplate and Franklin Gothic.

There are also some good display faces such as Template, equivalent to Stencil. Pack 3 is a little less useful as an all-round addition to your library but still good value. Incidentally, buyers are invited to make a contribution of £5 to a registered charity called SOFAA which is supporting a community in Ashanti, Ghana.

The administration will be dealt with by Gate Seven - contact them on 071-602 5186.



Some of the Gate Seven typefaces from Packs 1 and 2

and Didot will appreciate the assistance an AFM file gives when kerning but don't actually need it to get by. For most purposes, the fonts will be fine with just the PFB files, provided you remember to kern large headlines.

Happily, though, there is a small freeware utility that will convert

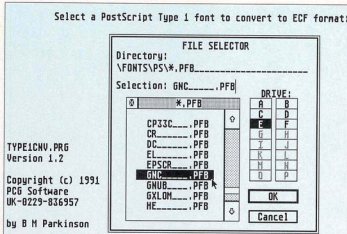
PFM files into AFM files which should be available from most PD libraries. Armed with this, you can quite happily scour the PC catalogues for PD and shareware ATM fonts, safe in the knowledge that you should be able to use them. At least you will with v2.2b of PageStream.

Version 2.1 was very fussy about some fonts and Didot and the ST font converters still tend to be choosy, particularly with poor quality.

So how can you use these cheaply sourced PostScript fonts? There are two main options for converting them into a useful format. The first is to use the budget ST Club utility called Fonty, which we looked at in this column some months ago. It costs less than £12 and converts PostScript Type 1 into CFN format.

The second option is the PCG Font Designer, which we've also looked at, and as well as offering PFB to CFN conversion, it allows PostScript fonts to be converted into PageStream's native format. Not that there's much advantage in it.

But there's a second stage that will be essential for some users. With CFont or Fontkit Plus you can then convert them into bitmap formats suitable for use in Timewords or That's Write.



... and the PCG utility

PD libraries with a PC bias offer opportunities for picking up PostScript fonts.
Andrew Wright investigates

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To order your copy of Family Roots, send a cheque or postal order for £24.95 to the address below. UK postage free, please add £1.50 for Europe or £3.00 for rest of World.

Stone Cold Sober

Stone Cold Sober is a graphic adventure for the Atari ST, STE, TT and Falcon. It runs on colour or mono display (without the location graphics in mono) and is ideally suited to the novice adventurer. As the name suggests, you start your quest in a pub. Your journey will take many weeks to complete and will involve a considerable amount of thought and a bit of luck. There's an element of the supernatural in this one so beware! The program is entirely mouse driven and involves almost no keyboard input at all. Stone Cold Sober was written by Simon Brown, one of the best adventure game authors of recent years and is promised to keep you glued to your screen for weeks (months perhaps)! To order your copy of Stone Cold Sober, send a cheque or postal order for £9.95 to the address below. UK postage free, please add £1.00 for Europe or £2 for the rest of the world.

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Every company that wants to stay healthy not only needs a regular flow of accurate information about its affairs and its market – it also needs to spend time considering that information, and making sensible decisions based on the facts.

The monthly meeting should be the focal point for detailed consideration of company and market data. In large companies, this takes the form of a meeting of the board of directors.

If you are in a partnership, or you are a sole trader, there will, of course, be no directors as such – but it is still of vital importance that a regular meeting takes place.

The idea of a sole trader meeting with himself or herself might seem rather strange, if not comical, but every business person needs to set some time aside to consider their company's current position.

The success of the monthly meeting depends very much on the preparation that has gone into it. If there's little or no information to consider, then it's unlikely that anything useful is going to come out of it.

As an ST user, you have one of the best tools available for preparing for your version of the monthly board meeting.

In past months, I've covered the use of the ST for producing spreadsheets, charts, customer and prospect databases and regular reports, and for tasks like finance management.

The monthly meeting is the time when the pertinent results of this on-going activity on your ST should be gathered together and placed into one folder or binder.

Don't produce information just for the sake of it. Successful businesses are not built merely by documenting in minuscule detail everything that appears to be happening in them.

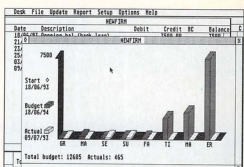
You must aim to get straight down to key factors. For instance:

- What's the current cash position of the company at the bank? You would be surprised how many small businesses only have a vague idea of their current balance, and are shocked when a letter arrives from the bank asking them to pay in sufficient funds to rectify matters, or contact the bank immediately.

METHOD: Use a finance management package like *Digitas's System 3, Microdeal's Personal Finance Manager Plus*, or an economy shareware program like *Double*

Bank	File	Window	Block	Stat	Graph	Text	Macro	Options
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
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31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31

Keeping tabs on the cashflow using 3D Calc



PFM Plus's budget bar chart shows the difference between forecast and actual expenditure in up to six categories

Gathering it all in

Sentry Elite to keep track of all sales income and your costs.

Although it lacks VAT-handling facilities (not a problem for the smaller business anyway) I've personally found PFM Plus reliable and easy to use.

- What are the projections for the current month and beyond? Many small companies literally have no idea – make sure you're not one of them.

METHOD: Use a good spreadsheet like *K-Spread 4* from *HiSoft* or *3D Calc* from *Microdeal* to create worksheets which will provide you with a precise picture of what you can expect to make given various sets of production and sales figures.

This means that your sheets will have to hold lots of detail like unit, distribution and other costs, selling price and other factors which have an effect on your bottom line.

- What will be the effect of the projected sales on the amount of cash required to pay for the manufacturing process? Don't forget all

those warnings about cashflow! You can appear to be doing marvellous business as far as orders are concerned, only to find that you're completely out of cash, or beyond your overdraft limit, with no prospect of payment for the orders for maybe another three months or more.

METHOD: Be vigilant as far as cashflow is concerned. Keep putting the figures into your projected cashflow spreadsheet and if you see a crunch coming, take action – now! The discipline of the monthly meeting means you have a better chance of spotting it.

Your ST can be an invaluable ally in keeping your business in check (and, hopefully, in profit) through good and bad times.

Unfortunately, it is not so highly developed that it can call a meeting. But use it and the programs you feel most at home with to prepare for your regular meetings – even if there's only you attending! – and it will more than earn its keep.

Monthly meetings need not be a waste of time, even if you're the only one there! Use your ST to plan for it and your business could improve, advises Richard Williams

Be a SWOT

If you've not held regular company meetings before, it might help to prepare a SWOT analysis for your first one.

SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – four areas that every company would do well to examine carefully when taking stock of the overall situation.

Strengths and weaknesses are essentially internal concerns, relating to the individual company. A strength might be that a company is well-established, a weakness perhaps that it is using old-fashioned technology and methods compared to its competitors.

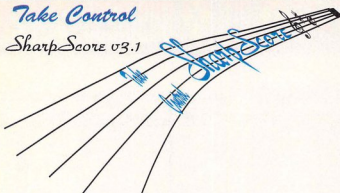
Opportunities and threats are usually external matters. An opportunity might be the fact that a particular market is currently growing, a threat that competition is increasing as new companies try to make a killing.

An accurate SWOT analysis often serves as a good pointer to what a company is good at, what it should avoid, and therefore what it should be aiming for in the future.

Your ST can help here, too. Signs that all is not well in a particular area, or unexpectedly successful in another, can be backed up with hard figures if you search your database, spreadsheet, cashflow and finance management files.

Computers have been known to help provide amazing insights and revelations for businesses. All it took was some human ingenuity to get the right facts from the system, and present them convincingly.

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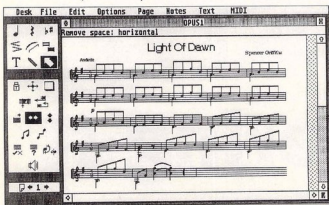


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Welcome to the new Falcon Aspects column. Each month we'll be covering Falcon-related issues, looking at different aspects of the machine's operation and picking out interesting bits of Falcon-only software along the way.

If you've any suggestions or tips you'd like to share with other readers, drop me a line, care of *Atari ST User*, and we'll see what we can do.

GRAPHICS

One of the Falcon's strongest selling points is supposed to be its graphics capabilities. Naturally, you'd expect the manual to cover the subject of the machine's video modes in a lot of detail. Unfortunately it doesn't – unless you count half a page as a lot – and that means matters worse what it does tell you is wrong. The video settings aren't under the Set Preferences... menu at all, they're under the Set Video... one.

If you bring up the Set Video... dialogue you get a few choices depending on what kind of monitor you're using. There are, I believe, 37 video modes on the Falcon. This is made up of 18 on a colour monitor and 19 on a VGA monitor, including the three ST-compatibility resolutions.

The good thing about the Falcon's video is that you don't

need to reset the machine, as changing video mode retains your AUTO folder and accessory setup.

Now a good many of these resolutions are unusable – on a VGA monitor, for example, trying to use the 40 column mode without line doubling will give you a horribly squashed desktop.

All this raises the issue of which monitor is best for the Falcon. Undoubtedly a VGA monitor gives you the best looking and most comfortable desktop.

You get a 20 per cent bigger screen as it displays a maximum of 640 by 480 pixels and while a TV or colour monitor provides a respectable 640 by 400 pixels, it achieves it using a process called interlacing. This gives rise to a certain amount of flicker and you might not find it pleasant. Personally I use my Atari SC1224

John Hetherington launches the new Falcon Aspects column with a look at its video capabilities

Graphically it's great

Free RAM in different colour modes

2 colours	3,657k	3,646k
4 colours	3,615k	3,595k
16 colours	3,497k	3,461k
256 colours	3,294k	3,224k
True colour	2,891k	n/a

Falcon 4Mb with TOS 4.01 running one desk accessory - FREERAM.ACC. First column relates to 80 column interlaced display on an SC1224 monitor (a 640 by 400 display, line doubling off, on a VGA monitor)

all the time and don't mind the flicker but I do use an anti-glare screen which I'd heartily recommend.

The colour monitor has one big advantage over the VGA one though – it can display true colour at its maximum resolution while the only usable true colour resolution in VGA is 320 by 240.

The SC1224 has its own problems though – it is extremely dark. The desktop colours have to be tweaked to provide a decent working environment (I could hardly

make out the icons on mine at first!) and many games aren't really playable as the screen is too dark.

In *Dungeon Master*, for example, it is sometimes impossible to see what a character is holding, let alone what is ahead of him! I've even read on-line reports from the US about this particular problem with SC1224 monitors, so it seems to be universal. The Atari SC1435 colour monitor doesn't appear to suffer the same problem.

There's another aspect of video that has been nagging away at me too. I ran out of memory one day when trying to load a file I'd created a few days before. The only difference in setups was that I'd changed from 16 colour to true colour mode.

A few tests with the old FreeRAM accessory revealed a startling state of affairs – a 4Mb Falcon running in high resolution true colour mode doesn't have 4Mb of RAM at all!

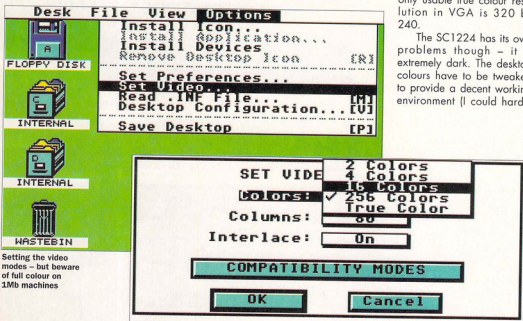
As you can see from the table, true colour mode uses nearly 800k more RAM for screen handling operations than two-colour mode. All this might seem pretty academic to many ST owners still dreaming of having this amount of memory at their disposal but to Falcon users working with memory-hungry graphics programs, 24-bit scanned images or even PhotoCD, it is very important.

BUYER BEWARE

But hang on to a second – what about the 1Mb Falcons when they appear? What is the difference between a 4Mb Falcon and a 1Mb one? Three megabytes, of course!

Take that away from the figure at the bottom of the table and it looks suspiciously as though 1Mb Falcons will be completely unable to switch to true colour mode at all, let alone run any programs.

Even in mono, a 1Mb Falcon will have a lot less free memory than a 1040ST! What's that phrase about "let the buyer beware"?



Setting the video modes – but beware of full colour on 1Mb machines

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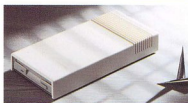
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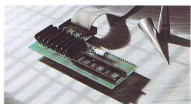
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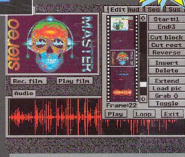
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