The Paragon Report

ATARI

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September 1991

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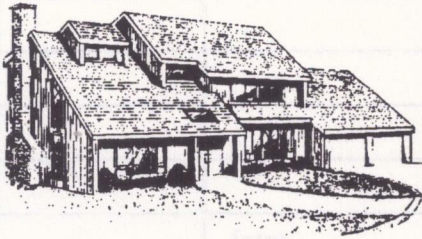secrets and Hints
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3D Construction Kit

Review of the 3D Construction Kit by Paul Blackmore for The Paragon Report

The 3D Construction Kit is a unique piece of software.

Firstly the packaging is unusual, a door on the front of the box opens to reveal pictures of what can be done with the system along with praise from satisfied customers (Well, they are not going to print complaints are they !)

Secondly the authors, Incentive Software, have used the unusual approach of supplying a half hour tutorial video to supplement the manual. This does, however, make the huge assumption that all their customers have access to a VHS video player. It should be said that it is not absolutely essential to see the video to be able to use the software, but it would be helpful, especially to someone new to the concepts of 3D work. The video itself is well done, and has been made for all versions of the software. This means you get occasional glimpses of 'foreign' machines like the Sinclair Spectrum. However after seeing it once or twice you should have a reasonable grasp of what the system can do.

Ok, so what does the 3D Construction kit do. In simple terms it allows you to create 3 Dimensional "worlds" inside your computer and then move around inside them. This, initially at least, caused comparisons between the 3D Construction Kit and CAD3D/Cyber Sculpt from the Cyber series. On the surface they are similar in concept but are actually vastly different in implementation.

CAD3D can create 3D worlds and objects and then apply lighting to them, resulting in a picture of the scene which can be saved for animating etc later. It has a number of utilities that allow creation of quite detailed models which consequently take a few seconds up to a few minutes to calculate depending on complexity.

The 3D Construction Kit on the other hand has a simpler approach to the creation of the models which results in less complexity. It has no advanced modelling functions nor does it to do lighting calculations or create animations.

What makes the 3D Construction Kit different and exciting is that the world created can be explored in REAL time and you can interact with it. At this point the similarities with CAD3D are out of the window.

The 3D Construction Kit operates basically in two ways. The first, editing, is where you create your 3D world and can explore it using the editor functions. If all you require is visualisation of your 3D world then you need go no further. The editor has a view of your 3D world in the upper half of the screen and a push-button panel that takes up the bottom half of the screen. Nice effects are used to make the push-buttons look 3 dimensional when they are activated, some actually look like rocker switches. The creation of the 3D world is done using 3D 'primitives'. There are only two 3 dimensional shapes to work with, cubes and pyramids. All the other shapes (lines, triangles, rectangles, quadrilaterals, pentagons and hexagons) are 2 dimensional flat shapes. Whilst this limits the models that you can create, (no curved shapes) the reason for their omission is simple, they take a comparatively long time to calculate and display. This calculation time cannot be tolerated if real-time 3 dimensional display is to be possible. However, clever use of pyramids and triangle shapes can generate composite shapes that pass for curved objects so the limitation is not that serious. All shapes can be stretched, shrunk, moved, and rotated (in 90 degree increments) as well as have some of their defining points moved to distort the shape. The triangle shape is especially useful as it is the only flat shape that can be 3-Dimensional, i.e. it can be distorted in all three dimensions. Although tedious and time-consuming it is possible to craft very intricate curved surfaces using many triangular facets. This is in fact the method used by ALL 3D CAD packages to generate 3 dimensional solids. Colour can be applied to each face of an object to simulate light and shadow and any colour from a range of 256 can be selected. This is achieved by dithering two colours to get intermediate shades and hues. All in all this allows a colourful and varied 3D world to be constructed and explored from the editor.

→
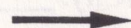
3D Construction Kit

The second level of use is where you can program the system to allow you to interact with the world you have created. It is here that you see the real reason the system was designed in the first place, as a game creator. As a game creator it can be many things, an adventure game creator, a flight simulator, a shoot-em-up, the only limit is your imagination, the system has commands that can handle all this. In fact the 3D Kit is an implementation of the Freescape 3D System used in commercial games like Driller, Total Eclipse 1 and 2 and Castle Master. To be able to program the system requires some familiarity with a programming language such as BASIC. By programming the system new features become available. The programming language has commands that allow objects to be moved, animated, shot, manipulated, detect object collisions, made objects visible and invisible, as well as allowing one of up to 32 digitised sounds to be played, place values into variables, set timers, interrogate the status of objects and maintain instrument displays (to name but a few). The 3D world itself is broken up into 'areas'. Each area can be likened to a room in an adventure game, it can have floor, ceiling and walls or can be just ground and sky. Each area has any number of 'entrances' or doorways, these are the links from one area to the next. An area can also have its own colour palette and its own unique set of conditions that apply only in that area. The conditions are the 'program' that controls your interaction with the 3D world and its objects. There are also global conditions that are used, for instance, to detect the end of the game or increase your score.

This might all sound a little daunting at first, but creating a working game is not that difficult, but maybe a little time consuming. The final result can be turned into a compiled .PRG file that can be run without the 3D system. The system actually comes with a game that you can load and experiment with (and also play !). The surprising thing about it is its size, only 32K of data plus another 47K in sound and graphic files and the 89K compiled runner program. The game includes lighthouses in the ocean, animated sharks under the sea, a space shuttle, a robot shopkeeper and a castaway desert island, and there are many more. Many of the locations are highly detailed and interesting to explore. There is obviously potential for a huge game with many detailed locations and objects. The one thing to remember is keep the objects as simple and as few as possible. The simpler the objects the faster the system responds.

Gripes..

If there are any negative points to make they are few. My main gripe is that the supplied hard disk installation program does not work, (not enough memory .. on a 1040ST) and therefore copies zero byte files. The software is copy protected and has to be run off the original floppy as a result (yes I have TRIED to back it up).

Secondly it is possible to trick the system and cause it to lose its bearings whilst editing, resulting in a garbled display. The reset option does not always cure this problem.

The manual, although it does tell you all the commands, is tersely written. There is a total of 3 pages of general examples. Incentive Software have set up a user group which registered users can join to exchange ideas and get telephone hotline support, (for another $36 a year to us Aussies - that's nearly half the price of the software !), but isn't this just a cop-out for writing a better manual ?

The lack of curved object primitives is a bit of a nuisance, to me at least. The fact that the system can handle 3-Dimensional triangle faces means that simple curved solids, spheres, hemispheres, cylinders and cones, should be relatively easy options to add.

Still, all the gripes aside I do not hesitate in recommending the 3D Construction Kit to anyone who thinks they have a use for it, whether to write a game or as a 3D visualisation tool for interior design, building construction, product prototyping or whatever, you will not be disappointed. And what's more, it's great fun !

Reviewed for
The Paragon Report Sept 1991
by
Paul Blackmore

PageStream 2.1

The Atari ST Desktop Publishing Program

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The magazine of *PARAGON COMPUTERS* Pty Ltd.
Australia's largest ATARI only dealer

THE PARAGON REPORT contains news, reviews and information for Atari ST users in Australia, New Zealand, U.S.A. Canada, Germany, England, Holland and Sweden.

The magazine is produced in house using the Paragon Desktop Publishing Solution, consisting of an ATARI TT030. Eizo 6500 A3 monitor, Megafile 44 hard drive. SLM804 laser printer, QMS Postscript Laser printer, Hawk 432 Scanner, Augur OCR, Migraph scanner, and PageStream 2.1 Desktop Publishing Software.

The information for the magazine is compiled using the latest in human technology, Eyes and Ears.

Thank you to all the ST users for the moral support and for the kind remarks on the previous issues of PARAGON REPORT, (*please keep it up*). Due to numerous requests from readers of previous issues, we have included a list of our ST software, we would like to remind readers that our ST software list is updated every 3 days due to the arrival of new software, we also have specials on most software at the end of the month, to make room for new stock. Please call for the latest ST software and special list

We welcome any feedback on THE PARAGON REPORT and any comments, suggestions, articles reviews or news can be sent to (The Editor) c/o PARAGON COMPUTERS or leave a message on PARAGON BBS on (09) 325 5160 (its free) or phone (09) 221 3216. / 3lines. (human response). 9am - 5.30pm W.A.S.T. Monday to Friday. 9am - 12pm W.A.S.T. Saturday. or Fax on (09) 325 8251. 24 hrs.

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MIDI

How many times have you been given a music file created by a friend on his Yamaha DX7 or Proteus sound module, you load it into your own sequencer and press play, what a noise, up to 16 of the wrong instruments playing at the same time?

You then have to re-map drums, alter all of the program changes to make your keyboard or sound module play the correct instrument at the correct time, the reason for this is that sound number 1 on say a Casio keyboard may be a piano so you may use sound 1 on track one for the main theme, you give your masterpiece to your friend and he has a Roland keyboard that may have sound number 1 set as a wind instrument, imagine this for 16 instruments at the same time and you have a loud mess. Well maybe not for much longer, it seems that there will soon be a MIDI standard set, this means that sound 1 on a Casio will be the same instrument as sound 1 on a Roland or Yamaha etc. To meet this new standard, all instruments must respond to all 16 MIDI channels and must be 16 note polyphonic, that is they must be able to play 16 notes at the same time, MIDI channel 10 will be assigned to DRUMS with the same DRUM map on the keyboard, that is that each percussion instrument will correspond to the same key on all keyboards, touch sensitivity, after touch, pitch bend and modulation will also be standardised. This standard will mean that any music files produced on any keyboard will instrumentally match any other keyboard, no more hours of re-mapping and patching, of course this will only standardise the standard ROM instruments, programmable synthesisers will still have the capability of modifying any sound and assigning that sound to any key or series of keys available to them.

If, like me, you own an Emu Systems Proteus digital sound module, or any of the other popular programmable keyboards or sound modules, one program you must get is the Synthworks Editor by Steinberg, this editor will allow you to control your sound module in a way you have never experienced before.

With typical German attention to detail, the editor gives the user a graphical representation of all the options available in the sound module and more, one of the most useful features in the Synthworks range of editors is the fact that the manual is reproduced on the disk and by clicking on the help option on a drop down menu the cursor turns into a question mark, now whenever you select an option from a drop down menu the relative section of the manual appears on screen allowing you to scroll up and down the pages of text.

After several nights of bashing away on my DX7 keyboard, editing the Proteus using the Synthworks Editor, editing tuning scales and creating sounds that made the hair stand up on my arms, I looked at the dog as I was about to bash the keyboard one more time, he looked at me and then took off to hide in the bedroom on the far side of the house, it was about this time that I noticed an option in the drop down menu called "BRAIN COOLING" this option has been a life saver to me, my wife and the dog, to find out more about brain cooling, call into Paragon Computers and ask for a demonstration of our Steinberg range of software.
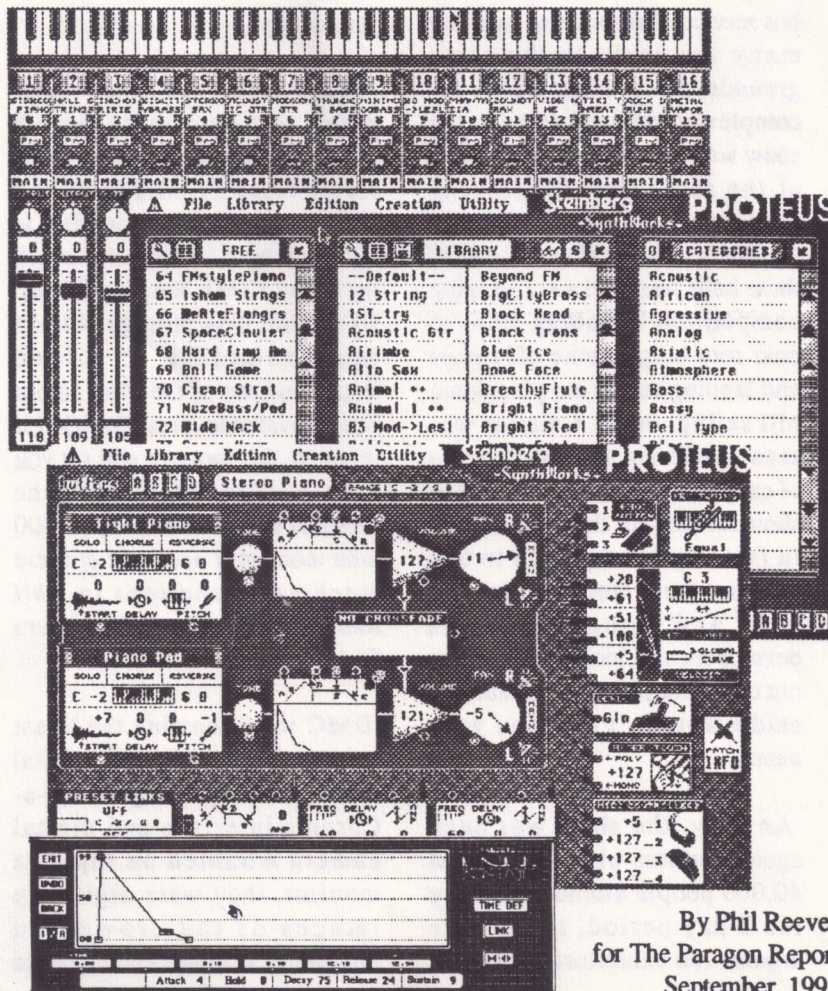
By Phil Reeves
for The Paragon Report
September 1991

The Dusseldorf Atari Show

Well! The Dusseldorf Atari show was certainly the place to be again this year if you own an Atari ST. For the fourth year in succession Atari held their annual Atari show at the huge Dusseldorf Messe halls, with over 20,000 square meters of display area in 2 halls. To give you some idea of the colossal size of the Dusseldorf Messe show grounds, the Atari show in 2 halls would take up less than 12% of the total display area available, each one of the many car parks would be equal to the total size of the Darling Harbour complex in Sydney, free shuttle bus services ferry visitors from the many car parks to the show grounds, the 16 halls within the complex are so huge that another show was held in just 2 other halls at the same time displaying outdoor activities available in Germany, in the corner of one of these halls was held a ski jumping competition including steps to near roof height, take off ramps and landing ramps etc plus down hill skiing, many a visitor was seen wandering around the acres of car parks several hours after the show looking for their parked car, In fact I would say even to this day that there would be several U.S. and Canadian Atari developers still looking for a way out of the car parks. (see Nathan, I said I wouldn't mention your name).

Anyway, the show was once again a success with an estimated 40,000 people attending during the 3 day period, there were around 180 exhibitors from most of the European countries and for the first time there were several North American developers displaying the latest in software and hardware technology. Fast Technology, ICD, Gribnif Software, D.A. Brumleve, CodeHead Software, Gadgets by Small, Double Click Software, JMG Software, ISD, and Wuztek were all there. Bob Brodie (Director of Communications Atari U.S.) was seen in several places at the same time talking with German Media publishers and German developers regarding German distribution of U.S. Atari products and U.S. distribution of German Atari products, hopefully this will lead to some of the better German products being made available to the English speaking world, and some excellent U.S. products distributed throughout Europe. This will be to the benefit of the Australian Atari community.

Tower cases and more tower cases, this year there were 8 companies displaying tower cases for the Mega ST, Mega STE and TT, the one on my wish list is TTTower by RA-Computer which includes 32Mb RAM, 480 Mb fixed hard disk storage, 44 Mb removable hard disk, 3.5" 1.44Mb floppy and any of the 24bit colour boards available, plus CD ROM if required, this monster will set you back Aus$14,000 without the monitor or around Aus$20,000 with monitor (*I need one of these machines, donations to Phil Reeves c/o Paragon Computers W.A. please*).

DMC were showing the latest module for Calamus SL, digital frame grabbing, using a Code-a-Chrome interface and digital camera mounted on top of a monitor, they were digitising images of the crowd and importing the image into Calamus SL. **Invent AG** were showing there QA75 overhead projector interface, projecting the image from a high res mono SM124 monitor onto a large wall screen plus a new product called **System Orbiter**, this allows your ST to interface and control anything in the outside world, Invent's own house in Switzerland is controlled using this system to detect the outside and inside room temperatures and open and close large windows around the house according to the detected temperature. **Fast Technology** had there 68030 board running at 40Mhz fitted into a Mega 4 with a graphics card, I tested the speed of this machine with my own software and it was indeed very fast, in fact it was noticeably faster than the Atari TT030 machine running the same software, Jim Allen's super fast 68020 board now for sale in Germany was going out of the door so quickly that the distributors actually ran out of stock during the first 2 days of the show as did most of the many ST Hand Scanner and graphic tablet retailers and distributors.

Several **24BIT colour** boards were shown including the IMAGINE VME board and the Matrix TT board, Matrix had some very eye catching large screen monitors displaying 24BIT demonstrations all of which managed to stop the German crowd in there tracks and cause them to walk into each other. **3K**

Computerbild had the largest display after Atari Germany displaying full colour output with Retouche Professional, OptoScan Module and Hell ImageSetters demonstrations of which were given in both German and English every hour. **TMS Cranach** were demonstrating Cranach Studio on multi coloured TT030 machines

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The Dusseldorf Atari Show

(blue with white stars and red with orange stars?) I can't quite figure out why these Germans always seem to spray paint their computers and monitors, there was $12,000 worth of TT030 + graphics board + 24" colour monitor that looked as though it had been left in a playschool for 24 hours?

Atari Germany themselves had around 50-60 displays this year with everything you can think of including the **ST Pad** and the new **Note Book ST** (both of which were chained to the tables I'm sad to say), all of my inducements, propositions, bribing, and eventual begging and grovelling in several different languages could not convince this Atari Germany person to part with his ST Note Book. We should see these in Australia later in 1991 I'm happy to say.

Networks are a big thing in Germany with PAMS Net and Bionet being the big 2 on display, printed circuit board layout programs including computer controlled etching, third party RAM upgrades for everything from the Portfolio to the TT030. Robotics and ST controlled devices of all kinds, Portfolio software and hardware developers, Music DTP, Regular siminars on every Atari subject imaginable, Atari User group stands from several countries, demo disks of everything, Music and MIDI software and hardware of every kind, hard disk drives of all kinds and sizes, Tower cases of all sizes and colours, ST books by the pallet load and ST magazines by the 100's, Programming utilities of every kind for every Atari machine, third party mice in every colour of the rainbow, in fact every piece of hardware or software that you ever dreamed of for every Atari machine

imaginable is on display at this largest Atari show in the world, if you're an Atari junkie like me, you won't want to miss the Dusseldorf Atari Show next year.

On the lighter side .

Some of the funnier things seen at and around the show this year were, An Atari Australia person (no names eh Michelle?) looking at Invent AG mixing a drink in Invent AG colours, purple at the bottom blending to light blue at the top and then expecting someone to drink it, (actually apart from being 100% proof it was not that bad if you wore sunglasses.)

Several U.S. and Canadian developers standing on one leg on top of 3 foot poles trying to find their cars in the car park (is that a red BMW I see on the horizon?)

Me trying to drive a left hand drive car on the wrong side of the road after getting into the passengers side and finding no steering wheel.

Me using my English to German translation manual trying to hold a conversation with a salesman on the Matrix stand only to find out that he spoke better English than I do after 10 minutes of letting me suffer.

A Canadian developer driving continually for hours at ever increasing speeds between the airport and the city centre and the airport and the city centre in the early hours of the morning looking for the hotel we were staying at.

Being stopped by a German and told that we are going the wrong way down a one way street, and then to be shown that the correct way to go the wrong way down a

one way street was to put the car into reverse gear and reverse the wrong way down the same one way street.

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What can we expect to see from Atari in 1992?

A multi tasking O/S for the Atari TT will be released around April , new TT's will be shipped with this new TOS installed, earlier TT's can be upgraded to the new TOS.

1.44Mb floppy drives fitted as standard to all Mega STE's and TT030, earlier versions of these models can also be upgraded to 1.44Mb floppy disk drives.

Analog joysticks for the TT030 and Mega STE's will be available.

An add-on transputer board called STT will become available for most current and future ST's, this may also include some kind of graphic board.

Interactive CD technology products will become available for the Atari ST line.

A new awesome 68040 based machine will be added to the current Atari line of products

Unix and X-windows on the TT030 will be available in 1992

ST Note book computer.

STylus the Atari ST pad

FSM GDOS

A New style LYNX machine

A new Portfolio Version 2

by Phil Reeves
For the Paragon Report
September 1991

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Page Stream 2.1 review

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┌─────────────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ New Document...     ⌘N  │ │ Undo               ⌘Z   │ │ Create Columns...       │ │ Show Facing Pages       │
│ Open...             ⌘O  │ │                         │ │                         │ │ Show Full Page          │
│ Append...               │ │ Cut                ⌘X   │ │ Snap to Guides          │ │ Show 50%                │
│ Close               ⌘W  │ │ Copy               ⌘C   │ │ Snap to Grid            │ │✓Show Actual Size    ⌘=  │
│ Save                ⌘S  │ │ Paste              ⌘V   │ │ Set Grid                │ │ Show 200%               │
│ Save As...              │ │ Delete             ⌘B   │ │                         │ │ Show Full Width         │
│ Save As Template...     │ ├─────────────────────────┤ │ Insert Page             │ │ Show/Set User Scale     │
├─────────────────────────┤ │✓Insert Mode             │ │ Delete Page             │ │ Variable Zoom           │
│ Import Text...          │ │                         │ │ Move Page               │ ├─────────────────────────┤
│ Import Graphics...      │ │ Select All         ⌘A   │ ├─────────────────────────┤ │ Show Rulers             │
├─────────────────────────┤ │                         │ │ Move to Page        ⌘M  │ │✓Show Guides             │
│ Export Text...          │ │ Search Text...          │ │✓Show Master Page        │ │✓Show Grid               │
│ Export Graphics...      │ │ Replace Text...         │ │ Set Text Routing        │ │ Show Tabs               │
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│ Print Document...   ⌘P  │ └─────────────────────────┘ │ Insert Page Number      │ │✓Show Column Outline     │
│ Save Doc Defaults       │                             │ Set Starting Page #     │ │✓Show Pictures           │
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The new Pagestream (version 2.1) began selling around Australia a few weeks ago with a minimum of fuss and without the months of advance advertising that has accompanied some software launches on the ST. This has boosted the reputation of SoftLogik, the company that makes Pagestream, as a quiet achiever, getting on with the job without making broken promises, leaving end users disappointed. There were magazine adds in Europe and the U.S.A. for just two months announcing the imminent release of Pagestream 2.1 then there it was, on the doorstep of users all over the world!

REPUTATION

The Australian distributors, Grass Valley Computer Wholesalers managed to release the upgrade to Australian users a few weeks ahead of those in Europe! (That makes a pleasant change, doesn't it!) They had a very positive upgrade policy to launch the product by offering the upgrade for just $110 to registered Pagestream owners for a limited time. This continued a long tradition with softlogik of offering to upgrade their product for not much more than the price difference between the old and new versions. Their philosophy is clearly one of maximum support for Pagestream owners who have supported them. This has built up a level of trust over several years

as word has spread in the ST community that Pagestream users can expect on-going support and improvements. We all know only too well how rare a reputation like this is in the computer world where software companies and even computer manufactures continually fold up and disappear overnight. Just ask owners of IBM Compatibles about their troubles in this area!

So we have a new product from a company of high repute but how good is it? Well the short answer is VERY good. Pagestream boots up looking a lot like the previous version. Only a few new Icons give a clue to the awesome changes lurking "under the hood".

NEW USERS

Pagestream 2.1 looks so much like its predecessor that anyone who has used the program before will dive right in without looking at the manual until they want to unleash of the new enhancements at full power. Those who have not been introduced to Desktop Publishing before will find the legendary Pagestream screen presentation that is now famous as being about the easiest to use and least intimidating of any program on any computer. There are no complicated typography or page layout concepts to learn with this program. No need to create frames, open up special windows or editors here! Simply click

somewhere on the empty page and start typing in some text, much as you would if you were to try to do them same job without a computer to help. Does your text not look quite right? No problem! Grab the object with your on screen "hand" and move it, stretch it, squeeze it rotate it or run the mouse over the drop down menus and choose from many of other alternatives including everything from duplicating multiple selected objects in a single go to variable zooming until just a few letters of the smallest print fill the entire screen! Oops, should those words have been in CAPITALS? Easily fixed just select them with the mouse and choose the Make Uppercase menu item. There are many more little features like that waiting to delight the newcomer to desktop publishing.

What differences will the seasoned Pagestream veterans notice? Quite a few, especially in the power end of the spectrum. Let's cover them area by area.

SCREEN DISPLAY

The most noticeable improvement is that the text on screen is no longer blocky at large sizes or magnification. Objects and text can be manipulated with a more accurate screen presentation with less chance that the final print shows something different (and unexpected) from that displayed on the monitor. Move a graphic

Page Stream 2.1 review

Tag	
✓ No Paragraph Formating	
Indented Paragraph	
Outdented Paragraph	
Set Indent/Outdent	
Manual Kern	
Batch Kern	
Manual Hyphenate	
Batch Hyphenate	
Batch Spell Checking	

Font / Point	^F
✓ Normal	^N
Backslant	^Q
Bold	^B
Double Under	^=
Italicize	^K
Light	^L
Mirror	^X
Outline	^O
Reverse	^R
Shadow	^S
Strike Through	^-
Underline	^U
Upside Down	^W

Super Script	
✓ Baseline Script	
Sub Script	
Change Super/Sub	
Left/Right Indent	
Line/Char Spacing	
Block Left	
Center	
Block Right	
✓ Char Justify	
Word Justify	
Auto Justify	
Make Uppercase	
Make Lowercase	
Make Capitalized	

Bring to Front	⌘F
Send to Back	⌘R
Group	⌘G
Ungroup	⌘U
Fill Style	⌘H
Line Style	⌘J
Edit Coord	⌘E
Align	⌘I
Rotate	
Lock	⌘L
Unlock	⌘Y
Text Runaround	⌘T
Duplicate	⌘D

close to some text and know that they will not overlap or block each other out in the printout. Pagestream 2.1 uses VECTOR fonts on the screen for anything more that 12 pixels high, and bitmapped display for the smaller text representation. Vector techniques mean that each character is represented by mathematical equations which can then be scaled (say made twice as big, [scaling factor 2]) without getting jaggies or looking blocky. A curve is still a curve and a line is a line no matter how big they are drawn and their relative places to other objects remain a CONSTANT whether being plotted on a monitor or a piece of paper. In other words things stay where you put them on the screen and on the printer.

A price has to be paid for all this maths calculation, and yes, Pagestream 2.1 is slower on the screen redraws. softlogik has minimised this price by leaving in the bitmap display for smaller screen displays. This means that you can have near the speed of the old Pagestream when you need it but the increased accuracy of the new one when you need to. For example this text is being entered straight into the page in CSTIMES 10 point, shown on screen at actual size. For those conditions Pagestream has automatically chosen a bitmapped display which is great because there is no need to

examine each character in detail for this operation, I simply need to read what I type in without concern for the exact shape of each letter. All this happens nice and quick too! When a much higher screen magnification is chosen then beautifully shaped characters can be seen but redraw takes longer, and this is OK because the high magnification would be used to accurately position objects on the page, usually a one off operation.

Screen redraw times are greatly improved by adding more memory. With 2 meg or more RAM, Pagestream 2.1 sets up a cache to store the screen. This means that when you go back to edit a section of the page, the program remembers the display it and so updates the screen very quickly.

Another nice feature of the improved screen techniques is the ability to read and edit rotated text. It really is awesome to see those smoothly formed characters leaning at some crazy angle, drop in the cursor and it takes up the same crazy angle, then type in some text and watch it appear beautifully formed and running across the page at your chosen angle.

EPS GRAPHICS
Pagestream 2.1 can now use Encapsulated Postscript (EPS)

graphics meaning that many more choices are available for clip art and picture files from the IBM compatible and Macintosh areas. Large proportions of this artwork is in vector format which once again means that it can be scaled to any size with no jaggies appearing. Some types of EPS files can even be edited on the screen from Pagestream itself. They can be stretched and resized of course, but the vector files can be separated out into their component curves and lines for full editing. This is a great way of learning how some of these stunning graphics have been created because you can dismantle them and study how various effects were achieved. The individual curves of the graphics can have shape changes imposed, as well as line pattern, thickness and colour altered. Graphic areas can be resized and have their fill pattern and colour changed. On the new Atari TT030 the on screen effects are spectacular because of the enhanced graphics modes with more colours and availability of A3 screen monitors!

NEW FONT TYPES
Extra font types have been made available with the new version of Pagestream. The old favourites like Tomhud, Oriental, Saturn etc are included (8 types) and three Compugraphic fonts have been added. These are Times, Triumvirate and Garamond font

Page Stream 2.1 review

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Configure Printer
Set/Save Paths
Set/Save Macros
Measuring System
Change Screen Colors
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Edit Color Palette
Edit Hyphen Exceptions
Set Hyphenation Rules
Edit Spelling Dict
Set Kerning Pair
```

families. Pagestream owners can now choose from the huge range of AGFA Compugraphic Intellifonts. These are a higher performance version of the fonts used by Calamus which have a different file structure, so Calamus fonts can't be used by Pagestream 2.1

Adobe Postcript Type 1 & 3 fonts can now be used which gives users access to the same fonts used by programs on the Mac, IBM PC compatibles and Amigas. There are many of these in the Public Domain so we can now have a large selection of fonts without paying a fortune for the privilege. I have heard that the overall choice of these types runs into the tens of thousands! Adobe Postcript type 1 fonts are hinted fonts which means that they have mathematical algorithms built in to improve the print quality at small sizes. Pagestream 2.1 is able to interpret these fonts to give high quality print even to none postscript printers, including 9 and 24 pin dot matrix printers.

There is an excellent section in the manual called "Understanding Pagestream" at the end of Chapter 1 which gives those of us without much knowledge of the printing industry to get to grips with the fonts. Compulsory reading for anyone contemplating Desktop Publishing, I reckon, and only 7 pages.

BEZIER CURVES

There is a new icon, second row down, right that looks like an arrow pointing at a square dot and the icon at bottom left that looks like a trapezoid shape has an extra capability. These two allow the creation and editing of Bezier curves, or smoothly curving lines for the non technical people (like us!). With the lower icon you can draw a line but by holding the button down when the end point is set, the middle of the line can be curved to take up any shape possible for a single smooth curve. Complex curves are then a collection of these easily drawn single curves.

Any curve which has been selected has two end point "grab handles" plus two more at off-set points along the curve. These are known as control points and they can be moved to change the shape of the curve using the new icon. the position of the end points can also be moved.

These new curves can be used to build a smooth outline around an irregularly shaped object such as a scanned image, then text can be "run around" this shape. The curves can be made invisible (white) to hide the shape that was used for the text run around.

BLEED AREA

As well as the page area there is an adjacent work are that can be resized at any time. This allows for anything to be placed partly on and partly off the page to create various effects, especially with multiple pages. This "bleed" area permits objects to be resized, rotated or copied etc and still land in an area that can be picked up by the mouse and put back onto the page if necessary or even taken to another page .

QUICKSTART TUTORIAL

For those who never read manuals, (isn't that everyone!) there is a little booklet called the quickstart manual that has a tutorial and basic setup instructions. This is an excellent little bonus that gets you desktop publishing straight away. One thing missing from both the manual and the quickstart is unambiguous advice to "UPDATE" the path containing the PLUGIN.TYP file using the font manager section of the program. Now they DO talk about the need to update the font folders so that the program knows where to find the font information but I got caught because I didn't update the folder with the plugin.typ file. When you click on font folders, a list of names appears in the right hand window of the manager showing the available fonts, you update that and everything is OK. But the plugin.typ file (and the other files with it) are not fonts, so they don't show up in the manager window when you click on their folder, so one would not expect to click on update when there is nothing there. trust me though, if you don't do this, strange things will happen like the text appearing on top of itself. Easily fixed once someone has told you what to do!

IMPROVED PRINTING

The printer drivers have been much improved in both quality and print speed. Paragon have a PD utility called FPRINT for the deskjet printer which produces printing speed on this printer that has to be seen to be believed! Even without that though printing is much faster and quicker. On the Atari Laser (SLM 804) for instance, all of the fill patterns now print brilliantly. All this power for only $399.00

Reviewed for
The Paragon Report
Sept 1991
By
Trev Holland

Brother M1324. 24pin Printer

Having used an Epson LX800 9 pin printer for 2.5 years, I was yearning for a printer with better print quality and one which was easier for me to use. (I am a tetraplegic and hence have limited use of my hands.)

The Brother M1324 24 pin printer is what I bought for myself and I am as happy as a pig in mud with it. Using it with the ST is no problem as it offers Epson, IBM and NEC emulation and printer drivers for these machines are readily available. Print speed is 180cps in draft pica (10cpi) and 60cps in Letter Quality pica mode. Printing elite (12cpi) is 20% faster and 15cpi gives a 50% increase. Print pitches available are:- 10, 12, 15, 17, 20cpi plus proportional spacing. Graphics resolution is 360 x 360dpi max. The M1324 comes with an 8k buffer and SEVEN built-in fonts :- Roman, Sans Serif, Broughman, Prestige, Script, Gothic and OCR-B with the option to add another 4. These fonts can be accessed by software control as well as the panel buttons. Under software control only, there is also the ability to do outline and shadow fonts but the manual does not properly explain how to implement them. It is also possible to download your own font set but again the manual lacks full details.

Both push and pull tractor feed are supported as well as friction feed for single sheet paper. With push tractor the paper is fed through the rear. Pull tractor can be fed either through the rear or up from the bottom of the printer.

Changing between tractor and single sheet, known as "paper parking" is sheer bliss. First, press a button to reverse the tractor out of the platten. Then flick a lever, insert the sheet of paper, press a button to advance the paper to the top of the page and you are ready to print.

Returning to tractor feed is just as easy. Press a button to eject the single sheet, flick the lever and press another button to advance the tractor to the top of the page. No touching or manual re-feeding of the tractor paper is necessary. The paper parking feature is only available when used in the push tractor mode.

There is one aspect of using the friction feed that I do find a bit of a nuisance. If the paper happens to go in crooked you can not loosen the platten and align it up properly. The paper must be ejected and then try again.

Six panel buttons/switches let you set and control the host of features this printer is equipped with. For most operations this is a simple to follow, once only, set and forget procedure. A stick-on guide sheet is supplied for more common changes such as print quality, pitch, font and character set selection. Buttons can be pressed one at a time. There is no need for multiple simultaneous presses and all settings are retained when the power is turned of.

Apart from a couple of typographical errors the biggest disappointment about the manual was in the section dealing with the ESCape codes. It was very limited with only lists of the codes and their effects as used in the 3 emulation modes. More detail should be given to this area.

If you are looking to reward yourself with a new printer then the Brother M1324 is well worth considering. It is available now from Paragon Computers and includes a disk with printer drivers to suit popular ST programs.

Reviewed for
The Paragon Report. Sept 1991
by Dennis Kretzschmar

ONLY ☺ JOKING

This software salesman dies and finds himself at the Pearly Gates; he says to St. Peter, "Glad to meet you, St. Pete. I'm a software salesman, one of the most successful ever -- I'm sure there's a place for me inside those gates!"

"Not so fast, software salesman!" St Peter says, "First, you have a choice to make. Take a look at God's video terminal. You get to choose between heaven --. " And on the display terminal there's a picture of fat men quietly punching keyboards, scratching their heads and reading software manuals... "Or, you can choose Hell." On the screen appears a picture of the biggest party ever imagined -- showgirls dancing, champagne corks popping, and every man has a beautiful woman on his lap.

"Wow!" shouts the software salesman -- "I'll take Hell if I'm guaranteed one of those beautiful showgirls and plenty of champagne and eats!"

An instant later he finds himself engulfed in searing, excruciatingly painful flames that seem to leap 500 feet into the sky. "St. Peter -- St. Peter, help! Somethings wrong! I'm burning in hellfire! What happened to the champagne and the showgirls on the video screen?"

St. Peter's voice is heard softly over the roar of the flames: "Oh, you surely understand that, software salesman -- that was just the demo!"

☺

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