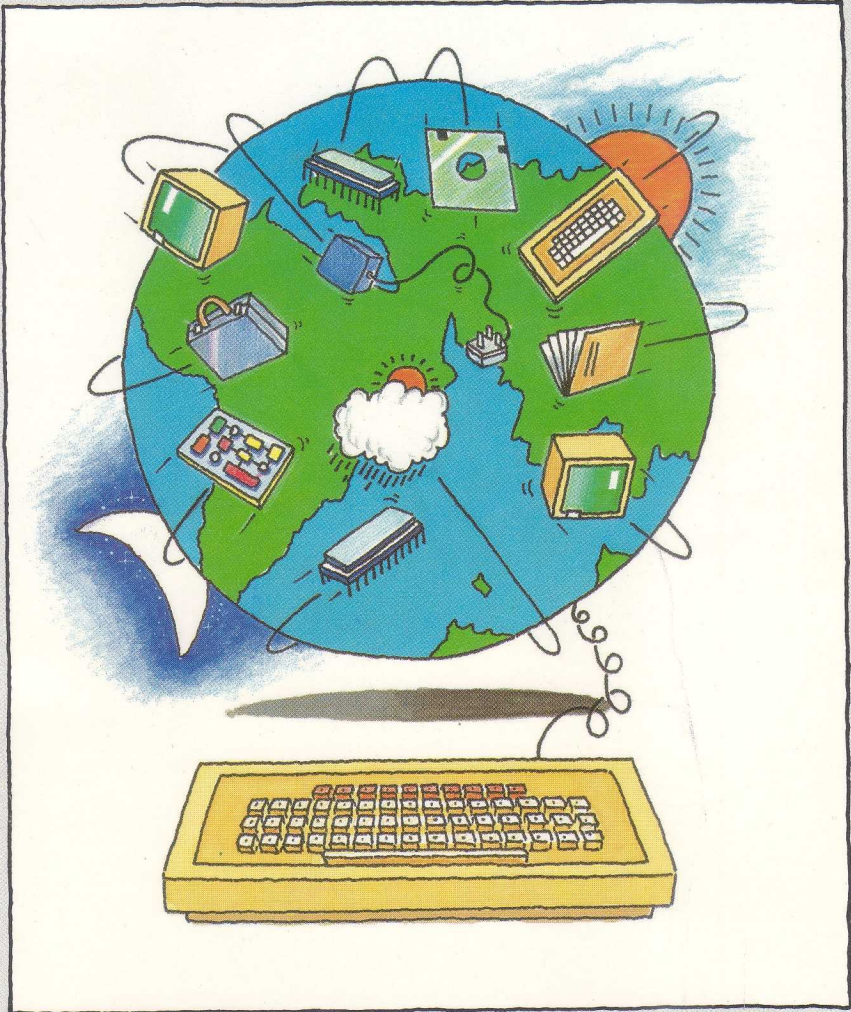
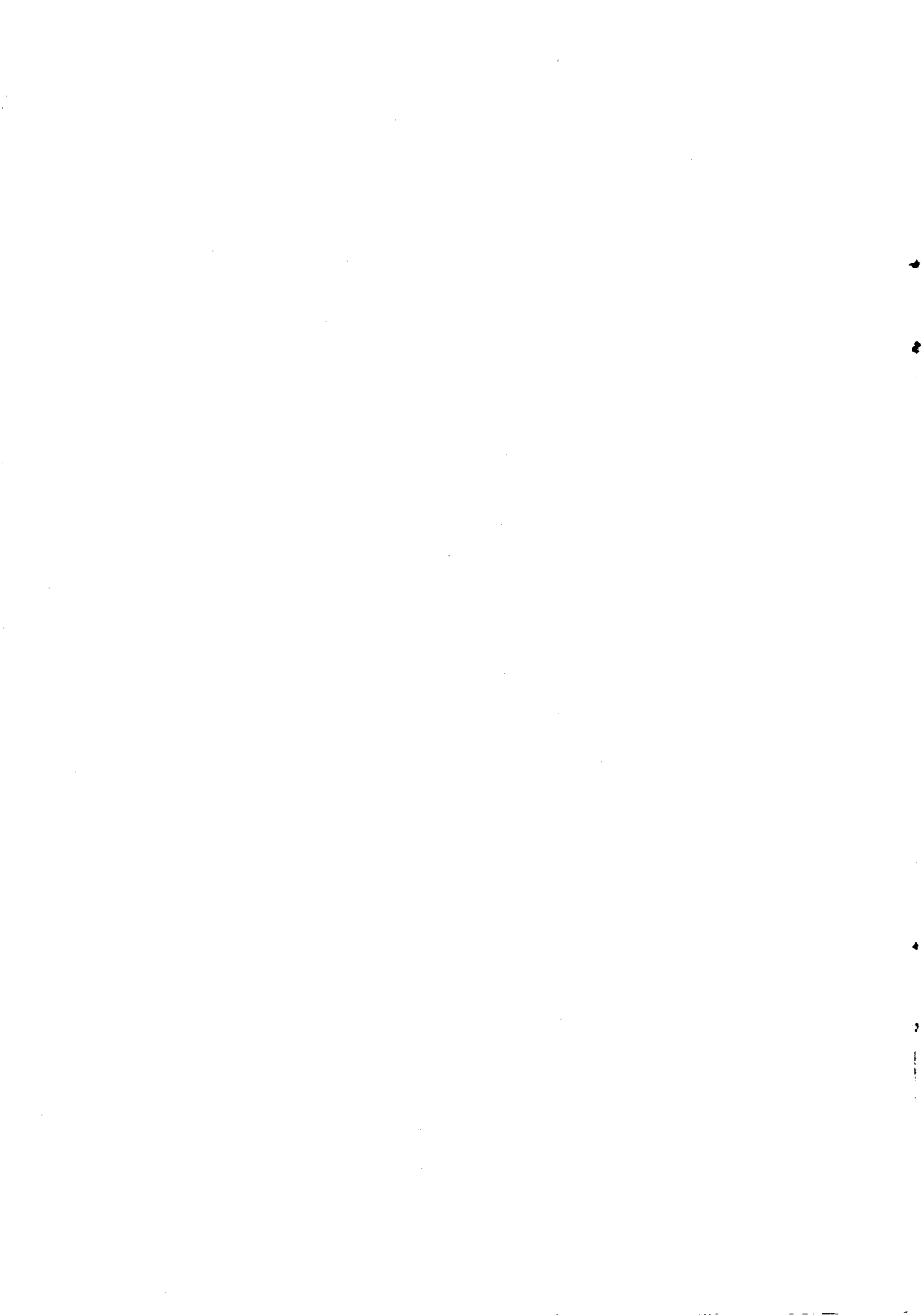


SID USER GUIDE



Acorn 
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**SUPPORT INFORMATION DATABASE
USER GUIDE**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Acorn **Support Information Database (SID)** has been created primarily to provide support information, both of a technical and a general nature, to our various sales and service organisations and our customers.

Some of you may remember that a similar system was previously provided on-line by Acorn and **SID** is a progression on the same theme. A number of changes have been implemented to overcome the difficulties highlighted by the previous system.

To allow **SID** to be compatible with as wide a range of terminals as possible, **SID** conforms to the PRESTEL standard using both the teletext character set and telesoftware formats; the system also operates at 1200/75 baud.

1.1 Overview of the structure of SID

SID is divided into three main areas – a set of viewdata pages, a telesoftware format library and a mail and bulletin board facility. The first area will be familiar to users of videotex databases and contains a number of viewdata pages supplying both menus and general information. The second area of **SID** is the telesoftware format library. This area of **SID** contains documents and software utilities in a machine readable form for use off-line. The third area, mail and bulletin boards, is covered in Part 2.

1.2 Enquiries and additional information

If you have any problems using **SID** or suggestions for additions or extensions you would like to see on the system, please write to:

The Editor (SID)
Customer Support and Services
Acorn Computers Limited
Fulbourn Road
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge
CB1 4JN

SID Mail ID 1000

2.0 MAKING THE CONNECTION

2.1 Connecting to SID

Any hardware may be used to connect to **SID** as long as it is PRESTEL compatible. For users of the BBC Microcomputer this will probably be a BBC Microcomputer Model B, B+ or Master Series along with a V23 modem (1200/75 baud) and terminal software such as BEEBTEL.

2.2 Fastrak access

Access to **SID** is available on Fastrak which is a wide area data communications network managed by Travinet Ltd. which is a subsidiary of Midland Bank Group plc.

This facility has a number of distinct advantages. Firstly, Fastrak is a UK-wide network with 75 local nodes distributed around the country. This provides local call access to the system with the remainder of the distance covered by the Fastrak network. The Fastrak network operates under X25 protocols and therefore line noise and data corruption are eliminated.

This of course represents a cost saving for the user since his call charges from PSTN are only for a local call, coupled with the removal of the need to re-transmit corrupt information, thereby reducing the length of the call.

Fastrak line charges will be made via Acorn at a standard rate and will be charged on a quarterly basis. For details of current line charges and subscription rates, contact the Editor at the address given on page 4 of this guide.

Access to **SID** via Fastrak will *only* be available to paid-up subscribers of **SID**. All of the facilities described within this guide will be available including the personalised mail box facility.

Since users of Fastrak will be charged for line time, it should be noted that the security of your User Id and Password is of great importance. All charges accrued against a User Id will remain the responsibility of the member to whom that Id is issued. If you have any suspicion that your Password has become known to someone else, it should be changed immediately using the command ***PASSWORD#**. If any doubt still remains, contact the Editor and we will change both your Id and Password for you.

2.3 Making the Fastrak connection

The following description constitutes general guidelines for the connection of your microcomputer to the **SID** facility. It is by no means exhaustive and in the event that you encounter problems you should refer to the user guides accompanying both your modem and the software you are using.

Connect your microcomputer, monitor, disc drive and printer (if you have one) together as described in the microcomputer user guide.

Connect your modem to the serial (RS 423) port on the microcomputer and also to a suitable BT telephone socket. Power up the entire system and install the communications software that you intend to use.

Fastrak, and in turn **SID**, will expect you to communicate at 1200/75 baud (V23). The data format that you should use is: 1 START BIT - 7 DATA BITS - 2 STOP BITS and EVEN PARITY. Most videotex terminal software configures its data rate and format to these defaults. If you are unsure, or if the subsequent received characters are jumbled, then you should suspect the data format (refer to your terminal software user guide to alter these parameters).

The modem must be configured to run at 1200 baud to receive and 75 baud to transmit. The baud rate may be changed in one of two ways depending on the modem you are using. If your modem is 'intelligent', then commands issued from software will allow you to change the baud rates. On less sophisticated modems, a thumb wheel or something similar will allow you to set the baud rate. Again you should refer to your modem operating guide for instructions.

When you are satisfied that the configuration of the machine, software and modem is correct, you should then dial your nearest Fastrak node to gain access to the network (a complete list of Fastrak nodes is shown on page 8). When the connection has been made, switch the modem to the data option and after a few moments the Fastrak introduction page will be displayed (see figure 1).

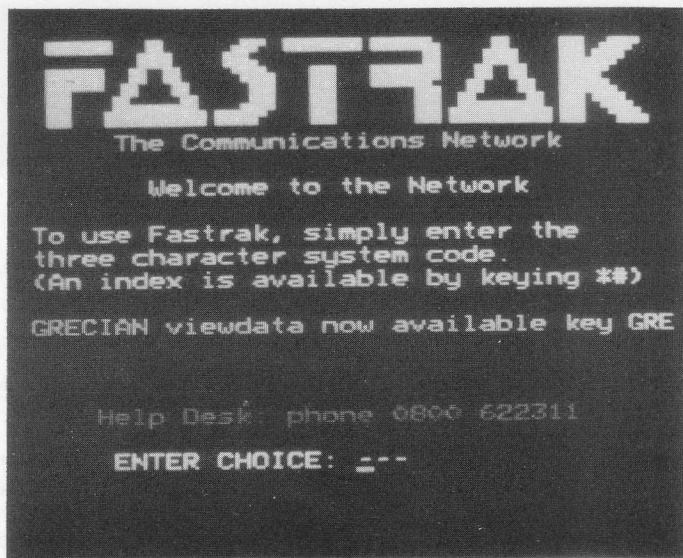


Figure 1

When this page is displayed, Fastrak expects a three character code to instruct it to connect to the appropriate system. To connect to **SID** enter **SID** but do not press # or **RETURN**.

The message **Please Wait** will be displayed and after a few moments the **SID** logon page will be displayed (see figure 2).



Figure 2

To gain access to **SID** you must now enter your personal User Id and Password. You will have been notified of these on the letter sent to you confirming your registration on the **SID** system.

The cursor will move automatically to the point at which you should enter your User Id and having entered it you should press #. The same principle applies to the entry of the Password.

If the User Id and corresponding Password are correct, you will now be presented with a welcome page which will state the date and time and will also display a breakdown of the contents of your mail box. A point to note is that at any time during a session on **SID** you may issue the command ***MAIL#** to check to see if you have received any mail whilst you were on-line. To move from the welcome page to the main menu you should press the # key. An example of the main menu page along with an explanation of the use of menus is contained in section 3.0.

The following is a list of the various access nodes for Fastrak:

ABERDEEN (0224) 648444	KILMARNOCK (0563) 41000
BANGOR (0248) 364884	LEAMINGTON SPA (0926) 881131
BARNSTAPLE (0271) 46655	LEEDS (0532) 432111
BARROW-IN-FURNESS (0229) 37575	LEICESTER (0533) 538717
BEDFORD (0234) 327711	LINCOLN (0522) 45401
BELFAST (0232) 235723	LIVERPOOL (051) 709 6565
BIRMINGHAM (021) 643 8898	LONDON (NORTH) (01) 493 9555
BLACKBURN (0254) 582234	LONDON (SOUTH) (01) 499 4141
BLACKPOOL (0253) 295959	LUTON (0582) 404464
BOURNEMOUTH (0202) 297811	MANCHESTER (061) 236 7676
BRECON (0874) 611611	MIDDLESBROUGH (0642) 502500
BRIGHTON (0273) 821992	MOLD (0352) 50111
BRISTOL (0272) 272628	NEWCASTLE (091) 261 8703
CAMBRIDGE (0223) 314322	NORTHAMPTON (0604) 230909
CANTERBURY (0277) 470222	NORWICH (0603) 630201
CARDIFF (0222) 378031	NOTTINGHAM (0602) 502500
CARLISLE (0228) 30572	OXFORD (0865) 792929
CHATHAM (0634) 815981	PERTH (0738) 39751
CHELMSFORD (0245) 262422	PETERBOROUGH (0733) 40901
CHELTENHAM (0242) 577903	PLYMOUTH (0752) 260511
DONCASTER (0302) 29651	PORTSMOUTH (0705) 382111
DUNDEE (0382) 200001	READING (0734) 500311
EDINBURGH (031) 225 9777	SALISBURY (0722) 335383
EXETER (0392) 213111	SCARBOROUGH (0723) 378888
FALKIRK (0324) 32451	SHEFFIELD (0742) 750424
GLASGOW (041) 204 2066	SHREWSBURY (0743) 248311
GRIMSBY (0472) 51396	SOUTHAMPTON (0703) 225577
GUERNSEY (0481) 710871	STOKE (0782) 289621
GUILDFORD (0483) 506141	SWANSEA (0792) 476270
HALIFAX (0422) 64421	SWINDON (0793) 610166
HASTINGS (0424) 64421	TAUNTON (0823) 59571
HEREFORD (0432) 277227	TORQUAY (0803) 291866
HULL (0482) 23816	TRURO (0872) 78118
INVERNESS (0463) 225577	TUNBRIDGE WELLS (0892) 46312
IPSWICH (0473) 213821	WEYMOUTH (0305) 773152
JERSEY (0534) 25374	WORCESTER (0905) 613821
	YORK (0904) 647001

Additional access nodes are being added by Fastrak, details of the availability of which will be shown on **SID**.

In the event that you encounter any difficulty obtaining a connection, Fastrak provides a 'help desk' facility: telephone 0800 622311.

2.4 Direct dial access to SID

We recognise that many customers will also be looking to gain access to **SID** on an occasional basis to read reviews and new product release information. To cater for this the direct dial facility will be retained for guest access only. Subscribers' User Id's will not be recognised via the direct dial facility.

The guest access via direct dial will only provide access to the viewdata format pages. Access will not be available to the bulletin board facilities, information library documents or electronic mail facilities.

To gain access to **SID** via PSTN use:

Cambridge (0223) 243642

There are three lines currently available on the above telephone number.

Once the connection to **SID** has been made, the user is required to log on to the system. To do this requires the input of a User Id and a corresponding Password:

For guest users accessing **SID** via PSTN, a guest User Id and Password:

USER ID	1000
PASSWORD	1000

is provided. This Id and Password is not valid when accessing **SID** via Fastrak.

3.0 THE VIEWDATA AREA

The viewdata area of **SID** consists of a series of interlinked videotex pages. These pages provide menus to various types of information. Some of the areas available are:

A help section which provides information to assist the user in manipulating the **SID** database.

An introductory area providing a guide to **SID** for guest users.

A news area which will contain current information about exhibitions and events of interest along with any other topical information.

New product descriptions. This area will give information relating to new software or hardware being released by Acorn.

Pricing information on Acorn products.

New additions. This area will indicate where new information has been added to **SID**.

Routes to other areas of **SID**, notably the telesoftware library and the electronic mail facilities, are provided from the menu pages. As standard, irrespective of the page that you are currently viewing, pressing key **9** will take you to the main **SID** menu and pressing key **0** will take you to the last subject menu.

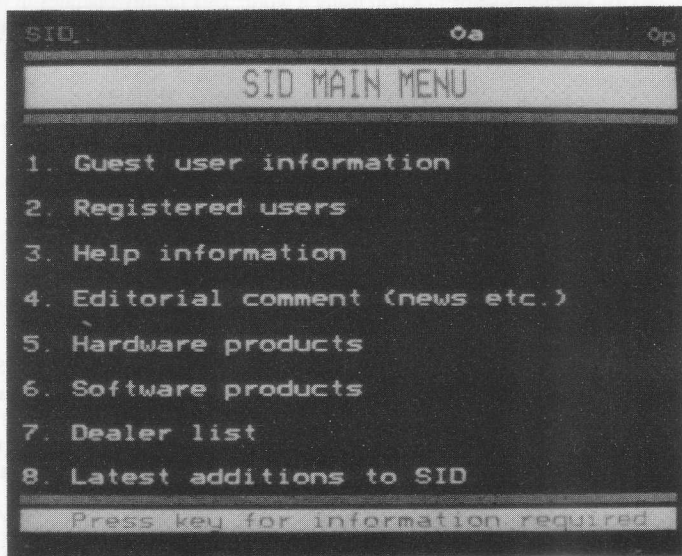


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows an example of the **SID** main menu; this is typical of the menus you will find within the system. These menus provide a list of the options available from them with each option having an associated number. From the above example, option 1. will provide access to guest user information. To access this area all that is required is for you to press key **1** on your terminal.

Searching through the database in this way can prove time-consuming and therefore **SID** provides a keyword search facility which is described in the following section.

3.1 Keyword search

To use the keyword search, or to access a page directly by specifying its number, you must first obtain a * prompt. To do this press the * key and wait for the * to appear. If you type ahead and do not wait for the * prompt, the characters immediately following the * will not be echoed back to your terminal. The command will still be accepted and the appropriate function performed even though the command appearing on your screen appears to be incomplete.

It is possible to specify a target page or function using a word. This facility operates in the same way as accessing a page directly by stating its number, eg. *0# will take you to the main menu page. However, accessing pages by their number requires the user to know the location within the database of the information required.

To help with this, a number of keywords are provided which will take you to the area of the database without the need for the user to be aware of its location.

A full list of all the possible keywords is maintained within the HELP section of **SID**. Entering the command ***KEYWORD**# will take you to this list.

3.2 Use of keywords

Using the keyword facility is by far the quickest method of locating the area within **SID** that you require. Unlike following numbered routes through the database, access by keyword will jump directly to the area specified irrespective of your location within the database. Keywords are available for most information topics such as Econet or Archimedes. Along with access to information areas, keywords are provided for the various **SID** utilities, ie ***MAIL**# to enter the mail system or ***BULLETIN**# to enter the bulletin board system.

The **SID** keyword facility allows any word to be used along with most of the additional character set. Notably * and # may not be used inside the keyword for obvious reasons.

The maximum length of any one keyword on **SID** is 10 characters, and where necessary installed keywords are truncated to this length.

SID is able to maintain up to 1000 keywords at any one time, although it is not expected that this limit will ever be reached.

It is certainly worth spending a few moments checking the available keywords, but in any case a well aimed guess will probably pay dividends.

If you find that you access a specific area of **SID** regularly, and a keyword is not available to take you to that area, send a suggestion for an additional keyword to the Editor.

3.3 Summary of commands available on SID

*#	Use of this command will allow you to go back to the previous page that you accessed. There is a limit to the number of times this command may be used at one time. When the limit is reached, the message 'YOU CAN GO BACK NO FURTHER' is displayed.
*MENU#	This command will take you to the main menu page. This is useful when you wish to return quickly to the beginning of the database.
*00	<p>In the unavoidable event that the page you have just received is corrupted through line noise etc, use of this command will cause SID to re-transmit the page.</p> <p>If repeated use of this command is necessary, then it is advisable to log off and re-dial since in doing so you may obtain a 'cleaner' line.</p>
*HELP#	This command will take you to the help menu page. Contained within the help pages you will find information relating to the use of SID . This information will normally be a supplement to this guide, although it may be a duplicate in some instances.
*BYE#	Using this command will end your session with SID and log you off from the system.
*INFO#	Displays your usage information.
*LOGON#	Use of this command will cause SID to allow you to re-log on without the need to re-dial. This is mainly of use within organisations which have more than one User Id on SID .
*PASSWORD#	This command will instigate the 'change of password routine'.
*MAIL#	Issuing this command will cause SID to enter the mail system.
*SEARCH#	Use of this command will provide the user with a query frame to allow the user to search the telesoftware library indexes. (see section 5.0)
*BULLETIN#	Use of this command will cause SID to enter the bulletin board system.
*KEYWORD#	This command will take you to a comprehensive list of the keywords available within SID .

4.0 THE TELESOFTWARE LIBRARY

4.1 The document library

The second section of **SID**, the document library, consists of a number of reference documents, applications notes and functional descriptions stored in a telesoftware format. This means that the documents are not available to be read on-line but must first be down-loaded onto disc, or other suitable filing system, and then read at leisure.

4.2 The telesoftware format

All the files contained in the document library are in telesoftware format. As was previously explained, this precludes them from being read on-line and they must first be down-loaded and then read locally.

However, not all of the files contained within **SID** are purely textual. The library contains files some of which are BASIC programs, some machine code files and some may be in other high-level languages.

The description in the index will identify the nature of the file, and as far as down-loading the file is concerned there is no difference. However, once a file has been saved to disc a number of options will exist.

If the file is a text file, then it will be a pure ASCII file which is formatted to be displayed in 80 column mode. It is not necessary to load this file into a word processor. Simply entering ***TYPE** (filename) on an Acorn Microcomputer, or a similar command on your own machine, will allow the file to be displayed on the screen and, if the local printer has been initialised then the document will be printed out.

These text files are compatible with the various word processors on the market. The file may be loaded into **VIEW** using the **LOAD** (filename) command and may also be loaded directly into **EDIT**. This will allow for manipulation of the text including searches for specific references.

BASIC programs will function correctly within either a BBC or Master Series Microcomputer without any alteration.

In the instance of a machine code file being down-loaded, then the Load and Execution addresses must be changed before the program will function correctly. The reason for the incorrect addresses is the need to declare a buffer in the receiving machine into which the transmitted program is placed. This buffer starts at Page and extends up to Himem. Therefore, after saving the down-loaded file, the Load and Execution addresses will be at Page.

To change the Load and Execution addresses the following should be carried out.

Having saved the program to disc and logged off from the system, enter the command ***INFO** (filename). This will cause the addressing information to be displayed on the screen, eg:

\$.PANEL 000E00 000E00 0016FE 015

\$.PANEL is the file name and the four numbers correspond to the Load, Execution, File Length and Disc Sector addresses respectively. For our purposes the last of these four numbers, the Disc Sector address, may be ignored.

The easiest way to change the Load and Execution addresses is first to load the file into memory and then save it back to the disc specifying the new addresses; to do this enter:

***LOAD PANEL**

This will load the file in at the Load address 000E00. To save the file with new addresses use the command:

***SAVE PANEL (START)+(LENGTH) (LOAD) (EXECUTION)**

Using our earlier example this command would read:

***SAVE PANEL E00+16FE 5FBD 5FBD**

The Load and Execution address **5FBD** is displayed on the introduction page of the telesoftware file and is also detailed under the relevant entry in the index.

Throughout this example, all addresses are given as hexadecimal values.

For further information on the addresses used with the disc or network filing systems, refer to the appropriate user guide.

5.0 INDEXES, THEIR FORMAT AND USE

The main bulk of the information available from **SID** is found within the telesoftware library and as such it may prove difficult to locate the information required.

To overcome this problem a facility not normally found within viewdata systems has been provided.

Using the command ***SEARCH#** will take you to the index search facility. This facility, which uses the interactive response frame facility described in section 6.5, allows the user to select the product that he is interested in and then provide one or two key words around which to search through the index of the subject selected.

Answer Page	2015a	Op
A/B/B+ Telesoftware		
Document No. :		
Page No. :		
Enter the search text below -		
:DISC,DFS,ADFS		#
:TEST		#
:		
:		
:		
:		
:		
:		
:		
Answer Page at the end of each line		
1 SEND; 2 CANCEL		

Figure 4

Figure 4 shows an example of the type of frame that will be provided when the user selects this facility. As with normal response frames the cursor will automatically move to the beginning of the first field. For the purposes of the following example, we will assume that the user has previously indicated that he wishes to search through the telesoftware indexes under the category BBC Microcomputers models A, B and B+.

The answer page is divided into two areas. The first area consists of two entry parameters: document number and page number. These two options are to enable the user to specify an explicit document or SID page number for the search. Normally these two options would not be used; however, where a user has sent a question to one of the technical enquiries boxes, the response might direct you to a specific document. These two parameters will quickly allow you to locate the document that you require.

The second area of the answer page consists of a sequence of lines prefixed with a colon. Within these fields the user may enter a word or sequence of words around which a search will be performed. The syntax works in the following way.

Three options are available. You may perform an OR search or an AND search or you may use a combination of both. To perform an OR search, the target words should all be entered on the same line, separated by commas. For an AND search the words should be entered on separate lines.

The example in figure 4 shows a use of a combination of the OR and AND searches. The first line, DISC,DFS,ADFS specifies a search for any document with the word DISC or DFS or ADFS in the index description. The second line, TEST, states that you wish to find documents including the word TEST in the description. Since the word TEST is on a subsequent line to DISC,DFS,ADFS the search routine will look for any document containing the words TEST and DISC or TEST and DFS or TEST and ADFS.

It is not necessary to enter a complex search pattern; a single word on one line is often sufficient. Note that a limit of 30 matches is imposed and therefore entering BBC would almost certainly generate an error of too many matches. If you receive this error, then you should try another search but with a more clearly defined search pattern.

When selecting the keywords upon which you wish to search, you should try where possible to select words that in themselves might be seen as a topic, i.e. DISC or TEST. Other keywords that might be used would be ADFS, NFS, OPERATING, SYSTEM, O.S, OS etc. However, any word may be used and with a little use the most effective ones should become self-evident.

Having been provided with the necessary parameters, **SID** will search through the appropriate indexes and provide a sequence of viewdata pages which form a tailor-made index based upon the information provided by the user. The pages produced contain a full description of the file contained within the telesoftware library, along with information concerning the page within **SID** where the document may be found. If you wish to download the document referred to by a given page, then pressing key 7 will take you to the introductory page for that file.

This facility operates by using a 'slave' computer connected to the network of machines which act as **SID** host computers. When a request is created by a user, the parameters are bundled up into an Econet control block and sent to the 'slave' for processing. The 'slave' performs all the searches and also creates the viewdata frames which constitute the answer.

Since **SID** has a number of lines connected, it is possible that the 'slave' might be busy servicing another request when yours is sent. In this instance, your host will re-try a number of times in case the 'slave' finishes its task within a reasonable time. In the event that the 'slave' remains busy a 'systems error' message will be displayed along with an explanatory page. If you receive this message, you should re-try later. In the event that you receive this message on more than two consecutive occasions, you should contact the Editor who will correct any problem that may have arisen.

6.0 ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

6.1 Changing Passwords

To allow users the necessary control over the Password associated with their User Id, the ***PASSWORD#** command is provided.

It may become necessary, for example when your User Id and Password become known to someone else, to change your Password. To do this enter the command ***PASSWORD#** and **SID** will request first that you enter your existing Password followed by the new Password that you require. You will be asked to enter the new Password a second time to ensure that you didn't mistype it the first time.

Throughout this dialogue, the entries made by the user are not displayed on the screen to ensure that the old and, more importantly, new Passwords cannot be seen by anyone else.

6.2 Usage information

A special page, available using the command ***INFO#**, provides useful information about the way in which you have been using **SID**. Entering this command will cause a page of information (see Figure 5) relating to your levels of access, the number of times and cumulative duration of accesses to **SID**, and also information concerning your budget, expenditure etc to be displayed.

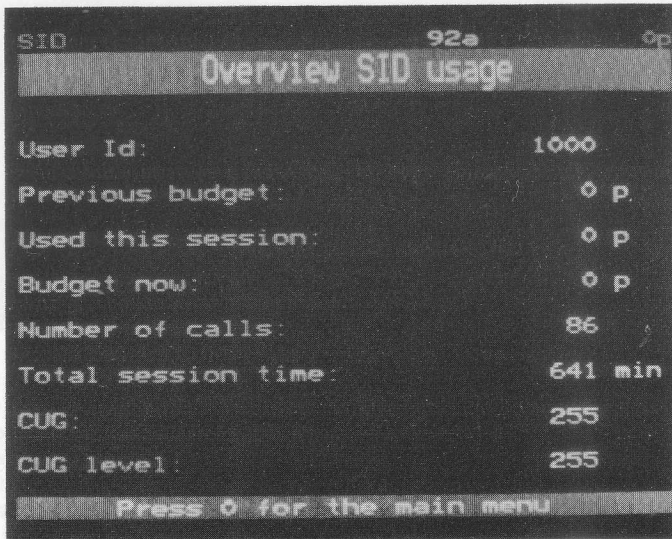


Figure 5

The User Id is that of the user that you are logged on as. The previous budget refers to the amount of credit you have remaining for the purposes of buying pages on the system. This is related to the price shown at the top right-hand corner of the page. The next two items detail the amount spent on frames during this session and the remaining budget respectively.

In general all pages on **SID** are free of charge, but in the event that a frame carries a charge, the previous frame will detail the charge and the information that you will be paying for.

The number of calls shows how many times you have been connected to **SID** during the current charging period and the total session time provides you with a record of the total line time used, again during the current charging period. The total session time is updated whilst you are on line so that a second look at this page later on in the session will show the appropriate increase.

The applications to which this facility may be lent are numerous and suggestions as to the type of information or facility which could be provided are welcomed.

In the event that you have established a CUG within **SID**, this facility may also be provided for you. As an example, you may wish to provide a software or hardware applications catalogue for your users to browse through. This may be achieved by the submission of an electronic text file of the catalogue which we could then interface with the 'slave' facility.

6.6 Future applications

SID will continue to be developed over the coming months. We will endeavour to ensure that such facilities as are not already available, but through weight of public demand are considered worthwhile, are implemented.

It is the company's intention that the **SID** system should be used in the most effective way for our customers' benefit. We therefore hope that **SID** users will take an active part in helping us to provide the best service possible.

If you have any comments or suggestions for areas for improvement, please do not hesitate to contact the Systems Editor using either the electronic mail facility inherent within **SID** or by writing to the address shown on page 4 of this guide.

The CUG and CUG level information refer to your level of access to the information within **SID**. These two numbers will usually be the same unless you are a member of a specialised Closed User Group. In practice, the number of CUG levels in operation is very small and therefore a low number displayed in this field is not indicative of any real limitation of access to the information contained within the system.

The following section gives a brief description of closed user groups and their implications to users of **SID**.

6.3 Closed User Groups (CUGs)

The facility exists within **SID** to instigate CUGs. This enables a number of users to share a common area of the database which is inaccessible to other users of **SID**. This will allow for specific information relating to the CUG users to be provided. It may also be possible to allow the CUG users to nominate their own editor for their area of **SID**. This would allow the editor to produce and display information on **SID** with complete on-line editing facilities.

There is a limit to the number of CUGs that may be instigated and therefore only those groups of users with a legitimate need would be allowed to form their own CUG.

If you want to know more about CUGs, or wish to form one of your own, please contact the Editor at the address given on page 4 of this guide.

6.4 Pre-format response frames

Throughout **SID** you may well find a number of frames which are configured as a form for you to fill in. These 'forms' may be used by us to allow you to make specific requests for additional information, catalogues etc. The articles sent to you as a result of filling in these forms are free of charge unless otherwise stated on the response frame.

When completing these frames, you will only be able to enter information into the fields provided and it is important that you provide all the information requested to allow us to carry out the appropriate action.

6.5 Interactive response frames

At a glance, this type of response frame appears to be the same as the pre-format response frames described above. However, the important difference is the action which is taken after you have completed the form. An example of this type of response frame is the search facility described in section 5.0 above.

These interactive frames will be put to a number of uses. In general they will be used in circumstances where either a sequence of viewdata frames or a telesoftware file is not an appropriate means of conveying information. For example, it is intended that a question and answer facility will be provided which will enable **SID** users to interrogate a large database of regularly asked questions, along with their corresponding answers, to obtain the solution to their problem.

PART 2

MAIL AND BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEMS

2.1.0 THE SID MAIL FACILITY

The electronic mail facilities provided by **SID** are far more comprehensive than those normally found within a videotex system. As a result the number of commands available to the user, and the way in which these commands may be structured, can become quite complex.

In order to make full use of the facilities provided by the **SID** mail system, the user requires a basic understanding of the way in which the system functions; a description follows.

2.1.1 Mail system overview

The mail system provides a medium by which users of **SID** may intercommunicate with each other. This is achieved by allowing users to compile special mail frames and specify the recipient of the frame. Each message is therefore restricted to either a single or a sequence of viewdata frames to allow the mail server to remain compatible with the viewdata standard.

Upon arrival in a user's mail box, the message is allocated a unique number. This number will remain with this message throughout its life within the recipient's mail box. Only when a message has been deleted will the number be re-allocated to a new incoming message.

The available commands follow a given structure with some commands available only after the use of another command. For example, it is not possible to **DELETE** a message until it has been **READ**.

The mail system imposes no limit to the number of messages that may be held in any given mail box at any one time, but in practice the user should manage his mail box to ensure that the number of existing messages does not prove to be unwieldy.

To ensure that the mail server does not become cluttered with large amounts of redundant mail, it will be periodically purged. Users will of course be given at least one week's notice of a purge taking place.

2.2.0 SID MAIL COMMAND STRUCTURE

The following is a description of the commands available within the **SID** mail system.

To enter the mail system you should issue the ***MAIL#** command from anywhere within the **SID** database. The mail command **QUIT** will subsequently allow you to exit from the mail system into the normal **SID** environment.

An introductory page will be displayed which contains any general message from the Editor along with details of the contents of your mail box.

A new type of prompt i.e => is displayed at the bottom of the screen when in the mail system. At this prompt you may enter any of the commands given below. The top level of the command structure consists of four commands, **SEND** **SCAN** **READ** or **QUIT**, which can be used either on their own or in conjunction with a number of different parameters.

2.3.0 THE SEND COMMAND

SEND

This command is used to send messages between users of the **SID** mail system. When used, it will cause a standard blank mail page to be displayed on your screen.

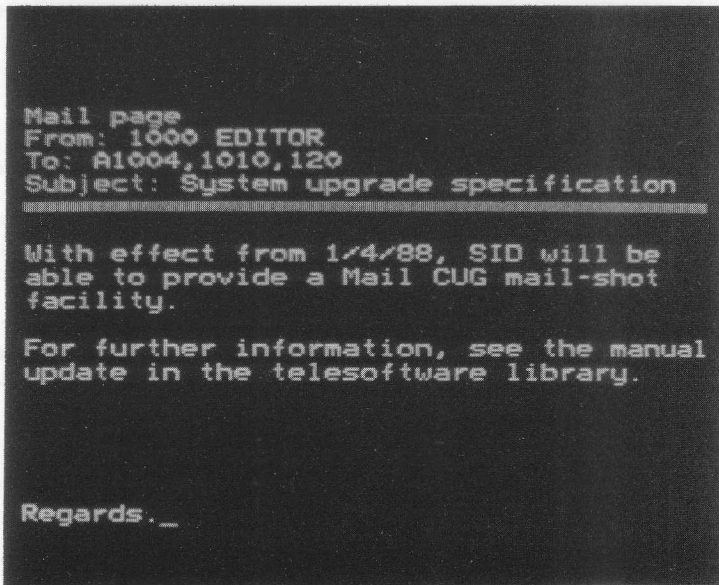
The mail frame consists of three fixed fields and a free format text area. The first field, the **From:** field is automatically completed by the system. The second field, the **To:** field, allows you to specify the recipient(s) of the message whilst the third field allows a one line description of the message to be entered.

When the fixed fields have been completed, the cursor will move to the free format area to allow you to enter the text of your message. When you have completed this area, pressing the # key will indicate to the mail system that you have completed entry of your message and you will be given the option to send or cancel.

To:

Within this field a number of options are available. At the most simplistic level, entering the **SID** Mail Id of the person to whom you wish the mail sent is quite sufficient to allow delivery. In most instances this in itself will be all that you would use.

However, to allow for the various contingencies that arise when sending messages to people, a number of prefixes are available.



```
Mail page
From: 1000 EDITOR
To: A1004,1010,120
Subject: System upgrade specification
-----
With effect from 1/4/88, SID will be
able to provide a Mail CUG mail-shot
facility.

For further information, see the manual
update in the telesoftware library.

Regards._
```

Figure 6

- A** **Acknowledge** – when this prefix is used, the **SID** Mail Server (SMS) will automatically send you express notification when the recipient first reads the message that you sent.
- B** **Blind copy** – if you have sent a message to more than one person but do not wish one or more of them to know the other recipients of the message, then you should use this prefix.
- E** **Express mail** – if your message is to be considered top priority, then appending the **E** prefix to the Mail Id will ensure that your message appears at the top of their mail stack. Use of this option should be limited to prevent complacency.
- R** **Reply requested** – when this prefix is used, the recipient will be presented with an appropriate reply page as soon as they have read your message. This may be used to ensure a prompt response to your original mail.

If you do not add any prefix to a Mail Id when more than one recipient is specified, then it will be treated as a carbon copy.

You may use any combination of these prefixes on any Mail Id specified. For example, if you sent a message to **EAR1000**, then your message would be sent as Express mail to the System Editor. As soon as the Editor has read your message, an Acknowledgement would be sent and the Editor would be provided automatically with a Reply page. In practice using both the **R** and **A** prefixes is not necessary since both the acknowledgment and the reply would be posted to your mail box at about the same time.

2.3.1 Mail addresses

Four forms of mail address exist. All addresses consist of a number. The following ranges show which numbers apply to which type of address. When sending the message to more than one Mail Id, each Id and any accompanying prefixes must be separated with a comma, e.g **A1000,1010,120**. With this example, the message would be sent to user 1000, user 1010 and user group 120. An acknowledgement would be supplied from user 1000.

- 0** If a message is sent to Mail Id 0, then it will be sent to the System Editor as a request for a global mailshot to all **SID** users. Using this mail Id does not in itself guarantee that the mailshot will be carried out, but merely constitutes a request.

This facility is intended to allow commercial users to place advertisements on **SID**. When such a mailshot is carried out then the message will be clearly stamped with the word 'Advertisement'.

It is important to note that this is only a discretionary service and is chargeable. For further information please contact the Editor.

- 1-255** This allows members of a Closed User Group (CUG) to send a localised mailshot to other members of their CUG. It is not possible to send a CUG mailshot unless you are a member of that CUG. For details contact your CUG manager.

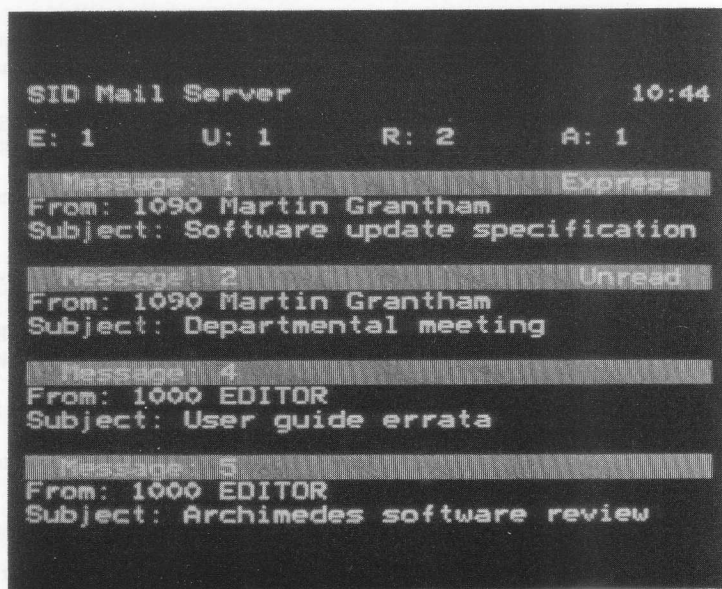
- 256-999** This range is allocated to mail user groups. These may be set up on request by the editor. Members of a mail CUG need not be members of the same **SID** CUG.
- 1000 +** Numbers ranging from 1000 and upwards constitute individual mail boxes of **SID** users. All users' mail addresses are 'Ex-directory' unless the owner requests otherwise.

2.4.0 THE SCAN COMMAND

The **SCAN** command operates upon two areas of your mail box. Firstly, it allows access to your current mail. These are messages that either are awaiting your attention or have been read but neither archived nor deleted. Secondly, it allows access to those messages which have been both read and then archived for future reference.

When used on its own, the **SCAN** command will display a list of the current messages in your mail box in numerical order. Information concerning the message number, its status, the sender and also the subject text is displayed.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**



```
SID Mail Server                                10:44
E: 1      U: 1      R: 2      A: 1

Message: 1                                     Express
From: 1090 Martin Grantham
Subject: Software update specification

Message: 2                                     Unread
From: 1090 Martin Grantham
Subject: Departmental meeting

Message: 4
From: 1000 EDITOR
Subject: User guide errata

Message: 5
From: 1000 EDITOR
Subject: Archimedes software review
```

Figure 7

SCAN (No.)

This command allows you to scan your mail box, starting at the message number given in the command.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**

SCAN EXPRESS <(No.)>

Displays a list of unread express mail that you have. If there is only one, then a number is not necessary; if more than one is present, the first message in the displayed list will be that of the number specified in the command.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**

SCAN UNREAD <(No.)>

Allows the user to list any outstanding unread mail. As with **SCAN**, it will begin with the first unread message in the mail box unless a number is specified.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**

SCAN READ <(No.)>

This command functions in the same way as **SCAN UNREAD <(No.)>** except that it deals with read messages.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**

SCAN ARCHIVE <(No.)>

This command allows access to any archived mail. The number is optional and may be used to specify an explicit message in the archives. The display follows the same form as with the current mail box area.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**

SCAN ALL <(No.)>

This allows a user to browse his entire mail box, starting from either the first message or from that specified in the command. This command will display a list of all messages irrespective of their status, including those in the mail archives.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**

2.5.0 THE READ COMMAND

The **READ** command operates upon two areas of your mail box. Firstly, it allows access to your current mail. These are messages that either are awaiting your attention or have been read but neither archived nor deleted. Secondly, it allows access to those messages which have been both read and then archived for future reference.

When used on its own, the **READ** command will display the first current message in your mail box (the message with the lowest number). The following parameters are available when using the **READ** command.

Subsequent commands: **ARCHIVE DELETE FORWARD NEXT REPLY**

READ (No.)

This command allows you to read a specific mail box item, e.g **READ 4** would cause message number 4 to be displayed.

Subsequent commands: As with **READ**

READ EXPRESS <(No.)>

Displays any unread express mail that you have. If there is only one, then a number is not necessary; if more than one is present, the first message will be displayed.

Note: When an express message has been read, it becomes a normal read message and not a read express message:

Subsequent commands: As with **READ**

READ UNREAD <(No.)>

Allows the user to read any outstanding unread mail. As with **READ**, it will begin with the first unread message in the mail box unless a number is specified. When using **NEXT** as a subsequent command, the Mail Server will display the next unread message and not necessarily the next message in the mail box stack.

Subsequent commands: As with **READ**

READ READ <(No.)>

This command functions in the same way as **READ UNREAD <(No.)>** except that it deals with previously read messages.

Subsequent commands: As with **READ**

READ ARCHIVE <(No.)>

This command allows access to any archived mail. The number is optional and may be used to specify an explicit message in the archives.

Subsequent commands: **DELETE FORWARD NEXT REPLY**

READ ALL <(No.)>

This allows a user to browse his entire mail box starting from either the first message or that specified in the command. This command will display all messages irrespective of their status including those in the mail archives.

Subsequent commands: **<ARCHIVE> DELETE FORWARD NEXT REPLY**

2.6.0 SUBSEQUENT COMMANDS

These commands can only be used after a previous action has taken place: for example, before you may **DELETE** a message you must first **READ** it.

ARCHIVE The archive command allows the user to 'file' the last read message away for future reference. When archiving a message, it will retain its mail message number. If message 2 is archived, then another message 2 will not be created in the current mail box area.

It is not possible to **unARCHIVE** a message, although you could always **FORWARD** the archived message to yourself. This is not recommended since it will still leave a copy in the archives and have the effect of producing a duplicate of the message.

DELETE This command may be used after a **READ** or **READ ARCHIVE** command and will remove the message from your mail box. The message number will then be re-allocated.

FORWARD As with **DELETE**, this command may be used after any **READ** command. The effect of this command is to forward the message onto specified mail boxes. To specify the intended recipients use the same format as for the **To:** field used in the **SEND** command. The prefixes and Mail Ids should be entered as part of the **FORWARD** command, e.g **FORWARD A1000 1001**.

When a message is forwarded, an audit trail of its previous recipients is attached to the header of the message.

NEXT This command may be used after any of the other mail commands. When used it will cause any subsequent pages, either lists produced by the **SCAN** command or messages accessed with **READ**, to be displayed.

- REPLY** After reading a message, use of this command will provide you with a standard mail frame with both the **From:** and **To:** fields completed for you.
- This will only allow you to respond to the sender. It is not possible for you to append additional recipients Mail Ids to the **To:** field.
- QUIT** Exit from the mail system to the normal **SID** database area. This command may be issued at any time at the => prompt.

2.7.0 *COMMANDS AVAILABLE

Only a limited subset of the *commands is available from within the mail system.

- *INFO** Use of this command will provide you with the standard information frame detailing your system usage. This may be of use if you are a CUG member and have forgotten your CUG number for mailshot purposes.
- *BYE** The standard system log-off command. Using this exits both the Mail Server and also the **SID** system in total.
- *00** In the event that a page you receive has been corrupted by local line noise, use of this command will provide a re-transmission of the page.
- *BULLETIN** This will allow you to swap from the mail system to the bulletin board system.

If you require access to another area of **SID** normally available through the use of a ***<keyword>** command, you must first issue a **QUIT** command to exit the mail system and return to the main **SID** database area.

2.8.0 THE BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM

To complement the **SID** mail service a bulletin board facility is provided. To gain access to this, use the command ***BULLETIN** from anywhere within the **SID** environment.

As with the mail system, the **=>** prompt is used within the bulletin board facility.

When first entering the bulletin board area, you will be presented with an introductory page which will contain any news or relevant information concerning the bulletin boards. After you have received this page, you will be provided with the **=>** prompt at which point you may make use of the following commands.

SCAN This command may be used in two ways within the bulletin board system. If you issue the **SCAN** command immediately upon entry into the bulletin board area, you will be presented with a list of the various bulletin boards to which you have access. As with the mail facility, each bulletin board has a unique number by which it is identified.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**

NEXT **NEXT** will display additional pages of bulletin board options where these are available.

Subsequent commands: None

SELECT (No.) The third command available after initial entry is the **SELECT** command. This will allow you to choose the bulletin board that you wish to use. Until a bulletin board has been successfully selected, the rest of the bulletin board commands are not available.

Subsequent commands: None

Commands available within a selected bulletin board

SCAN When used within a selected bulletin board, **SCAN** provides a list of the current messages. Again, each message is identified with a unique number. An optional number may be entered with the **SCAN** command to allow for the list to start at a specified message, e.g **SCAN 3** will start the list from message number 3.

To access any further pages of listed messages, you should make use of the **NEXT** command.

Subsequent command: **NEXT**

READ (No.)

To read any or all of the messages within a given bulletin board you should use the **READ** command. Use of the command on its own will cause the first message on the bulletin board to be displayed (that with the lowest number). If a number is specified when using the **READ** command, the appropriate message will be displayed.

In keeping with conventional bulletin boards, the messages are stored as a sequence, and although it is possible to specify individual targets, it is also possible to move backwards and forwards through the messages, using the **NEXT** and **LAST** commands. These two commands will operate irrespective of the point at which you commence reading.

Subsequent commands: **NEXT LAST COPY DELETE**

WRITE

To send a message to your selected bulletin board, use the **WRITE** command. You will be presented with a standard pro-forma similar to that used within the mail system but without the **To:** option. The subject field is that which is displayed when the **SCAN** command is used to interrogate the bulletin board.

Subsequent commands: None

DELETE

The **DELETE** command may be used to delete messages from a bulletin board. It is only possible to delete those messages that you yourself put on the board. You may not delete other people's messages. You may only delete a message after you have first read it.

Subsequent commands: None

COPY

Since messages may be deleted by either their owners or the bulletin board manager, the **COPY** command is provided. This will allow you to copy the message that you have just read to your own personal mail box.

Subsequent commands: None

DESELECT

This command allows you to exit from a particular bulletin board without leaving the entire bulletin board environment.

Subsequent commands: None

QUIT

Exits from the **SID** bulletin board facility and returns the user to the main menu.

Subsequent commands: None

***commands available from within the bulletin board**

Only a limited subset of *commands is available from within the bulletin board.

- *MAIL** Allows entry into the **SID** mail system from the bulletin board system.
- *INFO** Displays current usage information.
- *00** Re-transmits the last page.
- *BYE** **QUITs** from the bulletin board system and then exits entirely from the **SID** database.



Acorn Computers Limited
Cambridge Technopark
645 Newmarket Road
Cambridge CB5 8PB, England

Telephone (0223) 214411
Telex 81152 ACNNMR G
Fax (0223) 214382
Viewdata (0223) 243642