

Acorn Customer Services Newsletter

*Issue 15
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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 15 of the Customer Services Newsletter.

Due to an overwhelming demand for more technical information, we are aiming to issue the Customer Services Newsletter monthly and, providing there is sufficient information, discs will accompany the newsletter every two months. We hope that the information we provide is useful to you but please do give us feedback on the content of the newsletter and do let us know what specific technical topics you wish to see covered.

A disc is enclosed with this month's newsletter. We have included another copy of our Application Note No. 222, "Fonts as a shared resource", this time including the application which should have been issued with the Customer Services Newsletter Issue 14 - apologies for the oversight.

Further details of the disc contents can be found in the News Section of this newsletter.

Peter Dunn
Acorn Customer Services

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Acorn News

Acorns Technical Support BBS

Acorn's Technical Support Bulletin Board has been enhanced and the system now uses ArcBBS host software. The new number for Acorn's Technical Support BBS is:

Cambridge (0223) 254242

TTY or ANSI Terminal, 8 Data Bits, No Parity,
1 Stop Bit : V21, 22, 23, 22bis, 32, 32bis and HST.

Please give the board a call and bestow upon us your thoughts of the new layout.

Issue 15 Disc contents.

The application notes are supplied in Impression, !Edit and !Draw format. Please note that some of the !Draw files are RISC OS 3.10 specific.

Application Notes

Installing new fonts for Acorn DTP
Adding floppy drives to ARM based Systems
RISC OS 3.10 power up self test information
VIDC Screen mode timings
Printers Supported by RISC OS 3.10 printer drivers
!Fonts as a shared resource

Modules

SerialDevices (This module is for use with RISC OS 3.10 on A300 Series, A440, A400 series, A3000 and A540 systems and should improve the speed and reliability of applications which use the serial port).

The module should be stored in !System.modules and loaded by the !Boot file.

Servicing

Printable forms in Draw format: the Service Report form for use when sending items for repair, including via Fastrack; and the Product Return form for use when applying for warranty repairs or goods returns from your distributor.

Joystick support on the A3010

We are currently receiving a large number of enquiries regarding support for joysticks on the A3010. Any standard Atari/Commodore style joystick will work correctly on the A3010. It is however necessary for the software to have support for the Acorn joystick interface for the joysticks to work. Many of the early games will obviously not support Acorns joystick interface as the operating system interface was not defined at the time the game was written. If however you are not sure whether a particular piece of software will support the Acorn joystick interface please contact the supplier for details.

Pocket Book A-Link

The Acorn A-Link software and cable used to transfer files between Acorn ARM based systems and the Acorn Pocket Book requires RISC OS 3.10 to work correctly.

Level 3 Fileserver Software

A reminder for users of Econet Level III FileServer software; the latest version of Level III is 1.06. If you have an older version of the Level III FileServer software you are still able to return your original Level III disc to Customer Services for it to be updated to the latest version.

Any requests?

Now that you have had a chance to see a selection of our recent Application Notes, would you like us to provide other information in a similar format?

If there is a specific topic you would like to see covered, please write to me, Peter Dunn, at the address on the front of this newsletter.

Technical Information

No floppy / hard drive icons?

What do you do if no floppy/hard drive icons appear on the icon bar? The answer to this has always been to check your configuration to ensure that the configuration setting for floppy and hard drives have been set correctly for the number of drives connected.

Machines from the A5000 onwards have two answers to this problem. It is, of course, always best to check first to ensure that the number of drives you have connected have indeed been correctly configured. There is, however, another reason why the icons may not appear: RISC OS 3.10, on startup, will check for the physical presence of the drives. If for whatever reason no drive can be 'found' the icon will not be displayed. You may find, for example, that the cable from the drive to the machine is not fitted correctly. If all appears to be connected then it could be the drive that is at fault.

RISC OS 3 ResourceFiler

The RISC OS 3.10 Resource Filing System contains the following applications:

!Alarm	!Calc
!Chars	!Configure
!Help	!Draw
!Edit	!Help
!Paint	

If you not not wish users to 'see' the resource filing system then you can remove it from the icon bar by:

*UNPLUG ResourceFiler

This will still leave the applications available to be loaded from boot files which accesses the pathname to ResourceFS directly.

Each of the applications in the ResourceFiler is a module so the second way prevent access to an application is simply to unplug just that application, eg

*UNPLUG !Configure

The !Configure icon will remain in the ResourceFiler window but when the icon is double clicked, the message "!Configure has been disabled on this computer" will be displayed. The other application module names are the same as those shown in the previous column and can be "unplugged" in a similar way.

Printer Driver disc space requirements

Under RISC OS 2 !PrinterDM took up 120K of disc space. Under RISC OS 3 !Printers as supplied takes up 192K of disc space.

This can, however, be reduced to 54K (with two definition files loaded) if you only wish to print to dot matrix printers as many users do.

The space saving can be achieved by removing the following directories from within the !Printers directory,

- lj
- ps
- PDumpers.

Checking if a printer is online.

On the BBC Model B the command ADVAL (-4) could be used to check if a printer was on- or off-line. If this command is used under RISC OS 3 problems can be encountered; in some circumstances the computer may actually crash as the application cannot understand the information returned by the command. This affects only BBC software ported to the Archimedes and any software that prints using the Acorn printer driver system will not suffer from this problem.

Printer Buffer Module

The printer buffer module supplied as part of RISC OS 3 does not work correctly. Even though the buffer has been configured to a large size, eg. 2Mb, the buffer module waits for the printer to complete its print job before returning control to the user. Acorn is currently looking into this problem and details will be made available if a fix is produced.

Technical Information

Separate printer driver discs

If the printer driver is not on the application disc when using a non-hard disc machine you will find it is necessary to re-insert the printer driver disc every time you wish to print. Every time a print job is actioned the palette file from within the !Printers directory is loaded. Unfortunately at the current time there is no way around this problem but we are currently looking into it and will let you know as soon as we have any new release of !Printers which avoids having to swap discs.

Applications which do not work correctly under RISC OS 3.10

There are some applications which worked under RISC OS 2 but will not now work under RISC OS 3.

All Acorn registered developers had access to development versions of RISC OS 3 well before the

launch of the final products. Most of the educational software houses have updated versions of their software available. If you have problems with any commercial software please contact the supplier of the software for details of how to upgrade to any later version.

HP Deskjet driver for 1st Word Plus.

The Acorn JP 150 printer is a Hewlett Packard Deskjet compatible so the printer driver for use with 1st Word Plus supplied on the JP 150 Support Disc, bundled with every Acorn JP 150 printer, can also be used on Hewlett Packard printers such as the HP Deskjet 500/550 and also on the HP Laserjets.

The printer driver supports all the printing effects available from 1st Word Plus but will not support the printing of graphics.

Service Information

Field Change Order Update

In Issue 14 of the Customer Services Newsletter we issued FCO's 2028 and 2029. We did not, however, at the time of issue, have the serial number range of the machines affected, these are:

FCO 2028

Serial number cut-ins for A30x0s to cure reset line problems.

01-AGB15-1016935 Onwards
01-ALC15-0000002 Onwards
01-AGB22-1012678 onwards
93-AGB22-1010001 onwards
01-AGB23-1010906 onwards
93-AGB23-1010001 onwards

FCO 2029

Serial number cut-ins for A3020s to cure ALT key problem.

01-AGB22-1012885 Onwards
93-AGB22-1010001 onwards
01-AGB23-1010848 onwards
93-AGB23-1010001 onwards

RISC OS 3.10 and A300 Series / A440.

Early A305s/ A310s and A440s suffered from problems with serial ports. Under RISC OS 2 the serial port may have worked but may have been unreliable and the customer would never have noticed. RISC OS 3.10 will show up any problems with the serial port much more clearly and the machine will need to be upgraded to one of the newer serial chips. Field Change Order 2003, issued with the Customer Service Newsletter issue 14 disc, contains details of FCO 2003 and modifications required to upgrade the serial port. The FCO payments for work done on these older machines are still valid.