

# CLAN

NEWS LETTER





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# NEWS

## Acorn moves to bring TV to the office desktop

The public service interactive TV revolution, for which Acorn has been developing solutions for several years, still looks a year or two away for now. Undeterred by the delay, Acorn has made a bold move to apply its valuable knowledge and technology in this area to a rapidly growing market local area networking (LAN), particularly in offices. Called simply LanTV, it is primarily aimed at corporate intranets, as well as localised entertainment systems, such as hotels and cruise ships, etc. LanTV uses a Web interface to provide live access to radio and TV channels, recorded programmes, multimedia services and the Internet. Office users can watch business information programmes and information services, and access interactive training programmes. Acorn and its partners have developed interactive TV technology components, like ATM (asynchronous transfer mode) network switches, low-cost video servers and digital set-top boxes (STBs), like the new Acorn STB22. Acorn also has unique experience of helping content providers to develop services and programmes for digital interactive TV. One of the strengths of the technology is video on demand, whereby you can watch programmes when you like. You can also instantly stop, playback, rewind and jump forwards or backwards through the



programme. For watching prerecorded programmes, it's more powerful than a conventional video recorder. Other inclusive features are interactive multimedia, plus Internet access and video conferencing. LanTV supports both Ethernet (10Base-T) and ATM Forum LANs, as well as PAL and NTSC TV broadcast standards. Unlike some other LAN-based TV solutions, which use the network cabling for conventional analogue TV distribution, Acorn's LanTV system has a true digital client/server architecture, conveying both standard quality MPEG1 and enhanced MPEG2 digital video. Acorn has demonstrated inexpensive MPEG video servers based on Risc PCs. Acorn supports Oracle's Video Server offering, as well as platforms from other server vendors. LanTV's Baseline user interface is provided by an HTML 3.2 compliant World Wide Web browser, enhanced to enable control of MPEG movies and real-time feed sessions from within HTML-authored Web pages. It incorporates Acorn's own software technology for minimising irritating screen flicker associated with video feeds on computer monitors. Added functionality, like Java for example, can be integrated using LanTV Delta packs. Offices and hotels, or even cruise ships, have not historically been the natural habitat for Acorn computers, but LanTV looks set to change all that.

## Korea's largest electronics company backs Acorn

Samsung, Korea's largest electronics company, has signed a licensing agreement for Acorn TVCentric technology, which includes the use of RISC OS. The chances are that Samsung could integrate the technology it is licensing from Acorn into products which are expected to be manufactured in quantities amounting to hundreds of thousands every year. Samsung produces a huge range of electronic goods, from mobile phones, TV, video and audio products to fax machines, copiers and PCs. Samsung will use RISC OS to control electronic functions in its more advanced consumer items. In turn, these devices will link up to ordinary TV displays. This is where Acorn's TVCentric solutions come in. TVCentric technology makes ordinary standard resolution TVs able to display clearly complex computer graphics and text, as well as video. Acorn users tend to take TVCentric technologies for granted. These include anti-aliased scalable fonts for clear textual displays, anti-twitch software for stable viewing on ordinary TVs, software programmable video resolution, colour depth and scan rates, plus graphics overlay support including semi-transparencies.

Daniel Oh, Manager of the Samsung Next Generation Platform Group, praised Acorn's ability to turn around projects to extremely tight deadlines. This was largely because Acorn often already had the answer to the problem which needed to be solved. He explained: "We need to work with flexible people who can offer us the technology we need at the right time. Acorn TVCentric technologies are ideally suited to consumer devices which use TV-based displays." Mark Phillips, Technologies Marketing Manager for Acorn, added, "This agreement is further evidence of Acorn's success in providing technology to the global consumer electronics market. It shows once again that Acorn's operating systems and applications software are ideally suited for consumer devices being produced by major corporations."



SAMSUNG





## BT tries out Acorn NCs

BT is to use Acorn Network Computers (NCs) as part of a consumer trial for Internet-based network computing in and around Martlesham Heath in Suffolk, where BT Labs is based. Chris Wheddon, Director of BT Systems Engineering, commented: "This project will be testing one of the most talked-about ideas in the IT industry over the past year the network computer. Our aim with this trial is to prove the technology and services over a six-month period, ending in March 1998, with a base of 500 users." Acorn's managing director, David Lee, commented: "This is a significant development in the life of the network computer. BT is one of the world's leading telecommunications organisations, with a rapidly growing marketplace and product portfolio. At Acorn we are already seeing that television is changing from a reactive entertainment forum into a fully interactive way of accessing information and, with the network computer, we are meeting the challenge of providing it at a low cost. "Phase one of the trial will involve 40 users. By the end of the year a full 500 users will be hooked up to the trial in the Colchester and Ipswich areas. Those involved in the trial will be accessing the Internet via Acorn NCs for both work and leisure-related uses.



## New Acorn warranty deals

### Acorn extended warranties

Acorn has made it easier to protect your hardware against the unknown. With a new pricing structure in place, protecting your Acorn machine for up to four extra years has never been simpler. Unlike some other computers on the market (see separate feature on long-lived Acorns in this issue), Acorn computers tend to stay in use for more than a couple of years, so extending your warranty actually makes a lot of sense. Warranties can be obtained through Acorn, ServiceTec or direct from your local dealer.

### Deals include:

#### Acorn StrongARM Risc PC

3 years return to base (RTB) - 12 months normal warranty plus 2 years £200

5 years (RTB) - 12 months normal warranty plus 4 years £400

#### Acorn Risc PC (non-StrongARM)

3 years on-site - £200

5 years on-site - £400

#### A7000 & A7000+

3 years on-site - £80

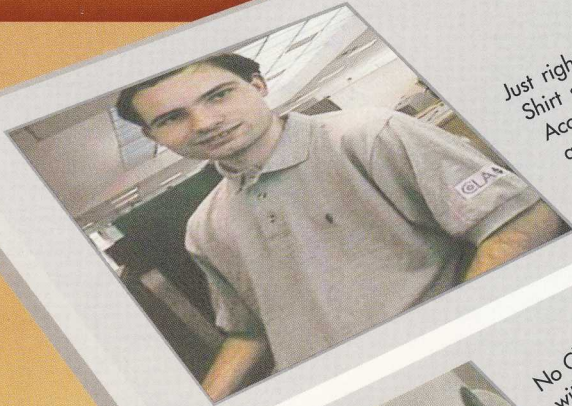
5 years on-site - £160

For more information call: Acorn 01223 725926, ServiceTec 0990 134972 or your local dealer. Prices are quoted ex. VAT for UK owners only.





## The latest Clan gear



Just right for the summer, the new Acorn Polo Shirt sports a Clan logo on the sleeve and the Acorn nut on the front. It is made from 85% cotton and 15% polyester. The Acorn Polo Shirt order code is TAT01, and each one is priced £15.95.



No Clan computer desk should be without one, an Acorn Mug of course. Acorn Mugs are ideal for coffee breaks or prolonged sessions at your computer. They come in pairs so you can drink twice as much coffee per trip to the kitchen! Bargain! The order code is TAT02, and each pair of mugs is priced £9.95.



For those times when you need to put pen to paper, there is the Acorn Parker Pen a premium quality ball-point pen. Acorn Parker Pens are available with blue ink and the order code is TAT03. They are priced £4.95 each.

# CLAN

**The latest in fashion statements for Clan members can now be ordered from your local Acorn dealer.**

**Contact your local dealer for further details.**







by Arthur King

**A** recent report by market research company GfK has revealed that *the life-cycle of a PC may be as little as 18 months*. When Microsoft brings out a new release of its Office software suite or introduces a new version of Windows, PC owners are often faced with the need to upgrade their memory and hard disc, capacity and even the processor, in order to maintain an adequate level of system performance.

For unfortunate power users, the only choice is to replace their old PC with a completely new one. **Amazingly, the very first Acorn Archimedes will celebrate its tenth birthday less than a year from now.** Back then, a basic A305 without a hard disc and just 512K of RAM would have cost you about £700. But it packed real 32-bit RISC power in the form of an 8MHz ARM2 processor. A typical PC of the day might have been an Amstrad PC1512, equipped with an 8/16 bit Intel 8086 processor and running plain old DOS or the now long-forgotten Digital Research GEM windowing user interface. It's a long time since I've seen a working PC circa 1997, but working first-generation Archimedes, are still a relatively common. An indisputable bonus enjoyed by Acorn customers is that their purchase won't end up on the scrap-heap as quickly as a contemporary PC. In 1992, circumstances forced me to add a PC alongside my two Archimedes machines. Of the latter, one was a four-year old A310 and the other a two-year old A420/1. The 420 lived at the office and the 310 at home. My new PC was a typical specification machine of its day: 25MHz 486SX processor, 4MB RAM, 100MB hard drive, running Windows 3.1 and Microsoft Word version 2. That PC cost me about £1,000. Five years later, all that remains of that original PC are the case, power supply unit and the keyboard. Even the original mouse has worn out. In five years **I have had to replace the motherboard four times, upgrade the hard drive three times and**

**the processor twice.** The operating system has changed from Windows 3.1 and DOS to Windows 3.11 and then to Windows 95. Probably by the end of this year I will have to invest in Windows 97. In 1992, 4MB of system memory was just about right. Six months after I bought my PC, Microsoft released Word 6.0 and in an instant 4MB of memory was totally inadequate, the system slowing to a crawl as the Windows virtual memory system was forced to constantly swap data between RAM and the hard disc. I quickly ran out of hard drive space (Word alone took up about 20MB of space) and upgraded to 250MB. An extra 4MB of RAM making 8MB in total restored sanity to the virtual memory system, for the time being. Meanwhile, colleagues not familiar with Acorn equipment marvelled that my Archimedes machines could do so much with just 50 and 100MB hard drives respectively, and 4MB of memory. Impression ran rings around Microsoft Word, especially if you included graphics and fancy fonts in your documents. In 1994, my then four-year old A420/1, albeit enhanced by a 25MHz ARM3 upgrade and a couple of megabytes of extra memory, was still faster and easier to use than the PC which had already had about £500 spent on it in upgrades, including a 66MHz 486DX2 processor and a Vesa local bus (VLB) motherboard. **In the summer of 1995, Microsoft introduced Windows 95. The visual similarity with Risc OS was uncanny.** But underneath, it was the same old Microsoft story. 8MB of RAM left Windows 95 huffing and puffing, so in went another 100 quid or so worth of RAM, bringing the total to 16MB. By this time, Acorn had launched the Risc PC. Naturally, I invested in one and splashed out on the top-of-the-range 8MB system RAM and 1MB VRAM, plus a whopping 420MB hard drive. To this day, the hard drive isn't full and, except when working with very large picture files, much of the system RAM is still left unemployed. Sadly, the seven-year old A310 had to make way for the Risc PC, but the now five-year old A420/1 was dutifully working as a fax and answering machine, as well as running word processing and spreadsheets at the same time all in





# long & prosper

4MB of RAM and with a 100MB hard drive. **Windows 95 sealed the fate the PC's 250MB hard drive and the VLB motherboard.**

The VLB standard was soon strangled by the new PCI bus standard and so I was forced to upgrade to a PCI bus motherboard and a 1GB hard drive. All that was left over from the old specification was the 486DX2 processor chip. However, it turned out that I had made an error of judgement. Pentium was the way to go indeed some software I needed to use would only run on a Pentium machine. The 486 PCI motherboard lasted barely six months and in went a Pentium 75 PCI motherboard. Of course by this time I had been forced to invest in a new graphics card too. It soon became clear I'd have to upgrade Microsoft Office 95. Documents sent to me which were created in the Office 95 version of Word wouldn't load into the "old" version of Word I had. To be able to run several Office applications at the same time, despite the much-vaunted Windows virtual memory system, I had to invest in another 16MB of RAM, making 32MB in total. This year, Office 97 arrived and I would definitely not recommend installing this in a PC with an ounce less than 32MB of RAM. The Pentium 75 is still there, but the motherboard died earlier this year and, in order to be compatible with the latest MMX-enabled processors from Intel and others, I have installed a state-of-the-art Intel Triton TX motherboard. The only problem is that I can't yet afford the £200-odd for the latest processor and of course Intel has now introduced Pentium II, which is not compatible with my latest motherboard. Oh, and I now have a 3GB hard drive...

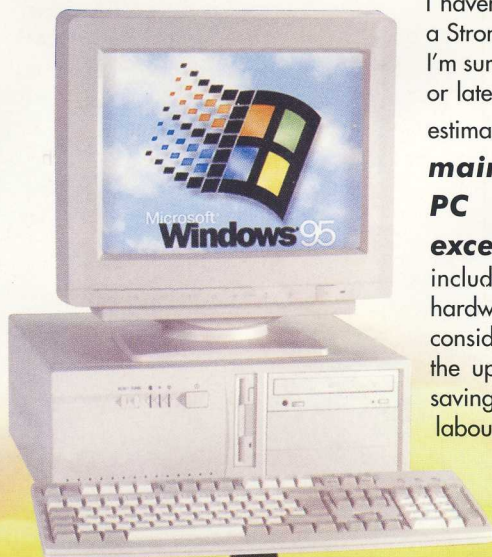
**Meanwhile, my Risc PC and Archimedes A420 machines are still running happily with their original configurations from what now seems like a long time ago.**

I haven't yet got around to a StrongARM upgrade, but I'm sure I'll succumb sooner or later. In just five years I estimate **the cost of maintaining my PC system has exceeded £2,000**, including software and hardware. You should then consider that I did most of the upgrade work myself, saving a pretty penny in labour charges along the way. **A typical**

**PC user would probably have replaced their entire system at least once and possibly twice in the same time period.** Even now I could do with spending another £200 or so on a faster Pentium processor to replace the old Pentium 75. The story certainly won't end there. Even now, up against PCs with MMX technology, Windows 95, bags of RAM and hard drive space, a modestly configured Risc PC running StrongARM can still astonish dyed-in-the-wool PC users. Imagine trying to run more than one movie window at a time under Windows 95 Risc OS 3.7 lets Replay show half a dozen. Today's Risc PC range may look slightly pricey compared to some PCs currently on offer. The question is, how much will a PC cost to maintain and how long will it last? **Acorn remains committed to long life-cycle products and history shows that Acorn has delivered this commitment admirably in the past**, saving loyal customers a significant amount of cash in the process.

## **The nine year old Archimedes workhorse.**

Don't take my experiences as gospel. There are plenty of ancient Archimedes still chugging away out there. Several Archies have passed through the Sean Sollé household over the years, but one of the very original A310 machines produced by Acorn early in 1988 still lives in - Sollé mansions in an idyllic corner of a Hertfordshire village. Sean, a professional programmer who has worked on many well-known products for the Acorn market, told us: "I've owned three Arcs in my time, the first I bought in '87, it was supposed to be my local dealer's demo model, but he couldn't justify keeping one in stock, so I bought it at trade price, on the understanding that I'd demo it if anyone ever wanted one." Of course, that was in the days before Risc OS, so it ran the ARM version of the BBC Micro's OS and was called Arthur. Sean later acquired an A440 to replace the A310, which he sold at a profit. The A440 was subsequently dispensed with because he had access to all the Acorn equipment he could need through his work. Since, Sean has moved to career pastures new and has reinvested in another A310. "There was no hard drive in it when I got it so I put in a Morley SCSI card and an old Seagate SCSI hard drive." Other additions to the venerable Archie include a Computer Concepts' FaxPack fax and answering machine package, a CC ColourCard Gold and CC Eagle multimedia card. By now you probably wouldn't be surprised to discover that Sean used to work for Computer Concepts. His Archie also sports an ARM3 upgrade, 16MB 4MB RAM upgrade and an Ethernet card to share disc resources with his PC. Sean still produces some impressive multimedia material with his Archie. He could use a PC to do the same, but the Archie works just as well and for a lot less money. We think Sean should throw a tenth birthday party for his faithful old Archimedes next year! ■



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# Acorn on the road



## Acorn and the Internet hit the road

**T**housands of people in shopping centres across southern England have been enjoying free hands-on use of Acorn Network Computers (NCs). Acorn participated as sponsor and main equipment supplier for a new high-tech Internet roadshow designed to interest ordinary people. Organised by Ideal Home Roadshows and called @the.mall, the roadshow featured a tutorial theatre, Web Café, information point and a mini exhibition of other sponsors wares. Twenty Six Acorn NCs were networked together, with 24 in the Web Café alone.

Executive director, Patrick Hay, explained how the roadshow came about: "I started to take an interest in the Internet and we had already been running the Ideal Home Roadshow. Companies that were attempting to market Internet-related products to the public had a problem, which was that they could easily reach computer buffs by going to computer shows and advertising in computer magazines but they couldn't reach that huge general mass of the public, who in the end will be the mass of users of the Internet.

"They couldn't reach those people because those people don't go to computer shows and don't read computer magazines very much. In many cases they are a bit scared of the idea of computers. It made me think about how you'd get these people to give it a try. As we were already running a very successful roadshow, I thought well, let's think about how we could do it on a road-show and then the idea of a roving Internet café evolved."

Sponsors were quickly lined up, including the Electronic Telegraph, Olympus Optical and Shoppers Universe. However, as Hay explained, Acorn had nothing to do with the project until virtually the last minute: "We didn't get Acorn involved until quite late on in May. We had talks with a number of PC manufacturers, one of them, perhaps **the best-known of PC manufacturers, told us that what we were planning was not possible. It could not be done.** Well, of course we have proved them wrong. Another PC manufacturer was very seriously involved until just a short time before the first event was due to happen. This was originally to have been very much a PC event."

In the end, that partnership foundered because there was some

uncertainty over the capacity of the company to deal with technical issues. Hay was very concerned that technical issues could prove disastrous: "We realised there was a risk here that we would go out into the shopping centres with a network of PCs which would fall over at the first opportunity and continue breaking down, making us laughing stocks, generally.

"So it was very interesting when we spoke to Acorn, because they certainly had enough of the NC product ready to go out on the road. We thought this was a superb opportunity, because there is no doubt that **the NC is the product which is bound to take the Internet into the vast majority of people's homes.** That is going to happen, there is no doubt about it because of the price, the lack of complexity, the ease of use. So we were tremendously excited, not only because this would bring Acorn's really expert technical back-up to the project, but we would also be seen to be right bang up to date with the latest equipment."



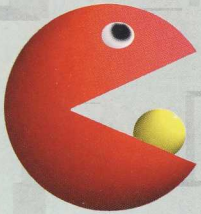
The project was, indeed, challenging, but not impossible. **Acorn rose to the challenge admirably**, according to Hay: "To be honest, I was hugely impressed by Acorn's ability and willingness to tackle problems. Dave Walker at Acorn was absolutely wonderful, he was a tower of strength. We eventually got to the stage where Dave didn't need to come to where the roadshow was because he could mend a lot of little faults from Cambridge, online. This was just tremendous. We could just ring him up and say we have got a problem with so and so and he'd fix it, ring back and ask, what now?"

Ideal Home Roadshows Ltd was so pleased with the outcome of its first @the.mall tour that they are now planning a second one which will tour the Midlands and further north. Hay commented: **We think this show has been a great success and this is very largely because of Acorn.** Because of scheduling problems, there is no guarantee that Acorn will be involved in the next @the.mall tour, but at the time of writing no firm decision has been made. If there is anything new to report, we will bring it to you in our next issue. ■





# GOING SOFT



**A**cornsoft is a trademark you may not have heard of for quite a while. The name has been lying dormant for several years and now, at long last, it is to return with a vengeance.

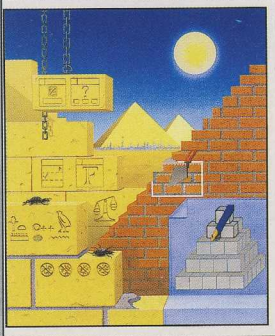
As far back as the Acorn Atom in 1981, Acorn had relied on a separate arm of its business to deal with software generated in-house, or through third parties, which was considered worthy enough to be warranted the Acorn seal of approval, or to be more accurate, the Acornsoft brand. When Acorn turned its attentions to preparing for the launch of the new Acorn Archimedes in 1987, a deal was struck with one of the leading Acorn software houses of the day, Superior Software, to take on the Acornsoft label and its day-to-day responsibilities. Superior Software hasn't been active for some time and now Acorn is to bring back the Acornsoft name and rediscover its former glory. **As a computer manufacturer and an innovative one at that, Acorn's hardware has usually commanded centre stage.** However, software has always been a critical factor in Acorn's history. From the first Acorn Atom and BBC Micro home computers to RISC OS and now shortly Galileo, it goes without saying that Acorn operating systems have been major fundamental examples of the rich software heritage Acorn has enjoyed. On top of

those operating systems, notable software Acorn has produced, sourced and supplied, ranges from BBC Basic and the View word processor to numerous software development kits, and the remarkable PC Emulator. Meanwhile, on the less serious side, **Acorn has been responsible for some of the most outstanding arcade games for home computers of their day.** Who can forget Snapper, Arcadians and Monsters? The incomparable Elite space trading game, which stretched the BBC Model B to its limits, was perhaps the crowning glory of the old Acornsoft. The new Acornsoft will bring a new focus on quality software for the Acorn platform. There is a perception among some that new software for Acorn users is a rare commodity. This couldn't be further from the truth and one of Acornsoft's primary objectives will be to demonstrate that Acorn users enjoy a wide range of innovative quality software at competitive prices. Acorn will also be looking to support the work of third-party software producers in their quest to generate great new titles and to further the overall success of quality Acorn software. If there is, indeed, any lull in the software market, **Acorn will, through Acornsoft, work to generate new interest in deserving software.** The outcome should be greater prosperity for the Acorn software market as a whole.

All new Acornsoft launches will be supported by a comprehensive marketing campaign, including advertising and the provision of review samples for the press. Acornsoft will endeavour to launch products that exploit exclusive advantages integral with the unique Acorn platform. For example, RISC OS 3.7 on a StrongARM Risc PC is the only non-specialist desktop personal computer operating system in general use which can accommodate up to six digital movies playing at the same time. The RISC OS 3.7 upgrade will be one of the first items to be included in the new Acornsoft catalogue. Other new software packages to sport the

Acornsoft brand will include the C/C++ programming language pack, Acorn's new and, as-yet, unnamed World Wide Web browser, which now supports Frames & Tables, multitasking Replay and Java for RISC OS. Further exciting new launches can be expected towards the end of this summer.

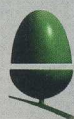
Acorn's Application Development Environment



Acorn

C/C++

Acorn





# UNDERGROUND

## Working the

**O**ver the last three years, one aspect of computing stands out as having caused the most press coverage and having had the most support (and the most vocal critics), Internet connectivity. Foremost in press hype of the many services the Internet offers has been the multimedia-oriented World Wide Web, conceived and first implemented in 1993 by Tim Berners-Lee at CERN.

The Web has spawned a vast array of applications ("browsers") to access it. The result is that just about every machine and environment capable of supporting a TCP/IP stack to enable Internet connection also has a browser.

### HTML Evolution

HTML Evolution, the mark-up language which Web pages are written in, has changed radically since its conception; the current version, which still needs to be tied down for ratification by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), is HTML 3.2, the reference specification for which is available at <http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html32>.

The forthcoming Acorn browser will closely approach conformance to this spec, and also add the functionality of frames as defined by Netscape Communications. Frames have received very mixed reactions in the WWW community, as they break the philosophy behind HTML: "If a browser doesn't understand a mark-up tag, it should be able to ignore it and still be able to render the information meaningfully". A page containing frames cannot be displayed sensibly by a browser which does not understand them, which means that an increasing number of Web pages are being rendered inaccessible to all but the users of specific browsers.

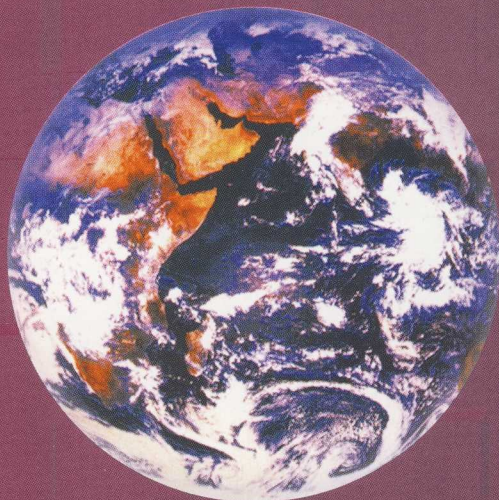
Displaying framed pages in RISC OS presents some significant problems, in that the window manager as shipped with all versions of RISC OS up to and including 3.71 does not cater for window inheritance; a window belongs only to the Desktop, it is not "owned" by another

window unless it is specified as a pane. Frames require individual panels of the browser window to be scrollable, with scroll bars appearing and disappearing as required; they need to be freely resizable, and to move or resize with the main browser window. Implementing this smoothly with panes would be likely to only give moderately satisfactory results and cause a large code overhead, so another approach was taken; we had already found that AWT, the windowing interface for Java, would require windows capable of being nested inside each other with inherited properties, so we set about building a full Nested Window Manager for RISC OS.

### The Nested Window Manager

The Window Manager has now been extended to allow nested or "child" windows, with the following behaviour:

- Wimp\_OpenWindow is extended to allow the parent window and alignment flags to be specified when opening a child window.
- Wimp\_GetWindowState is extended to allow a child window's parent and alignment flags to be read.
- Child windows are stacked within the parent window's work area, and are redrawn clipped within it.
- Child windows can be attached to the work area of the parent, or with any of its edges, by specifying alignment flags in Wimp\_OpenWindow.
- Child windows can have any or all of the same tools as top-level windows, and can be dragged, resized, etc. as normal.
- Wimp\_OpenWindow is optimised to reduce flicker and unnecessary redraws when moving a parent window and its children together.
- A child window does not have to be owned by the same task as the parent window, ie windows can be opened and invalidated by tasks other than the one which owns the window.
- Closing a parent window closes the children as well, but retains the stacking order of the children, so you re open the parent window, the children are still open in their original positions (and





# Web

Wimp\_GetWindowState still indicates that they're open even if the parent is closed).

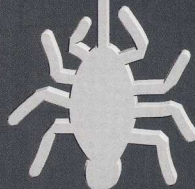
- Deleting a parent window does not delete the children, but does close them.
- Child windows can themselves have children.
- Window stacks can be enumerated.

The global window stack retains its original meaning, but now indicates the open top-level windows, and not the child windows. Each window has a list of child windows which are open within it, which works exactly as the global list works for top-level windows. Wimp\_OpenWindow, Wimp\_GetWindowState and Wimp\_RedrawWindow have been extended to cope with nested windows; for example, the redraw code to handle the invalid rectangle list now works as follows:

- For all windows in the top-level stack (starting at the front)
- Set rectangles to the intersection of the invalid list portion of the window (ie including scroll bars, etc.)
- If this list is non-null:
  - For all child windows of this parent:
    - Intersect outer box of child with work area of parent.
    - If the resulting box intersects any of the rectangles in the window list:
      - Set rectangles to the resulting list, and generate a redraw of the child.
  - If no children intersect the list, generate a redraw of the parent.

Wimp\_RedrawWindow now functions as follows:

- If redraw handle is set to this window, just perform a redraw exactly as the old Wimp would have done.
  - We're assuming here that none of the rectangles overlap any child windows, due to the redraw algorithm above.
  - Each rectangle is explicitly re validated as it's redrawn by the client
  - System borders are re validated separately by subtracting the work area and then subtracting the result from the invalid list.
- Otherwise:
  - Generate the list for the border regions, redraw them and re-validate border area as normal.
  - Intersect with work area, and subtract all child window (outer) rectangles.



- Proceed with work area redraw. Mouse click handling has also been extended to allow all parent windows to have their children checked recursively to determine which window owns the area the click was made in.

## Plug-ins (in brief)

As the number of types of media available via the Web increases, and continues to increase at an ever faster pace, it becomes almost impossible for a vendor to keep doing new browser releases to keep up.

The approach which has been taken on other platforms is to implement a software interface which enables a browser to pass data it does not itself understand around a set of "plug-in" applications which have registered with it to see if they can render the data; if a plug-in knows about the data type offered, a dialogue takes place between the browser and its plug-in to pass the data necessary for the plug-in to render the data itself within the browser's window. As the plug-in is a separate application, child windows are not tied to the same task as the parent window in the Nested Window Manager!

We have produced our own plug-in specification, so that renderers can register themselves with NCFresco and our forthcoming RISC OS browser; plug-ins which either have been or are being written include: Java (currently 1.0.2 release).

Macromedia Director player (for movies authored with Director 4 WAV and .AU players  
Real Audio

Discussions are also under way to determine the feasibility of applying a plug-in interface to Replay. Unfortunately, the plug-in interface spec is too long to summarise in this issue; maybe in the next one... Finally we know that many of you are now wondering where to get hold of the full API details for both the Nested Window Manager and the plug-in interface; these are currently available to Registered Developers, and are likely to become generally available when the code itself is released later this year.

**Watch this space! ■**







# IMS News



WebMaster™ Web Site Editor Update • PCtoAcorn Multimedia CD Readers

## Dont just surf the NET: MAKE WAVES WITH WEBMASTER™

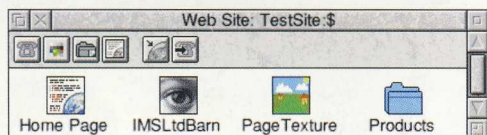
### Easily create and maintain your website

Do you have free webspace with your dialup Internet account that you don't know how to use? Perhaps you already use your allocation, but find creating and maintaining your site a chore. Maybe you're forced to design your pages on a different machine because of the shortage of suitable software on the Acorn.

Whatever your situation, WebMaster™, the new web site manager from Innovative Media Solutions, is just what you need.

### Extensive site management

From creating your site through to publishing it on the Internet, WebMaster™ offers comprehensive features.



- ✓ Named colours and a master page for consistency
- ✓ Subdirectories for a properly structured site
- ✓ Import Sprite and Draw files
- ✓ Links updated when you move or rename a resource
- ✓ Preview your site locally at simulated modem speeds
- ✓ Visual imagemap editor (works just like !Draw)
- ✓ Upload your site to the Internet with a single mouse click

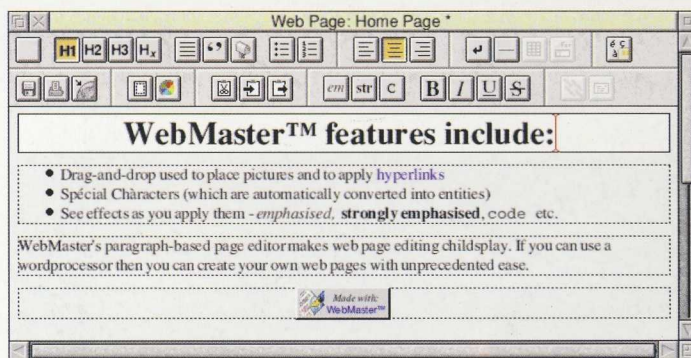
### Integrated visual page editor

If you can use a wordprocessor, you can create and edit your own web pages. With WebMaster it really is that simple.

- ✓ Looks and feels just like a wordprocessor
- ✓ Generates HTML 3.2 (the latest web standard)
- ✓ See exactly how your page changes as you apply effects

- ✓ Drag images from your site to place them on your page
- ✓ Drag resources to a dialogue box to create a hyperlink
- ✓ Impressive control over the page, within HTML rules

WebMaster™ gives you the power to put your message across.



### Try the demo

On the Clan CD, you will find a demo version of WebMaster™. Since the CD was produced, WebMaster™ has moved on. We've added a couple of new features and fixed some bugs. This is all part of IMS' total commitment to WebMaster™.

### Availability and Pricing

WebMaster™ is available now, and is great value for money at only 99+VAT. Clan members who quote their membership number when ordering will qualify for the special Clan price of just 89+VAT. Site licences are available for 299+VAT. If you already have HTML Edit, you can upgrade for 69+VAT by sending us your disk.

*Website creation and maintenance has never been so easy!*

You will also need some Internet access software such as the ANT Internet Suite or Voyager. WebMaster does not work with Termite. WebMaster does not yet support tables or frames.

### IMS' Unique Multimedia CD Readers

Have you ever seen Windows Multimedia CD ROMs and wished they would run on your Acorn? Our innovative PCtoAcorn Readers allow you to run certain titles on your Acorn's desktop - with no PC Card. Highest quality titles from companies such as Dorling Kindersley can now be used on Acorn computers (needs RISC OS 3.1, ARM 3, 4Mb RAM). A full list of titles can be found on our website (address below).

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