Downloading Software from

Acorn's FTP Server

April 1995

Introduction

In March 1994, Acorn opened a public area on a UNIX server for companies, educational establishments and individuals with connections to the Internet to download the latest releases of unrestricted non-sale Acorn applications and documents. This describes how to access an Internet-connected UNIX or VMS host to download this information. The Acorn FTP site may be accessed either via a dedicated command-line driven FTP client or via a World Wide Web browser.

Logging into the server via a command-line FTP client

From your user account (allocated by your company, educational establishment or link service provider), type the following: ftp (this should start your site's ftp client program, and result in a prompt being displayed which looks something like "ftp>"; if it does not, consult your site's system administrator). Then type: open ftp.acorn.co.uk. - if this results in a "host not found" error, the Domain Name Server used by your site is not set up to alias our raw address; try open 136.170.129.1instead.

When you are presented with the familiar login: prompt, enter anonymous as your User ID. At the password: prompt, enter your full e-mail address in "world order" IP format (ie user@host.site.domain.country, as opposed to the "middle endian" JANET format of user@country.domain.site.host); the server will validate your password as being an address, present you with an ftp> prompt, and leave you in the / directory.

File transfer from a UNIX command-line client

If you are accessing the server from a UNIX-based system, you can navigate around the server using the familiar cd and ls commands. You will need to set your ftp client to binary mode; issuing binary at the prompt should do this. To access a file, even to read a ReadMe file, it is necessary to issue a get <filename> command to copy the file to your local host's filespace and read it there using your on-line editor of choice; get is also the command used to download the archives stored on the server.

File transfer from a VMS command-line client

Under VMS, set def[] and dir should enable you to navigate around the server. Alternatively, and for improved communication reliability, the VMS ftp client program can be made to use the UNIX ftp command set. Indeed, for some versions of VMS ftp, it has been found necessary to do this as the client interprets the comma separating notional filename from notional filetype on the server as being a separator between filenames in a group. From your VMS prompt, type help ftp to find out how to do this on your site's release. Again, get <filename> is the command required to download files for either on-line reading or further transfer.

Closing the connection from a command-line client

Once your selection of files is in your local filespace, issue close to close the link between the Acorn ftp server and your host, and then issue quit to exit the ftp client program.

Logging in and file transfer via World Wide Web

Using Browser software such as Lynx or Mosaic, you can connect to the server by opening the URL "ftp://ftp.acorn.co.uk/" (this is done via the "File -> Open URL" option on Mosaic and the GO command on Lynx). The directory tree may be traversed simply by highlighting the chosen file or directory with the cursor keys (as with Lynx) or by pointing and clicking (Mosaic or Netscape); files may be downloaded simply by selecting them, at which point your Browser will query where you would like the files saved to.

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Server contents

There are currently seven types of file stored on the server:

Files which do not have a filename extension, or which end with .txt, are plaintext. This currently covers ReadMe files, index files and press release documents.

Files which end in .bas are uncompressed BASIC programs.

Files which end in .GIF are Graphics Interchange Format files; these may be displayed using viewers such as !ChangeFSI on Acorn computers, as well as many other viewers on other platforms (eg xv on UNIX systems running X11).

Files which end in .arc are Spark archives and must be decompressed using David Pilling's !Spark, !SparkFS or !SparkPlug; they are NOT decompressible with PKarc etc. A BASIC program, dearchive.bas, has been provided in /pub/riscos/releases which, when run, will construct a copy of the public domain SparkPlug Spark file reader and allow you access to the archives. The rationale behind the .arc filename extension is to enable World Wide Web viewers to recognise the files as being binary executables, so that the files are downloaded for saving rather than being displayed.

Files which end in .tar.Z have been compressed under UNIX; these files, if subsequently downloaded to floppy, are meant to be decompressed using dsplit | uncompress | tar xvf - or similar on a UNIX system.

Files which end in .gz have been compressed with GNU Zip, and must be decompressed using an archiver which can cope with this file format.

Files which end in .ps are postscript files. Download them as text, and then manually change the filetype to poscript for printing.

Further file transfer

If your site does not have Acorn computers available on a network connected to your server, the files can be transferred from your host via a suitable smart terminal and communication protocol available on your host (Kermit, DECNet, etc) to floppy disc; make a note of the filenames before transferring, however, as filename truncation may occur. Although this will not damage the data downloaded, it could present problems when trying to assign filetypes once the files have been copied back onto an Acorn system; filetypes may need to be set manually.

Contents

Below is a list of the current contents of the ftp site. For the up-to-date list, and more detailed descriptions, read the ReadMe file.

ReadMe	The up-to-date description of the files on the ftp site
ChangeLog	List of changes to the files available
document	Documents for public consumption
appnotes	Customer Services Application Notes; useful RISC OS and hardware info
press	Latest official press releases from Acorn
pricelist	An up-to-date copy of the Acorn price list
dealers	Contains a comma-separated variable (CSV) file of Acorn UK dealers and their addresses (suitable for loading into a database package), and a plaintext list of international distributors.
training	Calendar and descriptions of Acorn training courses
events	Calendars of Acorn-related events up and down the country
acornusr	Copies of Dave Walker's Acorn User column
products	Datasheets of the range of Acorn products
riscos	Software patches and free Acorn releases for RISC OS 2.0, 3.1 and 3.5
patches	Tweaks to enhance performance
action	Rolling demo of the A3010 Action Pack
advance	Rolling demo of Acorn Advance
changefsi	version 0.95
fonted	version 0.32
makemodes	Application for generating screen modes for the Risc PC
fpe400	version 4.03
printers	version 1.28c
newlook	Acorn's Style Guide Compliant Desktop look and feel
oslib	A library set for Desktop C
ro2extras	Latest versions of CLib (3.75), FPEmulator (3.20), modules and applications for RISC OS 2.00 and 2.01
riscos310	Applications Discs, as supplied with all RISC OS 3 machines
scsidm	SCSI disc partitioner and formatting utility only for the Acorn SCSI card
templates	New template set to go with the new Style Guide
dearchive	Self-extracting version of the Public Domain !SparkPlug application
riscix	
!RisciX	Version 1.21 of the RISC iX Bootstrap
as+xterm/tar/Z	Compressed new versions of as and xterm utilities
as+xterm/txt	Installation instructions and notes on the above
emacs-18/54/gz	New version of the do-everything text processor and LISP interpreter
named	Compressed patches to enable RISC iX 1.21c to use BIND (Berkeley Internet Name Daemon)
GMA-ports	
ksh-alpha/t/gz	RISC iX port of the popular Korn Shell, by GMA

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