

Acorn Customer Services Newsletter

Issue 13
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Editorial

Enclosed again are registration forms for Approved Service Centres and Education Advisory Teachers. If you completed and returned the form from the May Issue of the Newsletter then there is no need to fill it in again. Please note however that this is your last chance to re-register. If you do not register then you will no longer receive the Customer Services Newsletter and may fail to receive other information in the future.

Thanks to the people who have so far registered and a special thanks for the kind remarks about the support team. I hope we can keep the service up. Many of you commented on what you would like to see in the newsletter and in this issue I have started to incorporate some of those ideas. I hope you find them useful.

For people who have already registered but still have comments to make, please use the extra form _ you will have received with this newsletter either with your name on or, if you'd prefer, anonymously.

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Additional Inserts

- Re Registration Form for IT Advisors / Teachers and Approved Service Centres.

PLEASE NOTE THAT DEALERS AND DISTRIBUTORS WILL NOT RECEIVE THE FORM AS WE CURRENTLY HOLD AN ACCURATE DATABASE OF DEALERS AND DISTRIBUTORS.



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Return of faulty components.

Please note that only faulty A5000 modules should be returned to Callfind. If you have a direct account with Acorn, all other faulty components should be returned to Acorn at the Coral Park address, otherwise you should return them via your distributor.

Changes in Filetype allocation

As it was originally laid out, there were 4096 filetypes, of which half were free for users' own use. The remainder were shared between Acorn, AcornSoft and third party developers.

During the past year it has become apparent that the rate of allocation of filetypes has been reaching the level where some rearrangement is necessary to avoid running out of filetypes in certain areas in the future.

The new distribution of filetypes is:

- &000-&0FF - Users' personal (ie non-distributed) usage
- &100-&3FF - Users' distributed software (eg PD/Shareware)
(Allocation by Acorn)
- &400-&9FF - Commercial software (Allocation by Acorn)
- &A00-&AFF - Commercial software (was AcornSoft)
(Allocation by Acorn)
- &B00-&DFF - Commercial software (Allocation by Acorn)
- &E00-&FFF - Acorn use

The highlights of the new distribution are:

- *User area halved to 1024 filetypes
- *75% of the user area is now allocatable by Acorn on behalf of PD/Shareware programs
- *More filetypes free for commercial software
- *Some redundant areas opened for general allocation

Obviously, many programs exist already which have used filetypes from the area &100-&7FF. If you are the author of such a program, please inform us. We will then formalise your usage of that filetype so that a double allocation does not occur in the future.

Please note though - this 'amnesty' applies only to existing programs - for new programs you should contact Acorn to apply for a filetype. Write to Customer Services (Filetypes), Acorn Computers Ltd., Fulbourn Road, Cherry Hinton, CB 1 4JN.

Be Vigilant !

At the time of writing there are 27 known families of virus. By the time you read this the figure will probably be somewhat higher.

It is very important to ensure that your machines, and those that pass through your workshops, are not allowed to spread a virus infection around your systems, or worse still to your customers.

Activating a virus is as easy as opening a directory viewer in the desktop.

The only way to be sure that you are safe is to regularly use up-to-date virus detection/removal software.

All versions of !Killer 1.26 will now have expired, and version 1.17 should not be used any more. Version 1.17 cannot detect many viruses discovered since its release so scanning a disc under these circumstances could multiply an infection!

Acorn no longer have any direct involvement with !Killer and you should contact Pineapple Software to obtain a copy (Tel: 081 599 1476). However, we continue to be interested in reports of potential new viruses or suspicious happenings.

RISC OS 3.10

As I am sure you are all aware the **RISC OS 3.10** upgrade kits for all Acorn 32 bit systems are now available. The following should clarify which upgrade products are required for which computer :

A305, A310, A440 and R140

These computers require the RISC OS Single User Software Upgrade Kit (ALA31). They will also

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require a Hardware Upgrade Kit (ALA32) which allows for the memory size of the new operating system to be taken into account. One issue that complicate this upgrade is that various third party memory upgrades for the 300 series provided the option to fit RISC OS at a later date It is therefore worthwhile checking whether the customer has a memory upgrade fitted to the machine.

A410/1, A420/1, A440/1, A3000, A540 and R260

This range only requires the RISC OS Single user Software Upgrade Kit (ALA31).

A5000

The A5000 has a special upgrade (ALA34).

Schools can purchase Bulk Software Upgrade kits which contain 10 Sets of ROMS, 1 Set of Discs and 1 Set of Manuals, If they have the earlier systems they will of course require a Hardware Upgrade Kit for each machine.

Installing RISC OS 3.

PLEASE remember to perform a DELETE power on after installing RISC OS 3. Problems will arise if the machine is not reset properly.

One problem that has been raised a number of times so far is the use of VIDC enhancers with RISC OS 3. Please read the details on page 14 of the RISC OS 3.10 Release Note for details of how to use VIDC enhancers with RISC OS 3.

RISC OS 3 contains various power-on self test routines. Details of what the various colour screens mean and how to interpret the flashing disc drive lights are documented in the Customer Service Newsletter Issue 12.

A reminder :

SID's replacement is the Technical Support BBS on Cambridge (0223) 215453 (ANSI terminal, 8 Data Bits, 1 Stop Bit, No parity; V21, 22, 23, 22bis, 32, 32bis and HST). If you have the opportunity, please give the BBS a ring and tell us what you think.

Technical Information

Downloading Fonts to PostScript Printers.

With RISC OS 3 an application called !FontPrint is supplied. This utility can be used to download fonts to a PostScript printer. The FontPrint application is only designed to download Outline fonts, not Bitmapped fonts.

It is also necessary to have the password for your laser printer to enable you to download fonts. The password is set to a default of '0' by printer manufacturers. The application automatically puts up a dialogue box on starting !Printers (if !FontPrint has been set up) for the password to be entered into.

Downloading Fonts also takes up quite a bit of memory so problems may arise if printers have small amounts of memory.

PC Emulator version 1.8 differences.

The following is a list of the major differences between versions 1.7 and 1.8 of the PC Emulator.

Emulated VGA (Multitasking version only),
MDA graphics emulation removed,

LIM 3.2 Expanded Memory emulation (EMM.SYS driver provided),

Single Task Only configuration added,
Minor improvements and bug fixes,

New screenmode (&6A): 800x600x4bpp.

There are various minor bug fixes which improve compatibility. Compatibility of the emulation will also be improved by the addition of VGA Emulation and the expanded memory driver.

Technical Information

Disc Error Messages

Below is a list of disc errors reported by disc controllers used in Acorn Archimedes machines.

Disc errors reported by the ST506 interface. Errors &01, &03, &04 and &05 should be trapped by ADFS and should not be seen by the user.

- &01 ABT command abort has been accepted
- &02 NC invalid command
- &03 PER command parameter error
- &04 NIN head positioning, disc access, or drive check command before SPC has been issued
- &05 RTS TST command after SPC command
- &06 NUS USELD for a selected drive has not been returned
- &07 WFL Write fault (WFLT) has been detected on the ST506 interface
- &08 NRY Ready signal has been negated
- &09 NSC Seek complete (SCP) wasn't returned before timeout
- &0A ISE SEK, or disc access command issued during a seek
- &0B INC Next cylinder address greater than number of cylinders
- &0C ISR Invalid step rate: highest-speed seek specified in normal seek mode.
- &0D SKE SEK or disc access command issued to drive with seek error
- &0E OVR data overrun (memory slower than drive)
- &0F IPH Head address greater than number of heads
- &10 DEE Error Correction Code (ECC) detected an error
- &11 DCE CRC error in data area
- &12 ECR ECC corrected an error
- &13 DFE Fatal ECC error in data area
- &14 NHT In CMPD command data mismatched from host and disc
- &15 ICE CRC error in ID field (not generated for ST506)
- &16 TOV ID not found withing timeout
- &17 MA ID area started with an improper address mark
- &18 NDA Missing address mark
- &19 NWR Drive write protected

Disc errors returned by the IDE driver. Where they can be mapped onto a similar error from the ST506 driver, the error code is shown :

- &02 NC command aborted by controller
- &07 WFL write fault
- &08 NRY drive not ready
- &09 NSC track 0 not found
- &13 DFE uncorrected data error
- &16 TOV sector id field not found
- &17 NIA bad block mark detected
- &18 NDA no data address mark
- &20 no DRQ when expected
- &21 drive busy when commanded
- &22 drive busy on command completion
- &23 controller did not respond within timeout
- &24 unknown code in error reg

Errors reported by the 1770/1772 disc interface :

- &04 Lost data
- &08 CRC error
- &10 record not found
- &20 write fault

Errors reported by the 82C710/1 floppy disc interface:

- &01 Fatal - controller hardware error
- &02 Fatal - command timed out, drive problem
- &03 Fatal - Track 0 not found, drive problem
- &10 Critical - seek fault
- &20 Non specific command error
- &21 Data overrun
- &22 Data CRC error
- &23 Sector or ID not found
- &24 Missing address mark

Desktop Development Environment.

Customer Services have available on request a new install application for the Desktop Development Environment (DDE) which works correctly with the various third party IDE disc interfaces. If you have a customer who has the DDE and requires a new install application it can be obtained by either contacting Customer Services or by downloading it from the Acorn Technical Support BBS.