Acorn Customer Services Newsletter

Editorial

Welcome to issue 16 of the Customer Service Newsletter. This months issue is packed with more technical information than ever before and we hope you will find it all of use. The new Field Change Orders and Index will be issued in electronic form with next month's Newsletter. If you require more details on the Acorn Advance Software package please contact your local Acorn Education Dealer.

Peter Dunn
Acorn Computers Limited

Index

Acorn

Acorn News

Versions of RISC OS 3.00 - 3.10 and 3.11

With the introduction of the A5000 came RISC OS 3. 00. This was fitted to these machines alone. In the middle of 1992, with the introduction of the A4, RISC OS 3.10 was installed as standard on the A4 and also cut into A5000 production. With the introduction of the A3010, A3020 and A4000 all Archimedes machines were being manufactured with RISC OS 3.10 and the RISC OS upgrade kits began shipping with this same version.

The RISC OS 2 to RISC OS 3.10 kits were made available at a low cost as requested by the education establishments and the RISC OS 3.00 to RISC OS 3. 10 upgrades made available at cost plus a small handling charge.

Early experience uncovered two problems (see below) that were considered important to clear from the ROM. These included the AdfsBuffers and NetUtils faults. Both have work arounds under RISC OS 3.10 but RISC OS 3.11 includes fixes for both. From mid-Feb 93 all A3010, A3020, A4000 and A5000 machines and upgrade kits were being shipped with RISC OS 3.11. (Note: Users of RISC OS 3.10 do not need to upgrade to 3.11.)

It is advisable to run all machines in a school, and particularly those in a classroom or network, at the same major revision of RISC OS. So when moving up to RISC OS 3 it is advisable that all such machines run RISC OS 3.10 or 3.11. These two versions can be mixed freely but those at 3.10 may need to employ the work around for ADFSBuffers (see technical section for further information) and the fix for NetUtils (supplied on disc with Issue CS News Issue 14).

New Field Change Orders and Index

Enclosed with this issue of the Customer Services Newsletter you will also find two new FCO's. The first of which covers start up problems with the A540 and generic machines. The second FCO covers possible problems with the ID chip fitted to the newer Acorn products. Also enclosed is an index of FCO's which have been issued so far.

HP LaserJet 4.

The new HP LaserJet 4 will only work with RISC OS 3.10 and not RISC OS 2.00 or 3.00. The RISC OS 3. 10 driver will only support printing to 300x300 DPI.

RISC OS 3.10 / 3.11 Printer Driver Defaults

The default settings of the resolution and Quality options within the printer driver have been set in the middle of the range. A user may need to alter these settings if they require higher quality output. In particular the Integrex Colourjet 132 printer driver has the printing set to black and white by default and needs to be changed to colour. Also default resolution on all the ink jet drivers is set to 150 x 150 DPI whereas they may have been used to print at 300 x 300 DPI.

Acorn Advance software protection scheme

Acorn Advance was launched on the 1 1 th March 1993 and will be the first package which uses the Acorn ID chip system for protection. The introduction of this new system for software protection has highlighted a possible problem with some systems fitted with the ID chip. The machines which may be affected are:

Acorn A3010
Acorn A3020
Acorn A4000
Acorn A5000
Acorn A4

it is possible that the ID cannot be read correctly at p ower-up for some of the chips and therefore we have put in place a mechanism for having the ID chip replaced. The enclosed FCO's 2032 and 2033 explain how to obtain a replacement PCB with the minimum inconvenience to the customer.

the FCO's only covers rework at customer request so only customers with software which has difficulty reading the ID chip qualify for the replacement board.

Technical Information

AUN / Level 4 Spooler

If you are setting up an Acorn Printer Spooler on Ethernet using AUN and you wish to address the spooler by its station number rather than by name, it is recommended the station number of the system is set to less than 100 as the dialogue box for specifying the station number within the printer manager cannot hold enough characters eg. 128.128 is not allowed but 128.89 would be allowed. It is, however, recommended that you address the spooler by a name.

Printing to file using dot matrix printer drivers

Due to a problem with the dot matrix printer manager supplied with RISC OS 3.10 AND RISC 3.11 it is not possible to 'print to file' and then send the output of the 'print to file' operation to the printer via the printer manager. If an attempt is made to print the output file via the printer manager then an address exception during printing will occur.

RISC OS 3.10 - ADFSBuffers.

Under certain circumstances, most commonly found on 1MB machines, files written to floppy disc can be corrupted. The remedy under RISC OS 3.0 and 3.10 is to configure ADFS buffers to 0 instead of the default. This results in a slight performance loss when accessing the floppy and needs to be reconfigured if a power on reset is performed.

RISC OS 3.11 does not suffer from this problem .
Care required when writing a file to DOS discs.
The disc buffer employed in DOSFS to improve performance can result in incomplete files being written to a DOS disc; the last part of the file may remain in the buffer. Essentially, unless the buffer is flushed the user cannot guarantee to write a complete file to disc.

The work-around for this situation is to dismount the floppy disc after the disc-write as this flushes the buffer. This is documented in the release note.

This same problem can affect a hard disc partition. As the media is not removable it will be less common but it can be experienced if a machine is just switched off without forcing the buffer to clear. Hence, as always, it is recommend that users 'Shutdown' (Acorn Menu or CTRL-Shift-F12) their machines before switching off.

RISC OS Font$Path length limit.

The new font manager first looks for fonts in ROM and if not found there, looks in other directories in the Font$Path list. Sub-directories within the listed directories are searched automatically. Hence, large numbers of fonts can be stored in a few top level directories listed in the Font$Path. In this way the maximum length of Font$Path, at 256 characters, should not cause a problem.

HP Laserjet memory size

If you are printing from RISC OS 2 or 3 to an HP Laserjet printer it is necessary to have at least 1MByte of memory installed within the printer otherwise you will find that, at a resolution of 300 $*$ 300 DPI, only 1/4 of an A4 page can be printed. This will also apply to HP Laserjet compatibles.

PrinterBufferSize and !Spooler

The ! Spooler supplied with the Acorn Level 4 FileServer requires that the RISC OS 3 PrinterBuffer is set to the default 1K to work correctly. Nothing will be printed if the status option PrinterBufferSize is set to anything less or more than the default 1K.

PocketBook 'Bring' option.

To 'bring' data between two files within the same application eg. moving data between two worksheets, it is necessary to ensure that both the files are open. Using SHIFT RETURN to open the destination worksheet will ensure that the source worksheet remains open.

Technical Information

A3010, A3020 and A4000 DRAM link options

When installing memory to the new A3010, A3020 and A4000 it is necessary to move links to bring the newly installed memory into operation. The link settings should be as follows:

DRAM link options (A3020, A4000)

	LK31	LK32
2MB	1-2	2-3
4MB	2-3	1-2

DRAM link options (A3010)

	LK20	LK21	LK22
1MB	1-2	NF	1-2
2MB	1-2	NF	2-3
4MB	3-2	1-2	NF

AKF 17 / 30 / 40 to the Model B or Master Series

The output levels from a Model B or Master Series machine are TTL at about 1.66v olts. The specification of the the above Acorn monitors calls for a maximum of 1.4 volts. You can connect these monitors to Model B's/Masters by fitting series resistors in each of the Red, Green and Blue lines. Resistors of 120ohm , 0.25 watt, 5% tolerance should reduce the level to about 1.0 volts.

```
9 way D-type plug          5pin Din (BBC/Master)

1 Blue  ───[120Ω]───────3 Blue
2 Green ───[120Ω]───────2 Green
3 Red   ───[120Ω]───────1 Red
4 Ground ───────────────5 Ground
8 Composite Sync────────4 Sync
```
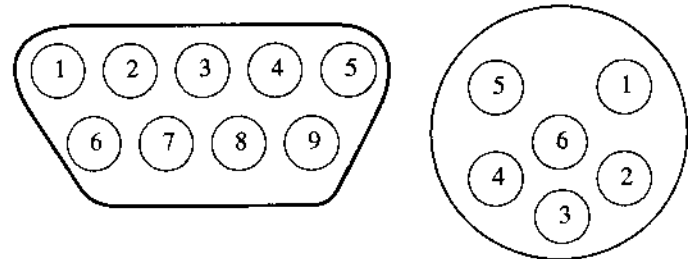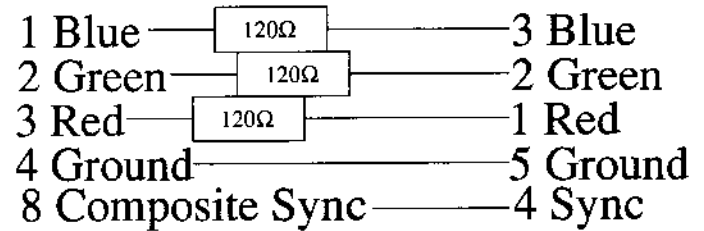
Note: Connections as viewed from back of connector (Solder side)

Spares / Service Information

Spares Information Update

Below is information on the new pricing of two Acorn spares items:

0276,034 - A400/1 Fan Filter £2.24
0886,002 - Push Rod(S/BAR support) £0.80
Both the above items shown should be back in stock by the end of March 1993. The prices increases shown are effective immediately. The prices are dealer excluding VAT. Please update your Acorn spares price lists a appropriate.

Warranty Return Procedures

Attached for all dealers and distributors is updated documentation covering Acorn warranty return procedures. Will all dealers and distributors please read the attached as is contains important information on how to return in-warranty faulty equipment.

Service Report Claims

Please remember when claiming payment for carrying out FCO or module swap outs it is essential that the serial number of the main unit is included on the service report AND the serial number of the PCB itself. The PCB serial number can be found on a label stuck to the PCB.