

ISV Department news from Acorn

No. 15 - August/September 1989

Acorn Computers Limited
Cambridge Technopark
645 Newmarket Road
Cambridge CB5 8PB

Telephone 0223 214411
Telex 81152 ACNNMR G
Fax No 0223 214382

A3000

The A3000 was launched at the BBC Acorn User Show at Alexandra Palace on 21st July. The launch was followed by a very successful, but extremely hot, revival of the Acorn User Show. Hundreds of A3000 systems were sold at the show and Acorn already has some thousands of orders.

There are now ISV/IHV discount prices which are as follows:

	exc VAT	Inc VAT
ISV Price	£506.22	£580.40
RRP	£649.00	£744.10

A3000 upgrade prices are on the August ISV/IHV Price List which is enclosed.

RISC OS is fitted in A3000 systems. The operating system and the Applications discs are identical to those supplied with the Archimedes range, with R140 and in the RISC OS upgrades.

For those of you considering the development of expansion cards there is an application note giving details of the expansion options. This is essential reading for those developing hardware add-ons for A3000 systems. There are also two drawings giving dimensions. PRES are building an external box for expansion cards. For details of this contact PRES. The PRES address is 30 Guildford Road, Lightwater, Surrey, GU18 5SN.

A leaflet describing the A3000 system is enclosed.

Archimedes 400/1 Series

As described in the Acorn News sheet supplied with the April newsletter, Acorn now has extended the Archimedes range to include the 400/1 series. This includes the 410/1, the 1 Mb machine, the 420/1, which has 2Mb and a 20Mb hard disc and the 440/1, which has 4Mb and a 50Mb hard disc. All these, like the A3000, are fitted with a new memory controller chip, MEMC 1A, which gives an increase in processing speed of about 10%.

ISV prices for the 400/1 range are as follows:

410/1 (AKB40)

	exc VAT	inc VAT
ISV Price	£935.22	£1073.79
RRP	£1199.00	£1376.60

420/1 (AKB42)

ISV Price	£1291.24	£1483.22
RRP	£1699.00	£1951.60

440/1 (AKB44)

	exc VAT	Inc VAT
ISV Price	£1922.04	£2208.64
RRP	£2499.00	£2871.60

A sheet describing the 440/1 series is enclosed.

New Price List

Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of the Retail Price List and the new ISV Price List. The latter includes the currently available upgrades for the A3000 and the 400/1 range.

Orders under the ISV/IHV Discount Scheme

Several orders have been received recently where Kelator's handling charge has been omitted from the total remittance. In future, any such order will be returned to the sender. The handling charges to ISVs do not reflect the full costs incurred by Kelator. It would clearly inconvenience everyone if Kelator had to raise all ISV handling charges to allow for the shortfall caused by the few.

MEMC 1A

MEMC 1A is available as a dealer upgrade for existing Archimedes machines. It is not practical to offer this as an ISV upgrade, since it can only be fitted by qualified dealers with appropriate extraction tools for the removal of the existing MEMC chip.

The MEMC 1A upgrade is required if the Floating Point Unit (NB Floating Point Units can only be added to 400 series machines) or SCSI card is to be fitted. The Floating Point Unit and SCSI card for RISC OS machines are not yet available, but prototypes are being tested. More news will follow when the expansion cards become available - the Floating Point Unit very shortly and the SCSI card later in the year.

RISC OS Extras Disc

An applications update for users of RISC OS, termed the RISC OS Extras Disc, is to be made available to the public via Acorn dealers.

The RISC OS Extras Disc is NOT an upgrade to RISC OS itself. Items supplied as part of the RISC OS Extras Disc will include such things as some new network modules and updated and further printer drivers (a revised PrinterPS for PostScript laser printers, PrinterLJ for Hewlett-Packard laserjet printers (printer memory required depends on page size, resolution and the device being driven), Printerlx for Integrex printers and a revised PrinterDM for dot matrix printers).

A disc containing RISC OS Extras Disc (currently a Readme file and the four printer drivers plus a modules directory including NetFS, NetPrint, NetFiler, NetStatus, Hourglass, Sound2, IRQUtils and WimpUtils) will be sent to registered ISVs and IHVs in due course.

Acorn Desktop Publisher

Acorn's DTP package was launched in June and almost immediately sold out. More packs have now been produced.

Many ISVs have asked if DTP is to be available under the ISV scheme. My immediate response was negative since it was not required for development but, following discussions with **various ISVs at** the BBC Acorn User Show in which it was pointed out to me the DTP would be very useful in the production of manuals, I have decided to include it on the ISV Discount Price List.

Fonts

Acorn Desktop Publisher includes the new Acorn Outline Font Manager and a set of fourteen outline fonts. Acorn plans to make these components of the package available separately, as products included in the Retail Price List. The intention is to create the environment in which users, rather than suppliers, provide fonts for individual applications.

The first font product, due at the start of the fourth quarter 1989, will take the form of a 'Starter Pack' containing the Outline Font Manager and the twelve basic fonts:

Trinity (Times) Medium, Medium Italic, Bold, Bold Italic

Homerton (Helvetica) Medium, Medium Oblique, Bold, Bold Oblique

Corpus (Courier) Medium, Medium Oblique, Bold, Bold Oblique

The price for the Starter Pack has yet to be fixed but is likely to be around £50.00.

Further packs, to include Newhall (NewCenturySchlbk), Selwyn (ZapfDingbats) and additional fonts, are being planned for the first quarter 1990.

Although its fonts are in a proprietary format, Acorn pays a royalty on the fonts which it distributes (both as part of the DTP package and in font packs) and the terms of the licence from the supplier do not permit ISVs to distribute fonts without an appropriate sublicense agreement. ISVs wishing to distribute fonts with their products may obtain a sublicense from Acorn (if Acorn carries the required fonts) or obtain alternative fonts and a licence agreement direct from Acorn's font supplier:

Digital Type Services Ltd, 27 Park End Street, Oxford, OX1 1HU Tel: 0865 248226

The cost of a sublicense to distribute an individual font (for example, Trinity.Medium.Italic) is £500.00 exc VAT. This fee covers the sale of up to 2000 units of the product containing the font.

Licences for the inclusion of Acorn Software on ISV/IHV discs

We receive many requests for permission to include items of Acorn Software in ISV/IHV products and, whilst our policy is to grant licences where possible and where it benefits end users, the volume of requests has caused us to review the procedure by which licences are issued.

Generally, licences to include software or modules will be granted if it can be shown that

inclusion makes a product easier for the end-user to use. A nominal charge will be made for licences to include software and / or modules which are normally distributed as part of the RISC OS Applications suite.

The cost of a licence to include other modules will depend upon the software involved and the application in question.

ISVs requiring licences to use Acorn Software should put their requests in writing.

Programming Languages

Enclosed with this letter is a brief questionnaire asking about the languages used in your development work. I would be grateful if you would take the time to complete it and return the form to me.

The information supplied will help us to make sure that you are kept informed of developments regarding the programming languages you use.

ANSI C

Release 3 of ANSI C will be available in mid-October at an RRP of £149 exc VAT. Release 3 provides a new shared C library and a template editor, both of which facilitate the use of RISC OS windows.

As with Release 2, a voucher will be available, for a limited period, to provide discount for ISVs and IHVs upgrading from Release 2 to Release 3. Please ask for a voucher if you require one.

Filetypes, SWI Numbers, Error chunks and other allocations.

Please, if you require the allocation of numbers, will you ask for them as soon as is reasonably possible?

Recently, I have been concerned that companies asking for allocations at the last minute have been inconvenienced when these cannot be made immediately. I believe that the need for the number allocations should normally be part of the overall plans for a new product and most requests could therefore be made at the outset.

The information required for allocations is as follows:

SWI chunks

1. Class - system extension (device drivers, low level functionality - application (high level applications)
2. Proposed prefix
3. Brief description

SWI chunks are also allocated for WIMP message blocks in the applications area.

Error bases

Written request

&100 errors are allocated on a per manufacturer basis. You should use errors from the error

base allocated for all your products until the allocation is exhausted.

Manufacturer's number

Company name

Manufacturers' numbers are allocated to companies making expansion cards.

Podule Identifiers

1. Company name
2. Brief description
3. Expansion card name

Filetypes

1. Proposed name (8 characters)
2. description of what the filetype is to contain

Filetypes are limited in number and a plethora of them is neither useful nor informative to the user. Most applications should only use one. Acorn is therefore only allocating filetypes where necessary i.e. so that users can double click on a file to launch an application.

Filing Systems

1. Name of filing system i.e. as for ADFS:, NET: etc.
2. Name to be used to select the filing system

Filing systems have their own error block &01 nnXX where nn is the filing system number and XX is the hundred you get.

CMOS RAM

CMOS RAM will not be allocated for expansion cards. You are expected to use the 4 bytes already allocated with each Podule Identifier.

CMOS RAM is in very short supply, therefore you should look at the maximum allocation of one byte and should have a very good argument as to why you need even so much. For applications and tools, look at storing the configuration in the application directory - see !PrinterDM, !Mailman and !Alarm on the RISC OS Applications Discs.

Please apply for allocations **ON A SEPARATE SHEET** from all other communications as the request has to be passed on to the Numerical Administrator and a clear request will facilitate the allocation.

Technical Issues

Case Sensitivity

Some future filing systems may be case sensitive with respect to filenames and references

thereto. For example, if an application contains a file Templates and the procedure that calls it refers to the same file as templates, then the system will be unable to find templates. Likewise if you have an application LOGIN in your software and your documentation asks the user to type in *Run Login, he will be unable to run the Login application because the system will be unable to find it. This has arisen because certain network fileserver standards that we are considering require case sensitivity.

It would be wise, therefore, if ISVs were to take account of this in their applications.

!System

The use of shared resources through a mechanism such as !System is a difficult issue. Talking to users reveals that a large number of people do not really understand the concept. Thus it is clear, for the users sake, that it is necessary for everyone developing and marketing software to follow a similar method of directing users to the required resources. This thorny matter is the subject of discussion at Acorn. Registered ISVs and IHVs will be informed of the outcome in due course.

Icons

A few notes about icons from the RISC OS Programmer's Reference Manual:

The standard size for the larger size sprite is 68 OS units square. This is to give them a consistent appearance in Filer windows and on the icon bar. For mode 12 (the usual mode used to define sprites), this size converts to 34 pixels wide by 17 pixels high. The small sprites are half this size: 34 OS units square. Exact sizes are less critical for these ones; typically a mode 12 small sprite will be 16 - 19 pixels wide by 9 high.

Check the appearance in two, four, sixteen and 256-colour screen modes; the WIMP will do its best to translate from mode 12 colours to those available. Note that the icon sprites must not be defined in 256-colour modes (the WIMP can't currently cope with these because of colour translation limitations).

Sprites for document files (file_ttt) conventionally have a square black (colour 7) border four OS units wide. (That is, vertical lines are two pixels wide and horizontal ones are one pixel high, if the sprite is defined in mode 12).

Sprites for device drivers (e.g. printers, disc drives) conventionally have a grey (5) outline and cream (12) body. !appl sprites are conventionally not square (so require a transparency mask) and are related visually to the file_ttt sprites used to represent the files they edit.

Catalogue of third party products

Work on the catalogue is now complete. The finished article will be available in time for the Personal Computer Show at the end of September. I intend to send a copy to all contributors. Thank you all for your help.

ISV Registration

The list of ISVs and IHVs supported by Acorn is large and constantly growing. Available resources cannot always keep pace with this growth. Consequently, responses to your queries can sometimes be delayed.

Since the introduction of RISC OS, only companies developing products for that environment

have been registered for support via the ISV department. All qualifying companies will receive a registration number in due course. When issued this must be used in all communications with Acorn.

It follows that in order to ensure that support is available to companies genuinely developing RISC OS products, the ISV Department must be kept aware of what each company is doing. Please make sure that you do keep me up to date with your work.

It may be necessary to reduce the current list and to categorise the remainder in order to allow more active companies to have support. Lack of recent information will be taken as one possible indicator of inactivity.

There will be three categories and you will be informed into which category your company fits when your registration number is allocated. Broadly speaking, companies in categories one and two will be sent the ISV newsletter automatically; companies in category one will qualify for the highest level of support, and those in category two will be asked to make all their support enquiries in writing. Companies in category three will receive no direct support from the ISV department, although the situation will be constantly monitored.

Newsletters and PR

In an earlier ISV newsletter, I mentioned Hi-Tech, the PR company responsible for Acorn's PR. If you have an interesting Acorn-related news story for them, please contact:

Peter Rennison
Hi-Tech Public Relations Limited
247 Gray's Inn Road
London
WC1X 8QZ

Acorn itself produces newsletters for the following markets: Education, Higher Education and Healthcare. If you have relevant news stories for one of these, please send them to:

Katherine Pierpoint
Acorn Computers Ltd
Fulbourn Road
Cambridge
CB1 4JN

Please mark the envelope clearly in the top lefthand corner with the name of the appropriate newsletter. Katherine will not be dealing with the contents herself, but will be passing it to the appropriate newsletter editor.

Naturally, Acorn reserves the right to select the news items it wishes to publish. No promises can be made with respect to the exact timing of the publications.

Promotional Videos

I have been approached by In-House, a company specialising in the production of promotional videos. The following is their description of what their company can offer:

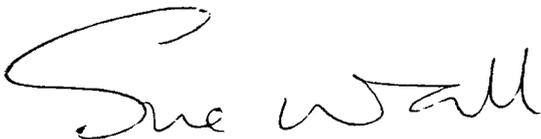
In-House Corporate Video is the business Communications division of Interesting Television who produce programmes for BBC and ITV. Their Creative Director, John Pluck, tells us they are interested in working with software companies, to produce cost effective videos for training and marketing.

"We are a relatively small company, but quickly realised that modern technology and well-designed software was enabling us to provide an efficient and extensive service that belied our size. Therefore, we are fully aware of the benefits of software but also appreciate the frustration of many end users! It is surprising that so few software companies are using video to demonstrate the benefits of their systems, or offer training videos to provide an enhanced level of customer support.

It's often said that videos are too expensive but when the cost of a video is realistically compared with the savings that can be made in taking the strain off the customer support department, for example - it's a different story. Video is the natural medium to illustrate the techniques of using software, providing it is done well, because many of the images are already in a video format.

Quality of corporate videos varies tremendously, which is one of the reasons we went into the business. We felt that companies were often getting a raw deal from greedy or simply inexperienced producers. Don't be put off though, there are several good production companies, who put sufficient thought into a project. They also ensure that it represents good value and will pay for itself, because they want to do more work for you in the future."

If you would like to find out how video could help your company's sales and reputation, then contacting John Pluck at In-House might be a good first step. Their phone number is 05643 3958.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Wall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sue Wall
ISV Product Manager

Enclosures:

Retail Price List
ISV Price List
Language Questionnaire
DTP leaflet
400/1 leaflet
A3000 leaflet
Merchandising leaflet