

UPDATE

THE GAFFER'S BIT

The Editor's Bit...

Talking of PCs, it is my grave duty to report that this Update is the first to be overseen by my fair hands (thanks to that soft washing up liquid) that has not be produced on the Dragon. Yes, the PSU exploits were just too much to bear (get Paul to tell you the transformer story...), and the D64 has been retired temporarily, which, after six years in this second editorial stint, I wish I could emulate. SW.

PEEKING THE DRAGON(77).MIKE STOTT

This article is the one that I find hardest to write every year as it has to be sent in just after I have had my summer holidays.

This year has been even busier as we had a few days away in a hotel near Kidderminster before picking my mother up from Mansfield for a family get together to celebrate David's eighteenth birthday. She stayed with us for a week and only a week later we were off to Warner's at Bodelwyddan Castle for a four night break as soon as we had discovered that David had got his required A level results for his first choice of Leeds University. This was the first time that just Nora and myself had been away for a summer holiday. In the past we have enjoyed family activity holidays at Millfield School (too far to travel) and Lancaster University (no longer doing sports), or Pontins (not the same without kids along). Warners is adults only and we were not disappointed as there were lots of sporting activities. We even tried fencing for the first time and enjoyed it even though we would never do it again as it is so hot and claustrophobic in the helmets and tight clothing.

I have had requests to do a review of Up2date in my article but that will have to wait for another issue. In the past I have thought of this as a subject but put it aside as I thought that Up2date is so cheap at two pounds per issue that people would buy a copy themselves to see what it is like. Obviously there are some of you who have not seen a copy. You do not know what you are missing.

Well, I promise that I will do a review in one of my forthcoming articles.

So what has stopped me doing one in this issue?. You have all read about the using of your PC mouse on your Dragon 64. Probably you have thought about getting the software and then put it to the back of your mind. I am now going to convince you to do something about it.

Paul sent me the software (three pounds, cheques payable to NDUG) and I then wrote to Stewart Orchard with a cheque for three pounds payable to him) and received the serial port adaptor lead back by return of post. Then I took the mouse off my PC and connected it to the adaptor, the other end of which goes into the serial port of the D64. Then I ran MSDEMO.BAS on the disk from Paul and was greeted by an opening screen telling me that the mouse driver was installed and the words CONTINUE and EXIT on the lower part of the screen. I moved my mouse and there was a cursor moving round the screen. I clicked on CONTINUE and the next screen shows the X and Y coordinates of the cursor. You are encouraged to play with the mouse buttons on this screen. When you have finished there and move on you will find instructions on how to draw using your mouse until eventually you will have a choice of Pmode0, Pmode1, Pmode2, Pmode3, and Pmode4 in which to create your masterpieces. It really is as easy as that so what are you waiting for, why not send for the software from Paul and the adaptor from Stewart (or even make the adaptor yourself as it does not look too complicated). At present there is just a small demo program but the potential is there for some really exciting projects. If anybody writes a program using a mouse on the Dragon why not send a copy of it to Paul so that we can all share it. I have not looked closely at the program yet but it should be easy to separate the installation part from the demo and then you are away. An article outlining the basic principles to help you program using the mouse driver is available in Up2date if you get stuck and I am sure that Stewart will give anybody help that needs it. Tim Lees has written to me bemoaning the fact that there are a couple of games that he has not got and wonders whether we could organise a sort of software library as he thinks all the companies and authors have long since given up the Dragon. I must admit that nobody has contacted me for years to tell me that they are still trading and there are no adverts. Am sending your letter on to Paul for his comments. He will either give his views in Update or you will get further news from me in a future article. If you give me a ring sometime, Tim, or drop me a line and let me know what games you are missing I might even know where you can get hold of some or all of them. I have got a fair number of duplicate copies of software myself with systems that I have bought in the past.

Zip-ittydoodah...Bob Smith

In a recent issue of Dragon Update, there was an appeal for a brief description of methods of compressing and decompressing files. Here goes...

The three systems I have used are: ARC, ARJ, and PKZIP/PKUNZIP. I'll call them ARC, ARJ, and IP.

All three are based on the principle that files can be compressed by eliminating redundant zeros and ones.

ARC was the first system - the version I have is from 1990 - and was sent out as shareware by System Enhancement Associates Inc. ARJ came next (1990-92), sent out as shareware by Robert K Jung. ZIP is the newest (1992?) and probably most utilised, sent out as shareware by PKWARE Inc. The compressed files are given the default extensions *.ARC, *.ARJ, and *.ZIP respectively. The three systems all work in the same way, thus:

```
program [command/options] archive-file [path] [file list]
```

ZIP has separate programs for compressing and uncompressing whereas ARC and ARJ use the same program for both functions.

All three have comprehensive steering options, most of which you'll never have use for. Now for the fat-free meat...

You'll probably want to do one of two things...decompress an archive-file on disk, or compress one or more files onto an archive-file on one or more disks. If you want to do more than this then you'd better contact me on

robert.smith@sds.no

Decompressing an archive file (make sure you have paths to ARC.EXE, ARJ.EXE or PKUNZIP.EXE, as above if you're not sure about this):

```
C:\>ARC e a:\iwantit.arc c:\my dir\*.* (parameter e is a mandatory command, in this case "extract")
```

```
C:\>ARJ e a:\iwantit.arj c:\my dir. (as above)
```

```
C:\>PKUNZIP a:\iwantit.zip c:\mydir (ZIP doesn't have commands)
```

Compressing one or more files to an archive file:

First make a rough total of the number of bytes of the files you're going to compress. As a guide, one 1.44Mb disk will have room for at least 2.5Mb of compressed archive files. If you need more than this, first make sure you have enough blank formatted disks to cover the estimated compressed size. It doesn't do any harm to include the multiple disk parameter whatever the archive file size.

```
C:\>ARC a a:\yougetit.arc/v c:\mydir\*.* ("v" spreads a file over several disks)
```

```
C:\>ARJ a -v1400000 a:\yougetit.arj c:\mydir\*.* ("-v" gives max. size for disks)
```

```
C:\>PKZIP -& a:\yougetit.zip @c:\mydir\mydir.lst (-& spreads a file over several disks) Where @ gives the name of a text file listing all the files to be compressed into yougetit.zip
```

```
C:\>PKZIP -& a:\yougetit.zip c:\mydir\*.*
```

where the last parameter takes all the files in directory mydir and compresses them into yougetit.zip

Here is a batch file to add new paths to PATH. I've called it WAY.BAT :

```
@echo off
```

```
if "." == .%1 then goto Slutt
```

```
path =%path%;%1
```

```
@echo on
```

```
path
```

```
@echo off
```

```
:Slutt
```

Type this in then run it thus:

```
C:\>way c:\zipit
```

Path to directory ZIPIT will be added to your PATH and the new PATH will be shown.

Happy Days (1) . . . Spencer Davies

Ahhh, the heady days of 8-bits. The time when most new products were innovations over what had gone before, and not purely rehashes of competing items. When one man could make a difference and didn't require a fortune to be heard over the baying masses. For me it all must have started some time around the beginning of 1981. It was shortly after Christmas when all of the children at my Junior school would bring in their most prized gifts to show off to friends and the like that I saw the machine that started off a life long obsession. One of the kids in the adjoining class had brought in his new Atari VCS 2600, which when I saw it playing (I think?) Space Invaders I was amazed, to me this was the future. So for the best part of the following year I begged and pleaded with my Dad to buy me an Atari VCS. He refused because of a number of points, mainly the fact that it and the games were very expensive, plus didn't want me wasting my time doing nothing else other than playing games stuck in front of the family T.V. I was heartbroken at his denial and ended up having to content myself with a portable colour T.V. as a combined Birthday/Christmas present. The following year I saw another device, which renewed my interest in computing. Near to the beginning of 1982 my music teacher Mr. Peter James bought a ZXB1 kit out of his own money which he then set about constructing and eventually brought into school for those of us interested in computers. This again was heaven; I didn't seem to notice the limited RAM, B+W display with its limited resolution and poor keyboard. I have to admit though that I soon lost interest when I discovered that it wouldn't be able to just load up Space Invaders and start blasting!!!. Never the less I had decided that these programmable computing devices had potential and set about persuading my father what a real benefit getting a computer would be to my education and future, I still had visions of playing Space Invaders and the like on it though!. Around about the summer of 1982, my dad started buying a few of the available computer magazines to determine what was available and at what price. This was heaven, I had never realised just how many computers there where available and was enthralled by the range. I would peruse the magazines for hours drooling over resolutions, kilobytes of RAM and ROM, etc. After much cogitation I had decided that I either wanted a Sinclair Spectrum or a Computers Lynx or maybe even an Atari 400 (the later would have needed far more in the way of persuasive powers than I possessed as it was so expensive, but by then I knew of the Atari name and its game playing potential so decided to try and apply all of my persuasive powers on that route (with the other two computers providing a fall back in case of failure). Around August of 1982 we actually started visiting shops which sold machines so as to have a play with the potential candidates and get the word from the horses mouths as to which machine to pursue. Some retailers recommended the Commodore Vic 20 for which Jelly Monsters was a great persuader in my eyes. Others recommended the Sinclair Spectrum, which with its massive 16k of RAM and colour display was again my favoured candidate. The local Tandy's (Radio Shack to our American cousins) were trying very hard to sell the TRS-80 Model II (strangely they hadn't tried selling us a TRS-80 Color Computer, which they must also have had in stock as they sold program packs for it!). Up to now my dad had been non-committal as he hadn't really liked any of the recommendations so far, dismissing most as expensive toys, or lacking a long-term future. In September 1982 we eventually came to one computer shop who's owner seemed to know what he was talking about. Although he only stocked the Sinclair and Commodore machines (including the Pet range) he recommended a machine which up until then no one else had mentioned (even the magazines had been strangely quiet over this machine!) He had told my dad about a wonderfully competent machine, which had only recently been released, called the Dragon 32. His enthusiasm for the machine was easy for all to see, but strangely he didn't stock the machine in question (he couldn't get a hold of any for love nor money). The shop owner told us of this machines excellent keyboard, very powerful BASIC, the ability to add disk drives later to expand the machines potential, etc.. All in all this sounded like the ideal machine to us both. More next Update....

Confessions Of A Computer Duff. By John Player.

First I would like to say how I sympathise with NDUG in trying to maintain the publication year in and year out. I have been putting out a car club magazine for some years in the face of growing (or is it declining) apathy. Why not do as I do. Don't give up, reduce the frequency of publication?. First it was quarterly, then three times a year. Now I only publish twice yearly, do a fairly comprehensive job, and let someone else fill in with newsletters with the more immediate announcements etc. It would be a pity to loose you independent thinkers, in this stereotype world of Windows - double glazed and electronic. Back in the 70's I happened to be working in Hertfordshire, home of the then burgeoning British computer industry -- ICL. You remember that?. Well forget it! It is being sold to guess who- Microsoft?. Is there anything left in this country that is even worth selling?. Anyway, everyone was talking computers at that time, so I was on a management course and did some computer familiarisation. I am no good at puzzles and realised I was never going to make it as a programmer. Later, I was back in the Midlands. Sinclair came upon the scene and I bought the ZX80 handbook which he was selling separately so one could decide whether to buy the kit. I didn't. Not being a member of the consuming society (my vehicles are 15, 19, and 29 years old respectively) I waited until the ZX81 was going out of fashion, then bought one cheap (snigger ye not, I saw some of our senior engineers playing with them in the office) for my little son, so he would not grow up feeling deprived, by not being "into it". Soon he had it sussed. As they do. In no time he was hacking into the programmes and making up his own variations. One of my workmates had extolled the virtues of the Dragon, so with my usual cussedness, I again waited until it was going out of fashion. --- and that is how I became involved and subscribed to NDUG, not to contribute anything, but hopefully to gain something. What did I want from computers? For what they are ideally suited -- listing a lifetime's collection of reel to reel tapes, cine films; colour slides; cassettes; video tapes, and CD's etc.. Not to mention a storage system for all my outdated equipment; word processing, and my magazine of course. I wanted one to store all my phone numbers, so that I could just press a few keys and it would dial the number -- all kinds of things like switching on my tape recorder. I had been brain washed into thinking that it would be the greatest time saver ever, in fact it turned out to be the greatest time consumer ever. Those early days of laboriously loading them up with tape were unbelievably slow and it was much quicker to do things manually. No one wanted to give me what I wanted, everywhere computers were used more as games machines -- even in business, for yuppy executives to live out their fantasies of actually producing something useful, so they could be paid handsomely enough to buy their boyz toyz from abroad. So where does that leave me? Surrounded with "obsolete" equipment. I never throw anything away, so my philosophy is to use each machine dedicated to some task, saving access time. The ones with modulators can be used for titling video tapes for instance. For word processing I use word processing typewriters. I have one old Smith Corona machine which can store information with instant access with additional plug in EPROM cartridge loading---too expensive for very much text--- so I do this sort of writing on a Sharp machine with a disk drive, I am sending you this also on disk, after all ASCII is universal (joke). By the way I have a pocket sized tone dialler which stores all my phone numbers. My son? He now has to have the latest all singing all dancing computer. It will do all sorts of useless things, the printer is not even included in the package, in case you don't want to do anything sensible. After paying about a Grand for it, he has to keep buying more and more memory because of the way it squanders the gigabytes. What we did with our 32K! Accessibility? He says you need to warm them up or it is bad for the hard disk!. This is progress?. So there maybe are some ideas for Update, or perhaps Backdate. Sorry I can't write anything in computerese, but if you keep writing, I will keep subscribing.

Win 3.x Prog.Manager Security. G.Tuttiett

A large number of my computer anorak friends are staying with Windows 3.1 or 3.11 rather than the more fashionable 95, so I have been scribbling down notes for them to tweak Windows, and this article is made of several notes pulled together especially for Update. In the standard installation of Windows 3.1x, all icons can be deleted, moved, and changed too easily by accident. Also, if you have others using your PC, then perhaps you'd rather they didn't run a certain program or two! There is an answer to this problem. In PROGRAM.INI it is possible to add restrictions to limit Program Manager's use, by implementing a simple security program. However, in my experience, many users are unaware of this. There are 5 restrictions that can be added to the INI file: NoRun, NoSaveSettings, EditLevel, NoFileMenu, and NoClose. Here is an example PROGRAM.INI file. These restrictions should follow the label [Restrictions].

[Settings]

Window=10 15 650 486 3

display.drv=256-1280.drv

Order=10 5 9 1 2 3 4 7 6 8

SaveSettings=0

AutoArrange=1

MinOnRun=0

[Groups]

Group1=C:\WINDOWS\MAIN.GRP

Group2=c:\WINDOWS\ACCESSOR.GRP

Group5=C:\WINDOWS\APPLICAT.GRP

Group6=C:\WINDOWS\DOSTOOLS.GRP

Group8=C:\WINDOWS\COREL50.GRP

Group9=C:\WINDOWS\AUXILIAR.GRP

Group4=C:\WINDOWS\EMERGENC.GRP

Group7=C:\WINDOWS\ADOBE.GRP

Group3=C:\WINODWS\VGAUTIL.GRP

Group10=C:\WINDOWS\WORKS.GRP

[Restrictions]

NoRun=1

NoSaveSettings=1

EditLevel=4

NoFileMenu=1

NoClose=1

NoRun=1 disallows FILE | RUN in Program Manager

NoSave Settings=1 disallows the saving of any settings in PROGRAM.INI

EditLevel=4 sets the editing restrictions for Program Manager, for example it prevents FILE | NEW.

It also fixes the position in a window of any program icons, so you can't move them by accident, copy them, or change Properties.

NoFileMenu=1 makes the file menu disappear, so it can't be used at all. This makes NoRun=1 unnecessary.

NoClose=1 means that you cannot close Windows and return to DOS. You can only close by turning the PC off. If you reset or reboot the PC it will return to Windows or DOS, depending on how the AUTOEXEC.BAT file has been set up. It is recommended that if this facility is used, then Windows should be automatically run from the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. Remember, you don't have to use all these restrictions, just the ones appropriate to your needs. Use an editor, word processor, or SYSEDIT.EXE (found in WINDOWS\SYSTEM) to add any of these restrictions to your PROGRAM.INI file - don't forget that putting a zero after the = turns the restriction off, e.g. NoRun=0 mean NoRun is off. It must be a plain text file; saving in Word format, for example, will not work. Please remember that this is a simple security measure and is NOT foolproof. I accept no responsibility for users defeating the security measures described here.

Disk Drive Discussion...P.G.Smith

When I first got disk drives in 1989, I got two 5.25 DS 80 track drives, not knowing how I could get them to work, but definitely a bargain at £35 each! Eventually, after almost a year and many phone calls and much investigation, I had a suitable PSU, SuperDos E6, and cabling, and lo and behold, a working disk drive system. Oh, the joy of virtually instant load! So I sent to PSE for some software, and was then dismayed to find that I couldn't use the drive to read any of the disk because they were conventional Dragon SS40T! Although PSE offered to do me versions in 80 track format, I decided that for the future, to potentially communicate with other Dragon users, it would be better to get an SS40T drive. After investigating the possibility of converting the 80T ones, and discovering it was 'impossible' from certain people who should know, I eventually managed to locate a 3/4 height Shugart which did the trick reading-wise, but just would not format disks. Now, my 80T 5.25 drives are slightly different to each other; both TEAC, but one obviously an earlier model. I had noticed in the past that whilst I could format and use an HD disk in the later version drive, the earlier version would rarely read such disks, and definitely wouldn't format them. Whilst investigating the ROM in my successful work to convert Pam D'Arcy's DISCDET to read PC disks, I discovered some old notes of mine that redirected my attention to an Update article by Jon Bird (U84, p5) which included information on pokes to DragonDOS and DOSPlus to put the Dragon into single density mode to read BBC DFS files. Knowing the Shugart was old and thinking maybe it had the same problem with DD as the older TEAC did with HD, I thought I'd try it out. After some fiddling, I found the SuperDOS workspace seemed to be as DOSPlus for this: &H6AB-6AE (for drives 1-4) normally contain 0, but by poking 8 to the relevant location, DSKINIT was no problem at all for the Shugart, and the location switched back to 0 by itself - eureka indeed! But I'm not totally convinced that this IS a single density mode problem, yet it works and the fact that it works using these precise locations and values renders it too spooky not to be true - perhaps someone can elucidate?. As an addendum, the article said that in DragonDOS, POKE &H607,44 would put ALL drives into single density mode. This did not have the desired effect for my drive with SuperDOS, but I did find that &H606 is used by the ROM routines for track/sector read and write set-up (resetting bit 1 for accessing the front side, and setting it for the back - sectors 19-36 for the Dragon, alternate tracks for the PC. This is part of the DOS call routine, at &HC168 on my D32. If the Dragon is seeking a sector between 19 and 36, it subtracts 18 and sets the seek up for the back side head. The value in &H606 must be used somewhere in the operation performance code, which I think is via a subroutine call at C1DD with the code AD D5, which references as JSR [B,U]. Meanwhile, location &H607 holds the drive number (0-3) in the least significant nibble (actually as the n in &H2n). Again, this is for SuperDOS. However, after all of the above, I now use my later acquired 3.5" drive almost exclusively; it's so much faster and more convenient, and incidentally will happily use HD disks, while my Atari 1040STE 3.5 drives just does not like HD disks at all and declares them faulty. Apparently, this is normal for Atari drives, yet my friend's earlier version Atari 520STFM has no problem with them. Funny old world, isn't it?

The Last of the Many?.

More on this subject later, but this is just to inform you that Brian O'Conner of PSE/Pulser fame has finally decided that the time has come for him to leave the Dragon scene and concentrate his efforts on the inevitable PC. Frankly I'm amazed that he has stayed with the old Dragon for so many years, and I think every Dragon owner owes him a great deal for all the time, work and money he has put into maintaining support for the Dragon long after almost everyone else had written it off as dead. However, you will be pleased to know that he hasn't just "disappeared without trace" as so many have done ... he has transferred most of his stock of software masters and hardware bits and pieces to Tim Lees, who assures me that as soon as he has got everything sorted out (not an easy job!) everything WILL be available once again!. Tim's address is: 83 HARWOOD VALE, HARWOOD, BOLTON, LANCASHIRE. If you need anything or have any queries, please write to him there. P.G.

Spreadsheets...Tim Lees

Seeing the article in Update about spreadsheets reminded me of another use for them. A few years ago, a non-computer owning friend asked me if I would type in and print out - for suitable remuneration of the liquid form - the complete final league tables for the Corinthian Football League, which ran from 1945-6 until the end of 1962-3. Now, fair enough, it was an amateur league with no more than 16 clubs at any one time, but even so it was a pain to do, typing in all those numbers. I decided to use SuperCalc 2, a spreadsheet I had for my Amstrad. The width of the cells could be adjusted in each column, so I could make the first column as wide as necessary for the club names and the remaining columns could be just two characters wide. Once I'd set up the initial settings, it saved a lot of typing. Using the copy command meant I only had to type in how many games the top club played, because all clubs played the same amount. Using formulae I could save another two columns of typing. If column B held the total amount of games played and C held how many were won and D how many were drawn, then column E, how many games were lost, could be filled in by the computer using $B-C-D$. Likewise the points obtained column would be $C*2+D$. Again, using the copy command, I only had to type in the formulae once, in the top row, because the spreadsheet would either do an exact copy or adjust the formula for each row, so if I entered in the first row B1-C1-D1 the computer would automatically make the next row B2-C2-D2, then B3-C3-D3 etc etc. Using the spreadsheet saved me having to type in three columns of numbers per season for 17 seasons, 51 columns of typing less. Well, there you are, Spreadsheets may be made for one purpose, but I found another, and there's probably more. No doubt there's a program for the PC that does league tables now and sings you a song a makes you a cup of tea while it's doing it, but the Spreadsheet made a handy tool at the time.

Anyone With A Long Memory...?

Tim Lees recently dropped me a line with the following problem:

"In Update 99 (Feb 95) there was a program by Jon Baker to produce those Magic Eye pictures that the national press were so infatuated with a while ago. I typed it in, but thought line 1040 was a bit odd. The program ran perfectly first time round, and much to my surprise there was a rectangle on the screen. I was quite chuffed that the old Dragon was capable of producing these pictures. However, when I changed to program to draw the circle, it crashed with an error in 1040. The line doesn't make any sense as it stands, so I figured that you'd print a correction in the next Update (because of course, my telepathic powers informed you of the problem). By the time the next Update came round I'd completely forgotten about it. Missing out line 1040 gives a band running from top to bottom of the screen. Having rediscovered the routine, I wonder if you could print a correction..."

Well, I'd like to be able to print a correction, but unfortunately, owing to the rather archaic history of the query, I don't have the master sheet for the program in question. I do keep the original submissions for a while, but after three and a bit years they have, I'm afraid, already made their way to the recycling bin. So, if anyone else bothered to type in this routine, and even managed to get it working, please let us know at the usual address. Many thanks. Stephen.

%% Don't have a listing, but try substituting * or any other arithmetical symbol for the ^ in any relevant lines, see what happens. PG.

Own Up!

* had a phone call t'other week from someone (not a Group member) wanting to know if anyone still used either FLEX and/or DELTADOS format software, and I had to admit that I simply hadn't a clue! Personally I still have an old Delta cartridge, although I haven't used it for years, and somewhere I think I've still got some Flex system discs. (Haven't seen 'em for years!). Anyway, I said I'd enquire, so if anyone DOES still use them do please let me know. P.G.

The Late, Late Bit

Done your Christmas Shopping yet?. OK, so it's early, but all the mail shots that turn up here seem to assume that I am doing mine, so I thought perhaps you wanted a reminder to buy your Dragon something for Christmas like a Rodent Routine disc, perhaps, and a suitable rodent, or how about some general software? most computers run better with that!.

Of course, there is now one slight snag you can no longer buy your Dragon a present from Brian O'Conner. After more years than I like to think about, Brian has decided that he has to follow the trail to where the money is, and I don't think anyone can blame him for that! even the most dedicated Dragon enthusiast has to pay the bills, and regrettably it has been a long time since retailing Dragon software and hardware could even cover costs, let alone show a profit. Brian stuck it out longer than just about anyone (with the possible exception of the dedicated masochists who still churn out Update), and has been a great help to hundreds of Dragon owners since the very early days of the Dragon scene. In those days it WAS possible to make a profit from Dragon deals, and there was no shortage of firms and individuals doing so Dragon shows with over 150 stands and five figure attendance, plus dozens more firms advertising everywhere then suddenly it was all gone, and only a handful of firms were left, and over the years even they slowly dropped out until it was just Rob Preston and Brian O'Conner left the Preston establishment finally gave up last year, and now Brian has decided it's time to quit, so that is effectively the last of the "Old Timers" gone. The only bright point is that Brian has passed most of his stock of software and the remaining hardware bits and pieces on to Tim Lees, and Tim tells me that as soon as he has had a chance to sort everything out the stock WILL still be available, including the PSE programs, of course.

Next on the list are a couple of "has anyone got a" type queries. Firstly, Ken Taylor, of 10 Woodrolfe Park, Tollesbury, Maldon. CM9-8TB would be VERY interested in acquiring a standard composite video monitor, virtually any variety, for use with his Dragon, so if anyone has a spare one around do please let him know. Secondly, another scrounge from me anyone got a spare NT4 manual they no longer need?. I want to see if it is possible to tie NT down to ONE drive, without it inflicting itself and its modifications on the rest of the system, and some sort of manual might possibly be of assistance. Best prices paid, and all that sort of thing. (And yes, I KNOW the only 100% reliable method is to fit a removable hard drive bay and just switch boot drives as required, but that's bloody expensive!). The only news this month seems to be that there isn't any, unless you count the general release of "Clinton, The Video" (who DOES own the copyright of that?), and the usual political inanities seems that the Government wants to scrap the old quarantine laws so that they don't have to spend six months in kennels whenever they come back from abroad, and as part of their Great War on Crime they want to increase the penalties imposed on speeding drivers currently £300 fines plus costs plus endorsement for doing 35 knots in a 30 limit on a deserted road at two in the morning, but a caution for 25 offences of stealing and crashing other people's cars yes, they really must Get Tough on Crime!. Of course, their other priority is Education most of the brats around here are opting for Media Studies courses at Uni, so they'll know all about the best lighting and camera angles to try for when they make their guest appearance in a security video clip on Crimewatch. Off subject, but can anyone explain to me why so many people are currently wasting their cash (or credit) on twin processor P2 boards, and demanding 600 Mh CPUs to go with them?. I mean, what the Hell are they USING the bloody things for? I know Win 98 is even slower than 95 (when you can get any of its drivers to work), and that software generally is getting bigger and slower and more badly written, but it still makes no sense at all to me. I've just stuffed a K6/233 into this beast (before they disappear off the market), and it's a very nice, very rapid chip, but really it's faster than I actually need. So what's with these twin P2/600+ things then? STOP PRESS!: Viagra now 50% cheaper, to clear manufacturing surplus caused by sudden cancellation of White House order!.

Paul Grade.

SPREAD IT AROUND... Ken Grade.

There are quite a few clever tricks to use on a simple spreadsheet like the bank statement, but not all are available in ASEASYAS. I'll describe the techniques, and say whether each one is offered by ASEASY.

You may have found, if you've actually tried using a spreadsheet, that if the entries you have made have not used up all the allocated cells (i.e. those which contain formulae) the last balance is repeated right down the page (until it runs out of formulated cells). To get rid of it, use the IF statement, which checks to see whether a given condition is true. The bank statement sheet used column D for the BALANCE; the formula `@IF(D2+D1,D2-D1,D2+B3-C3)` will remove the repeating balance figure, but leave a trail of zeros. To remove that, press "/", choose Worksheet from the menu, then GLOBAL, after which, in answer to ZEROS, type YES, in Lotus. In ASEASY, choose Worksheet menu, then General, then Suppress zeros.

Dates can be given and automatically updated, but a column for dates has to be formatted for dates first. Insert a column. To do that, position cursor where the extra column is needed, then choose Insert from the worksheet menu. Activate "Insert Column". Press "/", then choose the Range, Format, then Date options from the menus, (in ASEASY) then choose the type of display - DD-MM-YY etc. Return to spreadsheet, and enter `@DATE(YY,MM,DD)`. The column should now be formatted for the DATE formula. In A2, type `+A1+1`, if you're going to have entries on a daily basis, or `+A1+7` for weekly entries. Otherwise, leave out the date formatting, and enter dates as text.

Printing the worksheet is quite interesting. First define the range to print, which is done in the same way as copying formula. Select Range from the print menu, move cursor from a fixed point (using the period, ".") to the last cell you want to be printed and press <enter>. (Some programs, like ASEASY, like to set printer's "top of form".) Printer control codes can be defined in a Setup String. Choose the print menu, then Setup, and enter the codes needed to produce the type of print you want (see your printer manual!) e.g. 027 069 for emphasised, or 014 for enlarged. Perhaps it is possible to define which part of the sheet should be printed in a given typeface. I'll check and find out.

There are uses for spreadsheets other than purely financial ones. Someone I know was planning to make his own speaker cabinets, and was trying to calculate the size based on (a) the (theoretical) optimum volume needed for given sizes of speaker, and (b) the physical space he had to put them. The cabinets were to be triangular (his design, not mine!), with the speaker fixed to the longest side. Speaker size governed the minimum length and height of that side, the other two sides being of equal length. The format of the sheet was this:-

Column A	Col B	Col C	Col D	Col E
Length of Front Panel	Sides	Area	Height	Volume

An ancient Greek had worked out the relationship between the longest side of a triangle and the two shortest ones, so the formula for column B was the square root of $A2^2 + A2^2$ divided by 2. Area? A triangle is half a rectangle, so the formula was $(+B2*B2)/2$. The volume was his theoretical optimum, so the formula for the height column was $E2/C2$. The point of using a spreadsheet, rather than a calculator, was that any of the dimensions could be changed, or incremented as part of the sheet formula, to calculate the change this would have on the other dimensions. e.g. Length of the front was set to increase at one cm increments, which produced a proportional increase in the length of the sides, but not the height, or vice versa.

Finally, being a good Lotus clone, ASEASYAS will export its files either in ASCII format, with a .PRN extension, or in .WKS form, which can be converted by Lotus 123 so they can be used by either program.

Anyone done anything interesting with DRAGON spreadsheets, DOS or OS9? P.G.

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