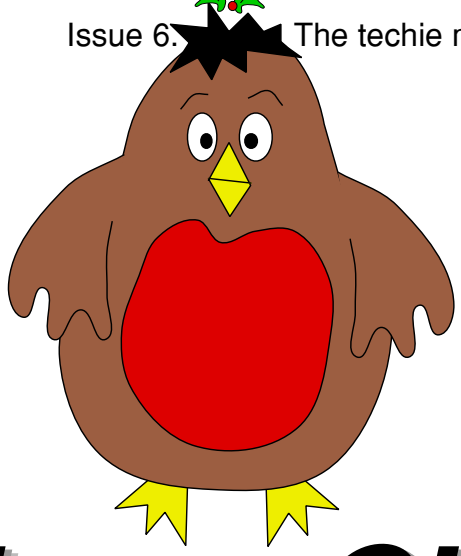
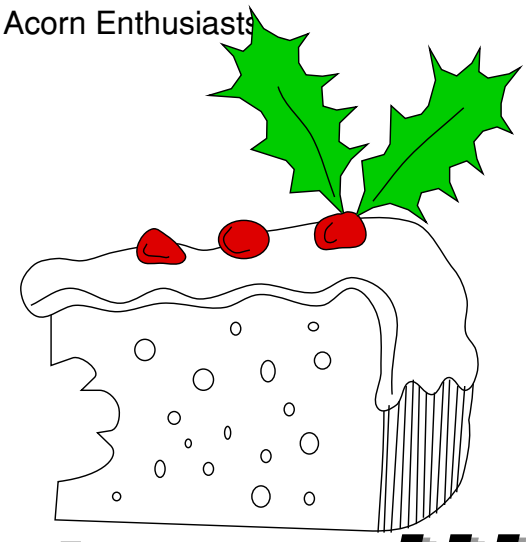
Frobnicate

DECEMBER 1995 &
JANUARY 1996

Issue 6: The techie magazine for Acorn Enthusiasts





Merry Christmas!!!

In this issue:

- ☞ New Series : Starting a BBS
- ☞ A look into FidoNet
- ☞ Beginners Guide to WIMP Programming
- ☞ The Invisible SysOp debate, final installment
- ☞ And ***much*** more besides!

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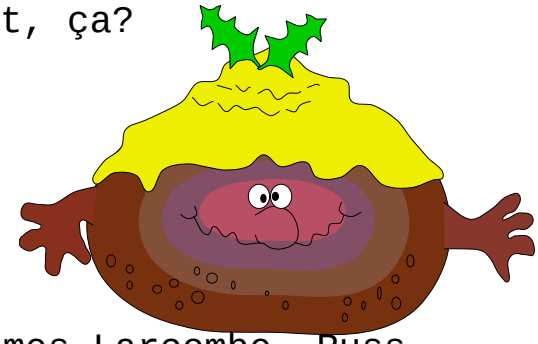

Credits:

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Graphics . . . . Richard Murray, Christmas drawings downloaded from Arcade.
Letters. . . . . Andrew Lobel

You may print and/or distribute this document provided it is *unaltered*.

The editor can be contacted by FidoNet netmail as "Richard Murray" at 2:254/86.1. Feel free to comment or send submissions.

Back issues, stylesheets, notes, logos and omitted articles are available from Encina BBS – netmail editor if you are interested.

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Editors Page(s)

Welcome to the sixth issue of Frobnicate... It's looking nice and Christmassy outside - but it's extremely cold. I suppose people from Sweden would laugh at that, but only a little while ago I was moaning how hot it is. Now it is all cold. There's no pleasing some people huh? :-)

I wish to announce the new Frobnicate echo. This is for fidonet points and BBSs to discuss Frobnicate related matters both past and future. Get linked and join in. The echo is currently available from ArcTic or Arcade.

This issue sees the concluding part of the Invisible SysOp debate. The *other* party kindly stepped forwards with a letter explaining their side of the view – and issue 5 has Tom Lawton's view. Unfortunately not much has been resolved, so this topic won't continue past this issue.

Right, well the "Easy peeC" topic was a bit of a non-starter. A few C people voted it highly, the rest didn't like it. Sadly, under 15% of my readership (worked out by counting downloads) bothered with the reader surveys. Hmmm...

Well, in an attempt to boost readership and please the current lot (you!), I'm introducing two new series:

Starting a BBS

> This will detail how to start a BBS from scratch. I'm not sure yet which BBS server to detail. I might end up using ArcBBS *and* ArmBBS...

Beginners Guide to WIMP Programming

> Not related to the book of the same name, but exactly what it says. This will serve as an introduction into writing your own multitasking utilities. Once you have built up a library of useful stuff - it is really quite easy... Well... You can be the judge of that. :-)

Apology time again... The last issue of Frobnicate took Dane's WereWolf BBS times from the Acorn User BBSlist. Unfortunately that was incorrect. Dane's BBS is online from 7pm to 7am. Dane subtly informed me today that his BBS had new glossier menus. Check it out on +44 (0)181 289 6003.

Also another errata for issue 5. It seems the SPARK archive system gets a little upset if you try to stuff massive files into it – so the first release of the Ovation version may be corrupted. However I believe David Pilling kindly uploaded a working archive to Arcade, and I uploaded an uncompressed version to Digital Databank. The file is almost 800K long, so don't even consider it unless you've 4Mb RAM or more.

I guess I'll have to keep a better eye of those graphics huh? :-)

So - Christmas is here. There is little news of a new Acorn machine or special offers. Amiga has been reintroduced (yuk) and Acorn are rumoured to move into selling badged PCs (yuk).

Well, that last statement has three outcomes:

- Acorn will make profit in the PC market and will wind down RiscOS.
- Acorn will make profit in the PC market and will use the profit to fund the less profitmaking (but far superior) RiscOS and ARM computer range.
- Acorn will be met with untold amounts of competition and won't make it in the PC market.

Personally, I recognise something must happen as the current situation isn't good – look at Cumana. So personally I hope outcome 2 is what happens so we can keep our beloved RISC platform, whilst possibly reaping the benefits of Acorn in the PC world (a place where IDE cards and SCSI cards are about the same price as a commercial game).

Who knows?

A warning to the more adventurous out there. Please don't plug your computer into the mains. The processor will pop, the motherboard will smoke a little, some of the harddiscs will die and most of the expansion cards will cease living. How do I know? Well, a kind Granada engineer plugged a new PSU into Robin Abecasis' RiscPC. This PSU apparently delivered 240V to the main power rail.

Now... Would that be a design fault or a quality control fault?

Whatever the case, my advice if you are having a new PSU fitted for any reason, be pedantic and bung your multimeter across the power outputs before it is hooked to your machine. If the engineer disagrees, switch on your video camera and record him.... :-)

Acorn has replaced some of his hardware, and will hopefully replace all of it. Some hardware is of a higher specification than his old stuff (because the old stuff may not have existed). However it isn't all rosy. He has lost some of the data on harddiscs. Acorn/Granada will (hopefully) replace the equipment but that doesn't mean the data will be replaced. I don't know how Robin will approach this. Time will tell.

Well, news of Ovation Pro, which was planned for release in the Spring - only the guy at Beebug didn't say Spring 1996 (I called last Christmas). Well, I am probably going to upgrade to Ovation Pro. The advert is making me drool a little bit.
Let's see how it is in reality.
Frobnicate will continue to be produced on regular Ovation for a few issues, then it will shift to Ovation Pro. I don't know about backwards compatibility - I don't have Ovation Pro... Yet... :-)

ARCADE BBS is at the 500,000 calls mark.
Go on...
Call the largest Acorn BBS
in existance!!!

+44 (0)181 654 2212 4 lines!
+44 (0)181 655 4412 1 line (mailer)
All lines support V.Everything.

SysOps: Dave Coleman & DaviD Dade.

The Invisible SysOp Debate

The letter posted across the next three pages is a typed up version of the letter I received from 'the *other* party'. But first, I wish to put forward a few points.

The review of National Voter was a totally separate entity to the "Invisible SysOp" article. I am sorry the programmers were not happy with the review, but I tell it how it is. However, it should be noted that a new version of National Voter has been released with addresses a few of the criticisms of my review. I shall not be rereviewing it. I'll leave it to you to make an informed judgement. You can see National Voter in action on Arcade.

You'll notice an odd paragraph about "Rollie Wedge". Please don't mail me, as two of you have, asking who Rollie is. I haven't a clue. The *other* party says he can't tell me either! Erk!

Letter #0009 was not enclosed, and I have been unsuccessful in contacting any of the National Voter programmers directly.

Well. You have Tom's article in issue 5, and you have this letter. I'm afraid you'll have to draw your own conclusions.

Are you ready? Yeah? Then glance at the adverts and then turn over!

BudgieSoft are looking for two ArmBBS/NewsFlash systems to aid in the compatibility development of our ArcBBS applications..

If you can help, please netmail "Richard Murray" at 2:254/86.1. Thank you.

WEREWOLF SOFTWARE announce...

CDtracker

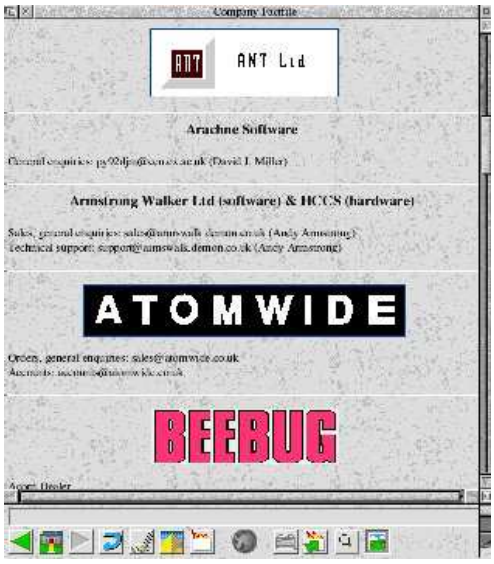
A comprehensive database program for audio CDs with advanced playing facilities

Contact us now for more info and download a demo from our support BBS!

Werewolf Software • 23 The Spinneys, Bromley, Kent BR1 2NT
Tel: 0181–289 6003 (7am–7pm) • Tel/Fax: 0181–464 7510
Tel: 0181–467 1138 • Support BBS: 0181–289 6003 (7pm–7am)

Digital Databank now has a web site!

This incorporates various parts of the Digital Databank in a nice graphical form (such as the Company Factfile, illustrated).



http://www.cybervillage.co.uk/acorn/digibank

NOTE: ALL OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS TRANSCRIPT ARE THOSE OF ANDREW LOBEL, CHAIRMAN OF UK MIRAGE ENTERPRISES (PO Box 7631, London, NW7 4QW).

Our Ref: A0031

Mr R Murray
<...>
<...>
<...>
<...>
<...>

18th November 1995

Dear Mr. Murray,

In response to your recent publication - Frobnicate issue 5, I would like to set a few points straight. I have taken into account that you ensured no references were given to any groups involved, although I am still not satisfied with the idea of publication in the first place. You are welcome to publish this letter in the interests of all the people involved.

Before I begin, I would like to draw your attention to the ARMsRace review in your Online Games section. I thought that I made it blatantly clear that any references to PSysop or Mirage Enterprises **inside** Frobnicate would not be acceptable. As you well know, PSysop was withdrawn a very long time ago, and was **never** an alternative. In light of this, I would like to make reference to letter #A0009 (enclosed). I did not agree at the time that any action should be taken about that breach of policy, but I would like to inform you that I am still aware of it.
Secondly, the small group of people involved in the production of National Voter did not appreciate being discredited in your review; I only took a small part in its production.

Moving on now towards Tom's life article, I must say that the letter sent to him, from myself was sincere. At that time, I had just received a copy of ARMsRace and had placed it up for access on InterComm. I was not entirely satisfied with its operation, and I was willing to lend help where needed to get it upto scratch.

When Tom logged onto InterComm, he paged me, and I welcomed him (as I like to do). I then proceeded to talk about ARMsRace, and then offered a few ideas on how to improve it. I then mentioned if he wanted help from us, he would have to send us the source code - at

his convenience, which he wasn't happy to do, so I left it at that. Soon after that point, I told him I had heard of preliminary plans for another Acorn version, and as I said, I could not be sure of its stage of production. It was then that I told him that he should make ARMsRace as good as possible in preparation for the possible alternative. I would like to stress the *possible alternative,* as at that point, it was only rumours which I had heard.
He then pointed out that my copy was un-registered (which I was aware of), and I then replied with the point that I was going to take it off InterComm soon, and review its progress at a later stage to maybe put it back on again; registered. Just before the chat ended, I offered Tom a trip to London to visit the team and one of its production studios. Tom kindly declined, but the offer is still open...

As far as Rollie Wedge's legality is concerned, I have been informed not to discuss it. Maybe more people should take note of the InterComm policy (which is available for download from the Information Menu on InterComm).

Anyway, soon after I got back from South Africa (after having conducted business across the globe during the summer), I received word of the Sysop Simulator, and that was produced by a new team, as a surprise. But, because I had many other things to conduct, it was released by my Nº 2 without a certificate of release by our Board of Directors, and following further research by myself a month later, I had it withdrawn.

In reference to the second letter sent to Tom Lawton (#A0010) from one of the former researcher's, I would like to make the point that addresses are kept on the letter database for future and past reference. Only under rare circumstances will the address change, thus the similarity of addresses
between the total two letters. Secondly the researcher who authored the letter, was not authorised to address Tom in the way in which he did. The group of people involved in the production of Perfect Sysop did stress the problems involved in having a rival, but due to related problems, ARMsRace is not quite as legitimate at Tom Lawton had thought, and they had, apparently already stressed their rights. Because of this, and because of a complaint received due to another unrelated problem, the researcher involved was dismissed (after 3 year's in the business, stemming from our old Illusions & Co). The ideas and comments stressed in Tom's 'so called' translation are to be ignored, as those detract from the original point made.

According to past experience in this area, possession and or distribution (either knowingly or recklessly) of any source code originating from us can apparently be followed up. Thanks to Tom Lawton's statements, we now have conclusive proof. I will have this followed up in due course...

Anyway, later on, I called Tom to ask him whether he wanted to withdraw ARMsRace at his own will, or whether he wanted to keep it going. Tom asked what would happen if he did

keep it going but I was not sure (as I was not handling his case at that time).

I failed to respond to any of Tom's requests for spools as by that time, I didn't have a copy of Perfect Sysop, and as for asking for the source code, Tom should have known better. Later on we had a call from a so called Darren Madisson of Denver, Colorado. He managed to successfully waste lots of our time and money trying to trace him. The address and telephone number he left us were invalid, and according to the Bureau of Investigation, even the street name he left us didn't exist anywhere in the USA. By that time, we were too late to have his call traced.

I must apologise for my very slow reactions in this area, but over the past few months (ever since just before the Summer), I've had an end-less list of things to do, and I'm still planning The Underground Mirage which everyone is invited to on its open evening. For further information on The Underground Mirage, please write to underground@ukmirage.demon.co.uk

I hope this has straightened out most of the points raised. If there are any further questions, please don't hesitate to write to me.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Lobel [digitised signature]

Mr A Lobel
Managing Director
UK Mirage Software Support Group

So make of that what you will. No further discussion is planned in Frobnicate magazine, but you can always discuss this in the Frobnicate echo – that's what it is there for... :-)

I don't get it!

Advertising is free. All you need to do
is submit a DrawFile or text file.

It's *that* simple!

"Richard Murray", 2:254/86.1
rmurray@arcade.demon.co.uk

Starting a BBS

So. You want to start up a BBS? Okay. Have you thought this over?

What you will need:

1. A modem. Not a basic boring stupid modem, but a fast one. At least V.32*bis* (14400bps).
2. Access to a telephone line. Preferably 24hrs as comms people tend to call at all sorts of times.
3. A BBS server. A decent one at that. My personal favourite is ArcBBS. However as ArmBBS represents better value for money (something oh-so-important), this article will be related to both servers. Don't bother with RiscBBS - it has been pretty much overtaken by ArmBBS.
4. A target. A little known fact is many BBSs won't survive if all the SysOp does is to replace "THE PLASMA SPHERE" in the default menus with "MY BSS" and put that on line. Nobody wants to call a load of cloned BBSs. The example menus are there to give you and example of how the system works. They aren't there to save you time. You should really be expected to put in your own menus.
5. Money. The reason will become painfully obvious if you offer Internet mail and fidonet and Riscnet and alsorts. Just wait 'til the phone bill comes. However when you first start your BBS – you won't have other networks.

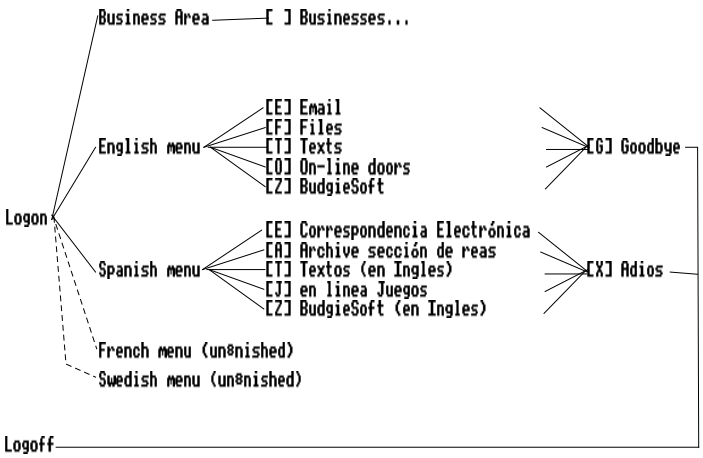
So... Let's begin.

What is your BBS to offer? Really you should aim to offer something that can't be found anywhere else. What about your hobbies? There are Christian BBSs, there are Trekker BBSs, there are anarchist BBSs. All provide a theme. You see, many people treat a BBS as a place to leach files from. However until you've built up a substantial and interesting file area – you'll have to offer something a little different.

This is where YOU come in. I'm not going to make suggestions. You should be the one doing that.

Once you've come up with your master plan, you should give it the rough treatment on a piece of A4. Set out the major constituents and the main links.

Here is an example:



Here you can see a really really basic plan of my BBS. From the integrated logon, the user can branch off to Spanish or English or to a business area. The Swedish/French options are not completed, and the user will eventually return to an integrated logoff.

Once you've planned out your BBS, you must start collecting materials. You can either collate materials from other systems and web/ftp sites – or you can create your own materials. Don't fret over copyright. Once your original material is 'out there', copyright won't count for much. I believe you yourself have to take copyright offenders to court. So if you have something vastly personal and which you wish to exert control over – don't put it on-line.

This isn't to say you can nick other peoples rights and work, though.

So. Our plan is to create a BudgieSoft area. Yours can be different, just I need to use something with ready-made examples. :-)

You've collected from Arcade and Digital Databank a few BudgieSoft utilities. You've collected the BS_ProgLst file and find you're missing a whole load. Your options:

1. Gloss over the things you are missing.
2. Hunt further, harder, deeper in the hope that those elusive programs will appear.
3. Decide it's no good, and make yourself a DWS BBS instead.
4. Ask at the source.

2 and 4 are the acceptable answers. If you're a DueSouth fan making a DueSouth BBS - DueSouth have an email address. Drop a line to them. Write to BudgieSoft. Call by Acorn. Whatever, it doesn't hurt to ask.

Then, when you think you have enough, it is time to draft out some example menus. Here it is wise to draft out your menus in !Edit with a screensize of 79 characters and 23 lines.

On the right is a list of things gathered for a BudgieSoft area.

```
BudgieSoft resources:
  $.BudgieSoft.Bridget
  $.BudgieSoft.CastAVote.CAV_3-00/8
  $.BudgieSoft.CastAVote.HVP_r4
  $.BudgieSoft.DoorDocs6
  $.BudgieSoft.HappyHak
  $.BudgieSoft.InfoSys
  $.BudgieSoft.LastUsers
  $.BudgieSoft.Linker
  $.BudgieSoft.MTerm
  $.BudgieSoft.ONLINE
  $.BudgieSoft.Parlez
  $.BudgieSoft.ReadTasks
  $.BudgieSoft.ReadUser
  $.BudgieSoft.RecordAT7
  $.BudgieSoft.RecordUsr
  $.BudgieSoft.Security
  $.BudgieSoft.SetUser0
  $.BudgieSoft.SysOpChat
  $.BudgieSoft.TopFeatur
  $.BudgieSoft.TTXDoor
  $.BudgieSoft.TurboSnail
  $.BudgieSoft.UserEdit
  $.BudgieSoft.ViewFile
```

Back to the menus. Once you have a rough idea of which way to go, you should start on designing your real menus and your real BBS. You can, for the time being, get by with monochrome text menus. We shall discuss assembling your BBS in part 2.

BUT FIRST THIS...

Which BBS server!?

ARCBBS is the oldest and most widely supported Acorn server. Written by Hugo Fiennes (ArcTerm7, sp_Dual) in C and assembler – it offers a quick and comprehensive system. The latest official version is 1.63, but unofficially we are up to 1.64beta32 which offers much more. Unfortunately at the time of writing this, I have no firm knowledge of where you can buy ArcBBS. I don't think it'd hurt to drop Hugo a line. I can't guarantee this, but I *think* "hugo.fiennes@warwick.ac.uk" should get to him.

ARMBBS is newer and quite well supported by virtue of it's compatibility with ArcBBS. Written by Keith Hall (Binkley support) in C and assembler – it also offers a good system with such useful extras as blindingly fast filesearching and "FreeForm" filebase to allow access to CD-ROMs. ArmBBS is still

in development – but it has already grabbed for itself the "Best Shareware software 1995" award from Acorn User. At only £25 it offers good value for money. The system does not, however, interface with fido-style networks. However there is an external application which will provide this functionality. Contact Keith at The Plasma Sphere BBS +44 (0)1925 757920.

NEWSFLASH is the only one, to my knowledge, that is coded in 100% assembler by Chris Davis. Erk! This BBS is compatible with ArcBBS and RiscBBS doors – but is aimed more at the techie SysOp. Things are done via script and these scripts must be 'compiled'. Well, I no longer wonder if Parlez works with NewsFlash. It seems to be included with the current release. Hehe... Unfortunately I won't be covering NewsFlash in this article as I have no experience with it. But if you're tempted - call the Highlander BBS on +44 (0)1452 384557. NewsFlash is ShareWare – a mere £10.

Chris, if you're reading... I love the processor loading. So simple yet so effective. Waaay cool! That'd look cool updating in real-time on my menu. Hehe... No way!

ARCHIBOARD seems to be aiming towards AUN compatible comms for educational establishments. It began, I believe, as Keith Marlow's degree project. This is the most expensive BBS server software (excepting ArcBBS where I have no solid information), but for that expense you get a lot if you plan to run the BBS over a network. To my knowledge none of the other servers offer this facility. For more info, contact Keith Marlow on Archiboard Central BBS +44 (0)1603 744231.

For completeness:

RSDFS by Chris Claydon offers a multitasking style BBS environment. Kinda similar to WWW crossed with RiscOS. This looks pretty cool on-screen, but the major drawbacks are:

1. Not compatible with standard comms programs. It has it's own RSDFS slave terminal.
2. RiscOS specific so unlikely to appear on other platforms in the near future.

RISCBBS was a good free BBS system. Now, however, it is showing it's age – it doesn't even support blockdrivers. If you have had experience with RiscBBS and want to go for something more up-to-date, then go for ArmBBS.

BBS is a simple BASIC BBS server. It is command driven, thus making it a pain for users. It's not really worth a look unless you would like to know roughly how a BBS operates.

VHOST is quite a powerful viewdata BBS system. I found it a little awkward to set up, but various people tell me it's pretty close to the Prestel setup – so like all BBS servers it's probably something you have to get 'in' to. Unfortunately most people don't give viewdata a second thought – which is a shame as it has better graphics capability than ANSI. My first BBS back at school was a viewdata system, thus I've a soft spot for it. For those of you unsure about viewdata, it plots a 40x24 display in colour, like teletext.

Next month — we'll begin assembling our BBS

Here's your cut-out and keep Christmas card from the Editor of Frobnicate.

Merry Christmas and best wishes to all the contributors and readers who have pushed Frobnicate to issue 6. Also to everybody who has helped off-stage such as Ben Brown, DaviD Dade, Dave Coleman and Steve Pursey who have put together the FROBNICATE echo.

Thank you all.
Seasons greetings.

Richard Murray,
Editor.

A look at the *InterNet*...

This was written by Russ Jucks who wishes for me to assure readers that he isn't normally this *bitter*. :-) Contact him at "*russhype@digibank.demon.co.uk*".

Internet. What a malarky eh?

It's basically a phone line isn't it?

Why do you get all these people who say: (macho deep voice mode <ON>)
"I surf the 'net, man. I'm so cool you could keep a side of beef on me for three months. I'm so hip I have difficulty seeing what kind of shoes I'm wearing. Yo."

*But nobody **ever** says:*

> *"Alright. I use the **phone**. Yeehah, call me RingDing!"*

Or:

> *"Check it out: Pen and ink. Paper. Hit it."*

Not as if I'm having trauma getting my node set up or anything... :-)

*And **another** thing...*

When you finally meet these people they look just like Gollum, pasty white, large eyes, and resembling an underfed laboratory skeleton, because they've just spent the last 10000000000 man-hours downloading a 200mb GIF file of the dark side of the moon, which shows Elvis cooking hamburgers, and they haven't seen sunlight since, since...

*In fact what **is** sunlight? Isn't it something to do with the Sun network/stations they've got on campus? Transfer protocol maybe. Anyway, I could always look it up I suppose...*

Sorry - got a tad bitter there. :-(

(Is there a smiley for: "Aaaaaaaaaaarrrggghhhh!"?)

Getting onto *FidoNet*...

A few issues back, Frobnicate detailed how to hook up Binkley and FidoMail.

Now you've done that - what is there?

NETMAIL:

This is the first useful thing. It's like a regular private user-to-user message on a BBS, except it is between BBSs. With FidoMail you have the ability to attach files to messages, but only if you call the destination system directly. You can't route files.

ECHOMAIL:

This is where most of the action happens. There are many areas available on many subjects such as the X-Files, Dreaming... But I take the main Acorn related messages, so I'll discuss them, in the order they are in my configuration file.

Restrictions depending on availability. The names given are the fido 'tag' names you'd use to link in.

FROBNICATE

This is the new Frobnicate echo, currently taken by Arcade and ArcTic. Please link in and chat!

UK-OFFTOPIC

This echo is where messages that are off-topic is other echos end up. Current threads are risque jokes.

ACORN-SYSOP

Available to Acorn SysOps only, this is where SysOps discuss BBS problems and BBS ideas.

ACORN-BBSDOORS

Current and potential door writers congregate here to come up with ideas, slag off each others doors and generally develop the software further. Users can join, but bug reports should really be netmailled to the relevant person.

ARCHIMEDES

The main Acorn echo, with the long suffering moderation (Steve Pursey) in control of this eclectic mix of Acorn-related subjects. A must for all Acorn people.

ACORNBBS

A place for Acorn BBSs to advertise.

BAU-COMMENT

Officially the BBC Acorn User Comments echo, but looking rather dead as everybody seems to have moved to the Internet.

CSA.MISC

Ported from the Internet by Arcade, this is the COMP.SYS.ACORN.MISC newsgroup. There are some interesting nuggets here, but there is sadly a rather high signal:crap ratio. Best read by subject line scanning (click ADJUST instead of SELECT in FidoMail).

CSA.HARDWARE

Another Comp.Sys.Acorn portee, this time more specialised and more interesting stuff.

Other CSA.* echos available. Please ask for further information.

ARCPROG

Acorn Programmers hangout.

ARCCOMMS

Where Comms issues are discussed. All Acorn comms people should at least be joined to this one.

And three non-Acorn echos:

BOFFINS

Discussing (semi) techie electric/electronic things.

BUSINESS_UK

A meeting place for UK businesses, rather small and informal, but a very interesting read. Current topics like "NHS Waiting Lists".

CYBERSPACE

An echo related around CyberSpace matters. Has been rather dead recently, but my petrol-laden post on BBS licensing seems to have kick-started life into it.

So, CONNECT AND ENJOY!!!

ACORN IN THE FUTURE...

This file was downloaded from Arcade, but there is unfortunately no indication in the file of who wrote it. However, very well done to that person. A nice concept... If only it were true!

Review
The new *VISC* machine from *Acorn*.

Well it finally arrived, my new *QED* unit, like the rest of you I parted with my two months credit and sat back to the usual excuses of production delays, component supplier problems etc. etc. until I finally got so fed up I threatened credit retraction, all of a sudden delivery was 'next week' and 'sorry for the delay'. Of course I could have got an ABM clone from one of apple/ibm/microsoft's bucket outlets but I'm a second generation user and still prefer to buy a home grown machine. Ok, the quantum core was fabricated in the main factory but the design was done in Cambridge and, after all, it's the thought that counts.

First impressions; the main unit comes in a neat packet 10cm by 20 cm (ipex standard) along with its interface harness, cryo set and memory cubes. I paid the extra and got the direct version as I've already got the interface fitted for my job. There's still a standard fibre link for those who haven't got this option and in some ways this may be better for the beginner. User information is the usual teaching interface in the form of a standard memory unit that plugs into any local node.

The main hardware.

The processor unit utilises quantum technology, data is manipulated at electron level using quantum dots,wires and planes. These go to form what's known as the *VISC* (virtual instruction set core). The technology has been around for a number of years in the labs and on high end machines but this is the first time it's been available for the personal user. The physics is horrendously complex and the engineering more so but as with everything the basic premise is that something can switch. In this case it's the probability of an electron existing in any given dot. This probability can be modified by voltage and so can form the basis of the switch. Where this technology is different to conventional processors is that besides being smaller, and hence better at creating circuitry, the state of the switch isn't definite. This means that when accessing the dot which has previously been loaded with an electron the return signal says that it's probably (but not definitely) there. Reading the dot is performed by injecting light into a tiny quantum wire at the end of which is a dot. The wire is two level, light emerges from one level if the dot is occupied at the time and the other if it isn't. It manages this by what seems like a bit of magic. The 'wire' consists of two parallel paths optically linked. When light is introduced into the bottom channel it can behave as either a wave or a particle. If it behaves as a particle it stays in the lower channel, if it behaves as a wave then it leaks into the top channel.The light behaves as a wave if there's a dot present at the end of the channel but as a particle if there's no dot. Now here's the magic, the light can only cross between channels during its journey i.e. before it gets to the particle: so how does it know how to behave if it hasn't got there yet?. Fortunately, this level of operation is masked from the user by the confidence circuitry and several layers of conventional neural circuits. The confidence circuit uses statistical processing to turn the vague probables to almost definites and checks them against a reality model in the main holographic memory. The neural layers then turn this into more conventional terms so that the overall effect is almost the same as a firm instruction set machine ...but much faster! because it's working at the atomic level!.

The system comes with a 128G holographic memory as standard with a second optional interface. It seems strange to limit the machine to only two interfaces especially as the main reality core is a permanent feature of the cube and can't be erased short of smashing the crystal. Of course in the end it all comes down to price and I suppose the extra memory could have been added but since over half of the system cost is already memory then this might have put too many people off. There are, however a series of clever techniques to compensate for this limitation. One particularly noteworthy one harks back to prehistoric times. When creating a personal document most of the memory used simply stores the author's original words suitably sampled and compressed. The *VISC* uses the standard recognition algorithms used for commands and extends it to cover all voice. Instead of storing the samples it recreates old fashioned text, adds nuance highlights and codes a front end voice print. This results in compression factors of several thousand to one without any significant loss of meaning. Similarly visuals are coded with fractal referents to the main reality block. The result of these two systems alone effectively gives a tenfold increase in usable memory raising the virtual system memory available to a respectable 500 G.

User interface.

With the full interface, direct visualisation is possible although the software still suffers from the indiscrimination problems of the old verbal unit. Context sensitive visualisation still requires precise thought and some degree of sub vocalization. However at least it is no longer fooled by sound alikes; the old student howler of "forewarned is forearmed" fails to produce six limbed beings. I found the visualisation process to be less restrictive than on industry standard machines. Ever since the moral majority it's been almost impossible to create satirical or ethnic references in your work without constant automatic political correction. It is refreshing to be able to use this machine without the prim and literal intervention of conventional neural interpreters. This is almost certainly the effect of the probablistic engine which seems better able to cope with vague concepts than any deliberate attempt to free the system. If you can't afford the direct link then you can use most input devices on the fibre. Even using a vocal input line the feel of the system is more tolerant and it lets you frame questions in more general terms. Output comes as direct stimulation of the visual cortex, I've never been comfortable with this system and I prefer to keep this part as a separate video tank even if it does cost more. It's pure prejudice I know, but I'm old enough to remember the days when direct linking was so absorbing that often people died of thirst sitting in their own effluent.

Software.

The package comes bundled with the three primal applications. A visualiser, a communicator and a guru. There isn't much native software available for the machine as yet but emulators abound for almost anything that's been popular in the last five years. I've tried several packages and despite some minor quibbles they appear to work well. However, the real power of the machine only becomes apparent when using the native applications. Each application is customisable to an astounding degree and there are options to create an interface personality. This option is uncanny in the way it can sense that 'day after' feeling and tone down its responses to sooth a tender head. It has some drawbacks; working on a cute presentation that constantly removes the sharper bits on its own volition can be frustrating. However it is possible to dynamically alter the interface even during a session so creating harsher and harder realities.

Visualiser.

The visualiser comes with two and three dimensional options. The basic tools are all interactive and additive, you can use a transparent textured brush with automatic surface contour tracking to create very realistic images without effort. Movement is added by object manipulation, this can be user generated but there are a full set of gravity, deformation and collision tools. I played for hours with the deformation option which can even change the colours and properties under external control. Try feeding it some music with paths for amplitude and frequency then use the visuals to modify the soundtrack. Really, this package has to

be played with to get the full impact and for those of you who haven't got access to one of these machines I've attached some example sequences to this file.

Communicator.

The communicator takes verbal, comms or hard copy and generally makes a better job of recognition than hard systems.This is due to the probabilistic nature of the machine. It is quite good at guessing and in particular the adaptive style option can collate different sources into a form suitable for any given user. Where it excels is in translation. It comes with an EE language set with promises of the major sino group being available as an add on. I tried it with a vocal clip of some Wagnerian lieder and achieved better than a 90% success rate.

Guru.

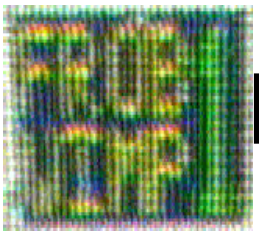
If the system falls over anywhere it's in the guru application. A mere 32G partition of the main cube contains the whole of the reality base. This is very inadequate in present day terms. In addition the general flexibility of the system gets in the way here. It is virtually impossible to refine sensible questions with the full variable interpreter on. The unit spends too much of its time following links. With the interpreter disabled the performance drops to that of an old style system but if no extra reality bases are added there is too much missing. Especially in technological categories.

Programming.

For those of you who still develop code from a more basic viewpoint the system has some great surprises in store. It behaves somewhat like a general massively parallel unit but the details of specific processor interaction can be ignored. This isn't a feature of the neural control layer as one might at first think, it is an intrinsic feature of the operation of the quantum circuitry. All data is operated on at the probabilistic level and so there is a small but finite chance that every conceivable answer to any specific algorithm might be produced. This means that the answer could be wrong. What stops this happening is the probabilities. These tend to cancel for wrong answers and reinforce for correct ones. Therefore the creation of a solution can be couched as a general question and the 'right' answer extracted from all the others by the probability filter. So how does this give rise to the massive increase in power of this machine? Remember the problem of public domain key decryption from your high school days. The solution with this machine goes something like this. The problem essentially is to factorize a large number into two or three large primes. The large number is entered into the probabilistic core as a pulse of energy. Each quantum dot will be excited into a certain state but the exact state is in effect a probability distribution of all possible states. The effect can be thought of as stretching each dot into a set of parallel dimensions. Now the reverse field is set up by the neural filters that have been trained on a dummy set of several K's of known codes and their encryptions generated from a standard public key program. As the quantum states return their energy the field reinforces the solution pattern for prime factors. What emerges is the most probable solution. Of course it is the essentially massively parallel effect of generating all solutions at once that makes this technique so fast but there are some side effects that are theoretically possible. Since quantum tunnelling appears to involve processes that are in some ways faster than lightspeed (I don't understand exactly how but my friend the physicist assures me it's possible) then there is always the possibility that the answer could be there before the question has been asked. In fact, as I am using the communicator on the *VISC* to create this review, it is quite possible that it has already spread through time and in some respects already exists in some part of the data universe.

Well; "Is it worth it".

All in all I'm pleased with my new 'beast' and I'm going to spend some time getting to know it better. Perhaps after the honeymoon is over I may change change my mind. However one thing's for certain; this is a radical split from the crowd and like all radicals it will either change the world completely or be silenced by the establishment.



Beginners Guide to WIMP coding

Beginners guide to WIMP programming - part one.

A. WHAT IS THE WIMP?

It's the WIMP, the DeskTop, the GUI. Confused? It's simple. GUI stands for "Graphical User Interface" which is exactly what it is. WIMP means "Windows Icons Menus and Pointers" which is exactly what you use. Finally, the DeskTop is the analogy used. You make pretend that the computer screen is your virtual DeskTop - onto which you put your files and even a coffee mug.

More importantly, the WIMP system gets your programs to 'multitask'. Back in the good old days, you load up a program and use it. When you want to do something, you shut down that program and loaded another. Now with the vast amounts of memory available to computers, it would not be uncommon to run several applications at once. DOS to a small degree allows task swapping, but this is not the ideal solution. We really want everything at once. Therefore the WIMP system was created. Windows™ allows a basic form of multitasking. RiscOS's DeskTop has offered true multitasking for ages.

B. WHY SHOULD WE MULTITASK?

That's a simple question. Because it gives your programs more appeal, offers more resources and makes the user interface simpler for both the programmer and the user.

More appeal - your users will prefer your task (or program) if it runs in the GUI. Then they can swap between tasks with the minimum of hassle.

More resources - recently there was a day where every decent program features its own font systems, its own graphics routines and its own printer routines. The GUI offers instead shared resources such as the printer manager. This helps reduce code size and makes your code simpler.

Simpler - firstly from the programmers view. You'll soon learn to loathe the complex data structures that go into making DeskTop things happen. It can be simple, et cetera. Yes. But can you imagine the grief that you'd run into trying to create and maintain your own windows using DRAW and PLOT commands?

Now from the users view. The bare minimum you expect from RiscOS applications is:

- The SELECT button (left mouse button) selects things, does things, clicks things.
- The MENU button (middle mouse button) brings up a menu if one is available.
- If a menu item has "..." after it, a dialogue window will open.
- You can kill an application via the Task Manager.

Almost every application will do this. Acorn have actually drafted a document called "The Style Guide" (supplied with the PRMs or available for about £10) that gives applications writers hints on how to comply with the mechanisms of the DeskTop.

C. COMPLICATIONS WITH MULTITASKING

You'll wish you were dead if you try to convert that fast shoot-em-up to multitask. There are few guarantees to the speed the system will operate at, it can vary from about 60 polls per second down

to less than one poll a second (on my A5000). A poll is when the WIMP goes round each task letting the tasks grab a slice of time to do its stuff. Also full-screen applications don't translate well. You can do a word processor or a game of patience, but maybe not space invaders.

The Acorn system is unique in that it offers co-operative multitasking. Let's look at both types:

PRE-EMPTIVE - This is what is offered to you by Windows™ and the tornado module. It is easier to program for, but more wasteful on memory. The GUI allocates each task an amount of time. The applications get that much time (say 10 centiseconds). After that time, the GUI passes control to the next task regardless.

CO-OPERATIVE - This is what RiscOS will offer you. When control arrives at your program, it is yours. You can enter a recursive loop and lock up the entire DeskTop. You do your processing as quickly as possible. Then once you've done, pass control back to the GUI by 'polling' the WIMP.

D. IMPLEMENTING A BASIC MULTITASKING PROGRAM

This assumes you are familiar with the DeskTop, DeskTop resources and know roughly how to use BASIC.

Our multitasking program will be really BASIC. When run it will pop up an icon on the icon bar. Clicking [SELECT] on this icon will make a bleep. Clicking [ADJUST] on this icon will shut down the program.

Firstly, we need some resources...

Find a space on your harddisc and create a directory called '!FrobWimp1'.

Now, create an !Run file in !Edit containing:

```
| !Run file for Frobnicate Wimp application 1
|
Set FrobWimp1$Dir <Obey$Dir>
IconSprites <FrobWimp1$Dir>.!Sprites
Run <FrobWimp1$Dir>.!RunImage
```

The first command line sets up a variable 'FrobWimp1$Dir'. The DeskTop tries to move away from the concept of 'current directories', but the underlying operating system can only be in one directory at a time (per filing system). This command line sets up a reference point for the DeskTop and your application. The pseudomacro '<Obey$Dir>' is set to the directory the Obey file resides in.

The second line tells the DeskTop to load the !Sprites file into the Wimp pool. This is so our application can find the iconbar icon.

The final line runs the code. The code can be called practically anything, such as 'DireStrait' or 'H_Rayner', however convention dictates it is called '!RunImage'. On the other hand, the '!Sprites' file MUST be called '!Sprites' as the DeskTop may search for this independently.

Now save that into our application directory as '!Run', and SetType it to be an 'Obey' file.

Keeping the file in memory, remove the "Run" command line, and change the word "!Run" to "!Boot". Save this as '!Boot', type 'Obey'.

When you open a master directory, the DeskTop will scan all subdirectories for applications. An application is a directory starting with "!". That explains why your application directory says "APP" on its icon. Once an application directory is located, the DeskTop will look for a file called "!Boot". If this is found, it will be run. This should load any sprites and set up any system variables - and nothing else. If there is no "!Boot" file, the DeskTop will try to load the correct "!Sprites" file.

When you double-click on an application icon, the DeskTop will try to run a file called "!Run" which will usually set up system variables, load in sprites, check the required resources are present and then run the main program.

Sprites? We are now at that bit. There are four types of spritefile:

`!Sprites22`	- Your high-resolution sprites.
`!Sprites23`	- Mono high-resolution sprites. Not often supported.
`!Sprites24`	- Low-resolution sprites.
`!Sprites`	- Default if no !SpritesXX found. Low-resolution.

The suffixes are added by the DeskTop. You should have at LEAST an '`!Sprites`' file.

So, load Paint and create a `MODE 12` sprite, `34` pixels wide, `17` pixels high with no palette. Call it "`!FrobWimp1`". You can have a mask if you want. This icon will represent your application in the filer and on the iconbar. Draw what you want in there. You could make it a plain blue square, you could try to write "Frob Wimp 1", draw a spaceship or confuse everybody and mask it all out (so it'll be blank!).

Save this into your application directory as "`!Sprites`".

Now we move onto the application proper. Here goes. This version is commented. A proper version (without comments) is available as an add-on archive that should come with your copy of Frobnicate.

```
REM >!RunImage
REM
REM This is the Frobnicate Wimp application #1
REM December 1995
REM
:
```

This is fairly default. `REM` statements are ignored by BASIC and serve mainly to be notes to you. The first `REM`, however, does have special significance. If the `REM` is followed by a right brocket "`>`" and a filename, that will set up what is known as an in-line name. The idea being you set up the program name at the beginning and need only type "`SAVE`" to save the code. However most of you will be using !Edit or !Zap or similar to write your programs because, basically, it is sexier. **:-)**

```
DIM wimp% &100,errblk% &100
```

This sets up two blocks of memory. The first block is the WIMP block, used to pass data around. The second block is used in case of an error. The "&" denotes hexadecimal (base 16), which equals 256 bytes.

```
SYS "Wimp_Initialise",200,&4B534154,"FrobWimp1"
```

Simple huh? That is what registers your application with the DeskTop. The first parameter '`200`' is the required WIMP version multiplied by 100. Don't be smart and type in 350 if you have a RiscPC as things are a little more complicated. That horrible hexadecimal number actually breaks down to spell "`TASK`". I don't know what options Acorn were planning when this was created, but "`TASK`" is what you need. The final parameter is what you want the task to be shown as in the TaskManager display.

```
ON ERROR SYS "Wimp_ReportError",FNerrblk(ERR,REPO
RT$),1,"FrobWimp1" : END
```

This line sets up the error handler. If something goes wrong, it should call the Wimp_ReportError interrupt with parameters specified. You can pass a function name, which will be evaluated before the interrupt is called. It will then `END`.

```
PROCWimp_Setup
```

This calls a procedure that will set up the WIMP - basically it will bung the icon on the iconbar.

```
finished%=FALSE
```

The main body of the program just repeats until the variable '`finished%`' is TRUE or an error occurs. Here we define the initial value of the '`finished%`' variable.

```
REPEAT
  PROCWimp_Poll
UNTIL finished%=TRUE
SYS "Wimp_CloseDown"
END
```

Here is the main body. Like I said, it repeatedly calls the `Wimp_Poll` procedure until `finished%` is TRUE. Once it is TRUE, the application is closed down and the program ends. Simple!

```
DEFPROCWimp_Poll
  SYS "Wimp_Poll",1,wimp% TO action%
  CASE action% OF
    WHEN 6: PROCWimp_MouseClick(wimp%)
    WHEN 17,18: PROCWimp_Message(wimp%)
  ENDCASE
ENDPROC
```

This chunk is the `Wimp_Poll` procedure. The first thing it does is '`poll`' the Wimp. The DeskTop therefore runs through all the other tasks, and returns... But does it?

The first parameter, '`1`', tells the Wimp not to call our task if nothing has happened. This speeds things up a little. The second parameter is the WIMP data block. This is returned, when something happens, with certain bits filled in. The `TO` parameter is filled, upon return, with a poll event. There are many poll events - but we are only interested in three of them:

`6`	- A mouse click has happened.
`17`	- A Wimp message has been received.
`18`	- As for 17.

These events are then processed by calling the appropriate procedures. When done, or if nothing happened.

```
DEFPROCWimp_MouseClick(wimp%)
  mx%=wimp%!0
  my%=wimp%!4
  mb%=wimp%!8
  IF wimp%!12<>-2 THEN ENDPROC
  IF mb%=4 THEN VDU 7
  IF mb%=1 THEN finished%=TRUE
ENDPROC
```

This takes the '`wimp%`' variable and extracts the mouse x position '`mx%`', the mouse y position '`my%`' and which mouse button is clicked '`mb%`'. The next line checks to see which icon has been clicked, `-2` is the iconbar. Now we move on to the button parsing. The buttons are numbered as follows:

`SELECT`	– 4
`MENU`	– 2
`ADJUST`	– 1

These are additive. `5` is `SELECT and ADJUST`, `7` is `all three` buttons.

If `SELECT`, then `VDU 7` (bleep). If `ADJUST`, set '`finished%`' to TRUE to quit.

```
DEFPROCWimp_Message(wimp%)
  CASE wimp%!16 OF
    WHEN 0   : SYS "Wimp_CloseDown" : END
  ENDCASE
ENDPROC
```

This routine handles the WIMP messages. The only one we're interested in is message code 0 - which is sent by TaskManager to shut down our task.

```
DEFPROCWimp_Setup
  LOCAL sx%,sy%,sm%,px%,py%
  DIM sprite% (LEN("!frobwimp1")+1),text% LEN("Fro
bWimp1")
  $sprite%="S!frobwimp1"
  $text%="FrobWimp1"
  SYS "Wimp_SpriteOp",40,,"!frobwimp1" TO ,,,sx%,s
y%,,sm%
  SYS "OS_ReadModeVariable",sm%,4 TO ,,px%: sx%=sx
%<<px%
  SYS "OS_ReadModeVariable",sm%,5 TO ,,py%: sy%=sy
%<<py%
  IF LEN("FrobWimp1")*16>sx% THEN sx%=(LEN("FrobWi
mp1")-4)*16
  !wimp%=-1
  wimp%!4=0: wimp%!8=-64:wimp%!12=wimp%!4+sx%:wimp
%!16=2+sy%
  wimp%!20=&1700210B
  wimp%!24=text%
  wimp%!28=sprite%
  wimp%!32=LEN("FrobWimp1")
  SYS "Wimp_CreateIcon",,wimp% TO !wimp%
ENDPROC
```

I'm not going to detail this piece of code. It basically checks the screen co-ordinates, then plots our icon on the iconbar... Not the most efficient code either.

```
DEF FNerrblk(err%,report$)
  !errblk%=err%:$(errblk%+4)=report$+" at line "+$
STR$(ERL/10)
  errblk%?(4+LEN($(errblk%+4)))=0
=errblk%
```

Finally, this part takes the error parameters and builds up the data block for the WIMP. Notice the `STR$(ERL/10)`. This effectively removes the final '0' from the error line number - therefore allowing you the know which line to jump to in !Edit.

E. THINGS TO TRY:

You can amend and extend to this program yourself to make simple utilities. For example:

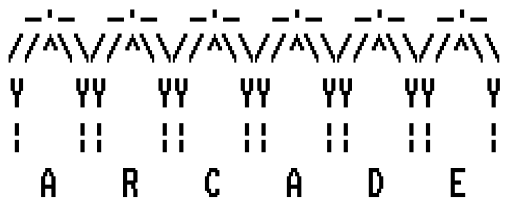
- Clicking on the icon could bring up the root directory of your harddisc.
- Clicking on the icon could dump the current screen into RAMdisc.
- Clicking SELECT on the icon could save the WIMP sprites pool to RAMdisc, and clicking ADJUST to save the ROM WIMP sprites.
- Clicking on the icon could open a TaskWindow.
- Add a menu?

You are limited only by your knowledge and imagination (and memory, and harddisc capacity, and processor power, and and and...).

'til next time, have fun!

The program code should accompany your copy of Frobnicate on disc or within the archive.

If you don't have it, you can download a copy from Arcade BBS.



The Bulletin Board for Acorn Risc PC and Archimedes users

2:254/27.0@Fidonet
http://arcade.demon.co.uk/

On Wednesday 6th December at 18:48, the Arcade BBS call count romped past the half-a-million mark with a login from one of its regular and frequent callers, Helen Rayner.

This represents some 25,000 UKP in call charges for British Telecom, if we assume at least 5p per call - and in reality this amount must be much, much greater.

Maybe BT should be canvassed to consider special discounts for amateur BBS operators? After all, all the Acorn BBS Sysops are helping them towards huge profits, so why couldn't they help us in return?

Helen will receive a £20 gift voucher from David Coleman and myself as a thank-you for all the enjoyment that we have gained from this absorbing hobby since we started in 1990 - we never dreamed how much it would grow!

We also say thanks to all our callers for the many and varied messages, programs, files, ideas, flames, arguments, meets, pints, dinners, karaoke sessions, movies, donations, friendships gained, bouquets, brickbats and everything that has built Arcade BBS. The BBS is the Users, and the Users are the BBS. We both thank all of you.

DaviD Dade and David Coleman

It is with regret that I have to announce that SkyLine Online BBS (Robbie Record) has gone off-line because of a harddisc failure.

Get well soon SkyLine!

A note for the unobservant...

http://arcade.demon.co.uk/

Qu'est-ce que c'est, ça?

Well, it's *that* time of the month. Time for me to sit down and think of things to grab, twist and throw. Like that pop group say in their opening line, "Today is the day that they're gonna throw it back to you". That's what I'm here for.

So first off, **FistLore**. This is basically a "kick the brown stuff out of your opponent" game, in the style of Mortal Combat (or "Kombat" if you can't spell). It is interesting to note that the demo version, supplied on a recent coverdisc, features two girls wearing miniskirts and purple pants <ahem!>. Not that I'm being sexist of anything, but when's the last time you saw two girls brawling. Ah well. I guess it is supposed to increase its appeal.

Now onto more sombre matters. Robbie Record has suffered some kind of harddisc failure so SkyLine on-line has gone off-line. We really need BBSs to start, not die! After all, this last year and a half has seen a massive explosion in BBS potential. BudgieSoft was created and has done some 20 or so doors and utilities and still going strong with a User Editor and a few conversions. Then Keith Hall releases his pet project ArmBBS onto the world – and promptly wins an award for it. Chris Johns has created NewsFlash. Even the people who I'm not supposed to mention [:-)] have released their fair share of stuff.

So where are all the BBSs?

On a related point, both Digital Databank and Arcade have WWW pages. Due to not having Internet access, I can't check these out for myself (anybody kind enough to send me some screenshots?). However, with the rumoured Internet access ideas that ArcBBS is to get (?), it's all looking interesting. I hope, however, the big bad (and pornography laden - if you believe the telly) 'net won't cause the demise of the local comms scene.

That's that. All that remains is for me to wish myself a happy 22nd!
16th December 1995

Notice Board

Well, no notices that aren't already in the magazine... So here's the latest BudgieSoft programs listing for you (main programs only).

NOTE: NewsFlash is usually compatible with doors marked "ArmBBS"...

Acronym [0.5A]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
Tom Box's NewsFlash acronym searcher program converted to ArcBBS.

BreakOut [0.10]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
The RiscBBS door now converted to ArcBBS, with some tidy-ups.

CastAVote [2.50]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
This popular door now comes as a bundled package including VoteEdit (the votes data editor) and VoteConfg (easy-configure CastAVote) and more. Utilities to convert your votes to different formats including CSV...
Release 3 coming soon...

DoorDocs [6]
Textfile
The definitive door writers guide to door related matters, now covers:
The 'CastAVote' protocol.
&16F00 message codes.
How to make your own DOING display.
Possibly the most complete ACTUAL list of ANSI codes and how to use them (also codes for VT52 and VT100).
Useful ArcBBS door routines.
Compatibility information.

HappyHak [1.06]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
Wind up your users with a faux 'wardialler' door. Even a SysOp with this door fell for it (Hello Robbie!).

LastUsers [1.28]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64
Gives a pretty coloured (or mono if you are not an ANSI user) display of the last # users to call your BBS. Includes daily totals count.

Linker [1.00]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64
Links your door to a blockdriver, giving better than 80% throughput in most cases. Could be a link to a modem for follow-on calling, or an internet gate or or or...

ONLINE [1.10]
Door; ArcBBS 1.64 and ArmBBS
This parodies the ArcBBS ONLINE command (list users currently on-line). However it does this in real-time so you can watch BBS life as it happens.

Parlez [1.40]
Door; ArcBBS 1.64 and ArmBBS
This door provides and BBS inter-messaging facility. You can conduct a private chat or just send a message. Failed messages are uploaded to the user's mailbox (ArcBBS only).

ReadTasks [2.15]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
This will display the tasks that you are currently running - not a lot of point, basically a clone of the Archiboard facility - just to see if I could do it. This was BudgieSoft's first ever door.

ReadUsers [1.00]
Utility; ArcBBS 1.64
This utility will scan through the userbase and output information on the users in long form or short form. Useful for taking a 'snapshot' of your userbase in case something happens to it. Can be easily converted to ArcBBS 1.63.

SetUser0 [1.00]
Utility; ArcBBS 1.64
Ever peed-off by the fact that ArcBBS 1.64 won't allow you to log on as user #0 - the default user? Be peed-off no longer. This utility allows you to nominate another user to be the 'default' user. Simply set up this nominated user as you wish the default to be, then run this program... Hey presto - the default user #0 set up as you require. Password/message areas and all.

SpeedyType [0.5A]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
Tom Box's NewsFlash typing speed game converted to ArcBBS.

SysOpChat [1.63beta22]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
This provides a nice split-screen SysOp chat with unique bleeping so you know you are being paged.

TTXDoor [1.06alpha]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
This door will download teletext pages and display it on the screen in ANSI form. Cool huh?
This door requires a Ground Control teletext adaptor. It /may/ also work with the Octopus Systems teletext receiver. They are both the same hardware, but I make use of the interfacing module...

UserEdit [1.06]
Utility; ArcBBS 1.64 only.
This replaces the ArcBBS standard User Editor to provide a nifty feature packed user editor - still using 128K. :-)
This can be linked in to ArcBBS to totally replace the default, or can be run additionally.

ViewFile [1.00beta]
Door; ArcBBS 1.63/1.64 and ArmBBS
Upon DaviD Dade's suggestion, I am working on a door to allow the SysOp to view certain files, like the BBS logs.

For a full list of BudgieSoft software, please refer to the BudgieSoft area on ArcTic or Digital Databank.