THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SELLING ST MAGAZINE

ST FORMAT

ISSUE 83 ■ JUNE 1996 ■ £4.25

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

Discover how Desk Accessories can change your computing life

ALIEN WORLDS

Transfer files from your ST to other computing platforms

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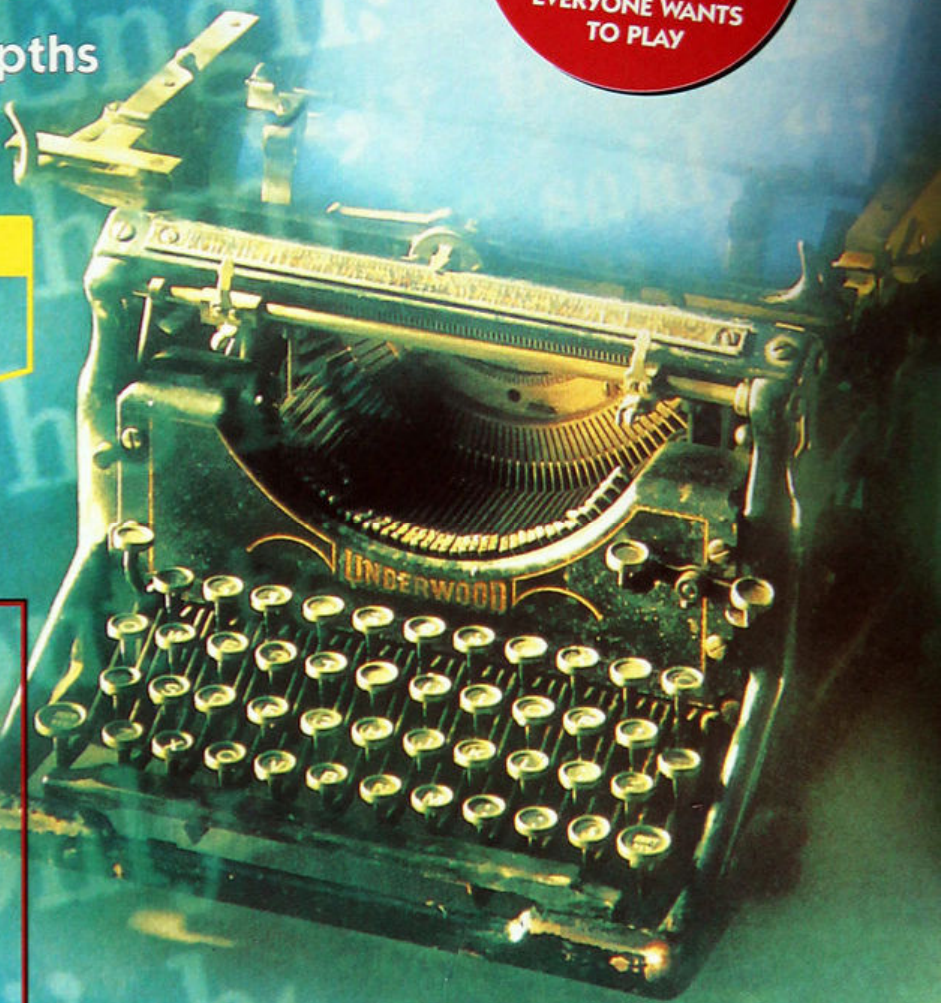

YOUR COVER DISK

Word processor, *STOS* fixer and exclusive game demo

REVIEWED THIS MONTH:

ZERO-X ● 6x CD-ROM DRIVE ● HD DRIVER ● CUBASE CD-ROM ● ATARI COMPENDIUM CD-ROM ● BROTHER LASER PRINTER ● KRYPTONITE DATA ● ULTIMATE ARENA FALCON ● ATTACK OF THE MUTANT PENGUINS ● AND MORE...

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REVIEWED: REVOLUTIONARY CD-ROM DRIVE ● SAMPLING SUITE ● GREAT JAG GAME

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Software at realistic prices

The faces behind L.A.P.D...

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Same day service, quality virus-free disks

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LAPD HAS NOW BEEN VOTED TOP PD LIBRARY BY ST FORMAT READERS.

ALL DISKS BELOW ARE ONLY £1.50 UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

games

• • ARCADE • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

G.466 ZAPTASTIC 2 (S/W): A fast action arcade blast in the style of Llamatron. ***NEW***
G.467 BANG & BLASTMAN (1Mb): Explosive 2 player Bomberman action (2 joysticks). ***NEW***
G.468 SUBAQUA (S/W, Falcon compatible): Highly rated underwater shoot 'em up. ***NEW***
G.463 PARALLAX PAINTER: Three dimensional platform/puzzle game. ***NEW***
G.449 MICHIGAN MIKE & THE LOST CITY OF ZOROG: Super new platformer in the rain forest
G.454 TRAPPED II: Ten levels of fast 'Light Cycle' action (1Mb, STE, S/W) (Order G455 for STFM)
G.448 H.E.R.O.: Human Extraction & Rescue Operation: One time commercial platform game
G.450 THE ORIGINAL: Colourful 'Boulderdash' type diamond mining puzzle game ***NEW***
G.457 DEADLAND: Search and rescue mission 'Cannon Fodder' style
G.456 SUPER CHICKEN: Collect eggs with a giant chicken using escalators and ladders.
G.460 SKYDUEL: A single or multi-player air combat game; ballistic missiles, dogfights and ground attacks.
G.433 GENOCIDE: (1Mb, STE, S/W): Fast space 3D shoot 'em up.
G.417 STAR VOYAGE: Intergalactic action – requires 2 joysticks (Ex Star Trek - TNG). (2 disks/£3.00, 1Mb)
G.413 COMBAT: Fast action military shoot 'em up in style of Operation Wolf
G.410 PACMAN ON E: One or two player classic 'PacMan' with sampled music (1Mb, STE)
G.405 ULTIMATE ARENA: Beat 'em up in the style of 'Mortal Kombat' (STE, 1Mb, S/W).
G.403 SQUARE OFF: The ultimate tumbling block 'Tetris' game (STE, 1Mb) (2 disks/£3.00).
G.398 ASTEROIDIA (STE): Classic asteroid blasting action – order G399 for STFM version (1Mb, S/W).
G.395 DYNABUSTER: Bomb laying and dodging arcade game (STE, 1Mb).
G.366 DAVE MUNSIE GAMES: 9 games from the master programmer, including Frogger (1Mb).
G.355 WING LORD: Aerial duelling game in the style of the classic 'Joust'.
G.380 STARBALL: Pinball game - arguably the best PD game on the ST!
G.381 MAX: Help Max find his girlfriend. A 'cute' arcade platform game (1Mb).
G.286 ROCKFALL - SPECIAL EDITION: Tunnelling/diamond collecting puzzle game.
G.80 TETRIS & PILE UP: Two very good versions of the 'Tetris' arcade game.
G.171 HACMAN II: 1 megabyte version of PacMan, 100 new levels!
G.110 LLAMATRON: 100 levels of fast arcade action with wicked sound FX.
G.201 BLAT!: 'Tetris' style three in a row, falling blocks with many added features.

• • FANTASY/ROLE-PLAY • • • • • • • • • •

G.425 ANORAKS OF DOOM: First person view fantasy role-playing game. (2 disks/£3.00)
G.124 SPECTRAL SORCERY: Excellent game of battling wizards.
G.172 HERO II: Detailed graphic role-play adventure (1Mb)
G.416 DANGIMERE: Detailed fantasy role-playing game. (1Mb, 2 disks/£3.00)
G.412 NISHIRAN: Classy sci-fi, first-person view role-playing game. (1Mb) (2 disks/£3.00).
G.198 OMEGA: A large and complex wilderness and dungeon adventure with hours and hours of play (1Mb)
G.431 REALMS OF REALITY: First-person view dungeon exploration and monster-bash.
G.351 TOWERS: First-person view role-playing fantasy adventure game ***NOW COMPLETE*** (1Mb) (2 disks/£3.00).
G.452 LAP OF THE GODS: Complex German language fantasy role play game (1Mb, mono, 2 disks/£3.00)
G.308 WALLS OF ILLUSION: The ultimate 'Dungeonmaster' clone with English instructions (1Mb).
G.426 WYRD WAYS: Magical combat in a maze of sliding walls (1Mb, S/W).
G.5 MORIA: A complex fantasy D&D based role-play game. (1Mb).
G.370 MINDMELT: Fantasy adventure with an overhead view.
G.288 DARKLYTE: 'Space Crusade' type droids wargame.
G.237 CHAOS: Madcap game of battling wizards by Martin Brownlow (1Mb or 0.5Mb)
G.262 ALIENS!: Space Marines v Aliens strategy combat game.
G.115 MYSTIC WELL: Complete 'Dungeonmaster' style adventure game.

• • PUZZLES • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

G.461 SHAPE UP (1MB, STE): A puzzle game of placing coloured squares on a grid. ***NEW***
G.436 SHRINKING WALL SOLITAIRE (1Mb): Challenging and addictive 'Match it' type game.
G.443 WORD QUEST: Construct and play word squares. Over 50 puzzles on disk ***NEW***
G.446 THE FRENCH COLLECTION: Three puzzle games; MANCIOLA, QUINZAINE & MOLECULE.
G.387 SPACESWEEPER: A challenging 'Minesweeper' game in three dimensions!
G.311 JIGSAW: A computerised jigsaw puzzle (1Mb).
G.269 QUIZMASTER: Multi-choice answer general knowledge quiz (STE).

• • TEXT ADVENTURES • • • • • • • • • •

G.158 LOTTERY: Adventure in the red light district of San Francisco
G.462 CYBERCOP: Future cop murder investigation. ***NEW***
G.411 ROBOT REVOLT: A sci-fi text adventure.
G.162 AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS: Try to emulate Phineas Fogg.
G.184 HEATHER'S EASTER EGG HUNT: Adventure for 7 to 12 year olds
G.394 THE SECRET PARK: A text adventure with graphics for children 8 years upwards.
G.362 MARCH OF THE MODS: Strive to become 'Ace Face' (contains mild swearing, violence and drug abuse)
G.225 CAILYNVORN: D&D type fantasy adventure set on a far earth-like planet.
G.140 A NIGHT ON THE TOWN: An adventure with the opportunity to meet the girl of your dreams and ....well, the rest is up to you.
G.91 QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL: Pythonesque madcap humour.
G.202 UNNKULIAN UNDERWORLD: Highly rated large scale text fantasy adventure.

• • GRAPHIC ADVENTURES • • • • • • • • •

G.383 MOBSTERS' CITY: Track down twelve gangsters.
G.246 HYSULA: 3D virtual reality fantasy adventure.
G.217 THE MAZE: 3D adventure game loosely based on 'The Crystal Maze'.
G.321 INVESTIGATION: Graphic adventure in the style of Sierra On-Line (2 disks/£3.00)
G.356 ENDURANCE (1Mb): Space station adventure in 3D virtual reality
G.200 ANARCHY ACADEMY: 3D graphic adventure to blow up the school!
G.222 GRANDAD AND THE QUEST....:3D graphics adventure by Ian Scott. Shareware (1Mb).
G.303 GRANDAD AND THE SEARCH FOR THE SANDWICHES: Graphic adventure (1Mb, 2 disks/£3.00).

• • STRATEGY & OTHERS • • • • • • • • • •

G.437 BINGO! (1Mb): Simulation of the seaside game with voice.
G.438 RACE (1Mb): Try to succeed in the 'Rat Race' of life (Board game adaptation)
G.432 MIDI-WIZ: Fantasy war game with similarities to 'Civilisation'. (1Mb, S/W).
G.131 STAR TREK - THE GAME: Defeat the Klingon threat to the galaxy (1Mb).
G.427 AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER: Control comings and goings at a busy - international airport.
G.386 STAR TREK - KLINGON WARS: A Starship Enterprise battle simulation (1Mb).
G.431 REALMS OF REALITY: 'Dungeonmaster' type exploration and adventure (1Mb).
G.421 WAR: A wargame construction kit (1Mb).
G.290 SOFTWARE PROJECTS: Run a software company business sim.
G.390 INTERNATIONAL MANAGER: European Nations/World Cup management game.
G.391 ANCIENT GAME OF GO: Two computer versions of the Oriental game (Gnugo, Amigo).
G.344 CHESS-MATE: A chess/draughts game analysis tool.
G.332 CAESAR: Strategy game set around the Mediterranean in 200BC (S/W).
G.330 GNU CHESS: French chess playing program for all levels.
G.388 STRATAGEM: Two player strategy world war game (2 disks/£3.00).
G.329 PEGASUS: Space strategy game. Seek out and colonise planets (1Mb) (2 disks/£3.00).
G.287 THE COARSE ANGLER: Angling simulation game (1Mb).
G.324 IMPERIAL CONQUEST: Complex ancient Mediterranean game of conquest (S/W).
G.325 SOCCER MANAGEMENT: A complex simulation of soccer management (S/W).
G.173 PENGUINS: Move your penguins around the screen 'Lemming' fashion.
G.10 VEGAS: Roulette, poker, blackjack and slots.... without the Nevada sand!

budgie uk

BU.119 FOOTBALL TACTICIAN 1: The original £19.95 Premier League version of the soccer management game!
BU.111 INTERNATIONAL CRICKET II: Animated 3D game (1Mb).
BU.90 MATCH IT: Possibly the most addictive game ever devised.
BU.89 HORSE RACING SIM: Quality sim from the sale ring to the track.
BU.86 QUATRIS: Superb 'Tetris' style puzzle game with falling cubes.
BU.71 DARK WARS: Role-playing adventure with a 3D view.
BU.70 PACMAN ST: The definitive version by Robert Leong.
BU.50 SPACE INVADERS: Classic arcade action by Robert Leong.
BU.30 QUEST FOR GALAXIA: The "Galaxians" return to your ST.
BU.10 MONEYSPINNER: Slot machine action with nudges, holds, gambles and more.
BU.8 SPECULATOR: True to life features market simulation.
BU.5 PRO DARTS: Mouse controlled 501 match play.
BU.4 OTHELLO: An immaculate implementation of the board game.
PRO.1 ELECTRONUC BANK STATEMENT: Home money managing program.

ST FORMAT TOP 10 GAMES - ONLY £12.00

A special bargain bundle of the top 10 PD and shareware games as selected by ST Format magazine in issue 75. They are 4-7-11, Colortris, Drachen, Grandad and the Quest for the Holey Vest, Grandad and the Search for the Sandwiches, Llamatron, Ozone, Starball, Stello, Super Breakout and Towers.

dave munsie games

Munsie Games, some of the most playable and fun-filled games on the Atari, can now be registered via L.A.P.D.! Send us the code number from your game and we'll send you the pass-code giving access to extra lives, extra levels, etc.

Cost is just £6.00 per title.

Games that can be registered so far are Asteroidia, Frantic and Square Off.

All registrations receive a FREE copy of Dave's SEA WOLF game!

Pre-registered complete versions of these incredible games may also be purchased as follows:

L119 ASTEROIDIA: The classic game 'Asteroids' with 3D rendered asteroids. (STE, £7.00).
L120 ASTEROIDIA: The STFM version of the above (STFM, £7.00).
L121 FRANTICK: Fast action kinetic combat simulator Frantick (STE, £7.50).
L122 FRANTICK: The STFM version of the above (STFM, £7.50).
L123 SQUARE OFF: Falling block puzzle game in the style of the classic 'Tetris'. (£7.50).

FREE MUNSIE DISK'O'ZINE

For a free copy of Dave Munsie's magazine disk with information and screen shots about his games just send a blank disk and an s.s.a.e. to the L.A.P.D. at the address below.

L.A.P.D. Licenceware Games

Possibly the best licenceware range on the ST

Licenceware means that for every copy you buy the author receives a royalty payment from L.A.P.D. This ensures that the authors receive suitable recompense for their hard work thus encouraging them to produce even more excellent programs for the Atari range of computers. It saves you all the fuss and hassle of shareware payments. Licenceware programs are complete and ready to run, there are no hidden fees!

strategy games

L.138 EMPIRE STAR (£3.00): Science fiction wargame, similar to 'Empire' for 1 to 3 players. ***NEW***
L.137 INFINITE POWER (£3.00): Maintain an ecological and financial balance running a power station.***NEW***
L.136 TRADER (£3.00): Sea trading game set in 14th century northern Europe.
L.135 ANNEX (£4.95): 3D role-play inspired by 'Dungeonmaster' and 'Doom' ***NEW***
L.128 BLUDGEON V.2 (1Mb, £3.00): Computer moderated fantasy combat system for one or more players. Includes two free adventure scenarios.
L.129 BLUDGEON ADVENTURES #1 (£3.00): Six additional solo adventures for the above BLUDGEON game.
L.124 THE SANDS OF MARS (£3.00): Govern a Martian mining colony.
L.132 SEA WAR (1Mb, £2.50): Hi-tech version of 'Battleships'. Design and fight your own fleet.
L.105 CONQUEST 2 (1Mb, £3.00): Rule over a medieval kingdom's economy and armies.
L.104 WAR OVER THE REICH (1Mb, £3.00): Plan and execute a campaign of WWII raids against twelve German cities.
L.98 WORLD AT WAR (1Mb, £3.00): A game of economic and military strategy on a grand scale for one to seven players.
L.22 GRAND PRIX MANAGER (£2.50): Simulation game of running a Formula One Grand Prix team.
L.79 DARKLYTE II (1Mb, £3.00): A sci-fi space/strategy game in which you must destroy the Darklyte forces. Reminiscent of the 'Space Crusade' game.
L.59 ARTHUR OF THE BRITONS (1Mb, £3.00): A strategy game with arcade sequences.

PO Box No.2 Heanor Derbyshire DE75 7YP Tel or Fax: 01773 761944/605010 (orders only)

e-mail: Clive@lapd.demon.co.uk or Leigh@lapd2.demon.co.uk

24 hour despatch on all orders No waiting around for disks to arrive!!

arcade games

L.139 BANG & BLASTMAN PLUS (1Mb, 2 disks/£6.00): Explosive 2 player Bomberman action (2 joysticks). ***NEW***

L.130 DESERT HAWK (1Mb, £3.00): Control a Black Hawk helicopter through different missions.

L.87 STORM (1Mb, STE, £3.00): Arcade action clearing aliens from a stricken space-freighter.

L.91 STORM (1Mb, STFM, £3.00): As L87 above but for the STFM.

L.117 FISH TANK (£3.00): A game for younger players who must find food for their fish without getting eaten.

adventure & role-playing games

L.131 WANDERING SCIENCE (£2.50): Solve the puzzles on an alien vessel. A graphic adventure.

L.125 PATHS OF GLORY (£3.00): A sword and sorcery role-playing game.

L.115 DEMON II (1Mb, £3.00): A fantasy adventure game with an overhead view and detailed point and click interface.

L.114 TIME MACHINE (£3.00): A classy text based adventure with over 100 locations and over 40 graphic screens.

L.112 CRAGHAVEN (£2.50): High adventure in a fantasy land.

L.97 STONE COLD SOBER (£4.00): A traditional adventure game but with a point and click interface.

L.69 BIO-HAZARD (1Mb, £3.00): A first person perspective game to clear a space freighter of alien creatures.

L.21 DEAD OR ALIVE (£3.00): A large, complex and humorous text adventure game.

L.31 THE CURSE OF AZRIEL (2 disks, £4.00): A graphic fantasy role-playing/trading game.

L.41 MURDER ON THE ORION EXPRESS (£3.00): A murder mystery game with an almost infinite variety of solutions.

L.50 DEMON (£3.00): Trapped in a stone cell, your first task is to escape before the resident demon gets back. 3D view.

puzzles

L.133 LAZER (£2.50): Use mirrors to direct a lazer around mazes.

L.102 DCS COMPILATION #4 (£3.00): On this disk are: BRAIN DAMAGE, test your brain to the limit. SHAPES, make shapes from 16 different pieces. LINK, form a chain across the screen. QUIZICAL, multi-choice question and answer game.

L.101 DCS COMPILATION #3 (£3.00): On this disk are: OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE, a collection of logic and maths challenges. MATCH MAKER 2, match symbols on hidden cards. FRAME OF MIND, a gambling game. CRYPTOGRAM, based loosely on the TV program 'Countdown'.

L.66 HEARTBREAK (£3.00): An infuriating and highly addictive puzzle game played on a 7 x 7 grid.

L.140 SEVEN KEYS (£3.00): Increasingly challenging temple exploration game. ***NEW***

art & graphics

A.99 MINIPICS II: All resolution picture converter and cataloguer (1Mb).

L.77 AUTO-STEREOGRAM: Create your own 3D 'Magic Eye' pictures (1Mb) (£3.00).

L.71 ARTIST FREEHAND: Complete art package with multiple screens, animation, etc (£3.00)

A.107 ASCII ART: Hundreds of images rendered in ASCII characters.

A.95 VISUAL ILLUSIONS: A collection of 24 'Magic Eye' 3D pictures.

A.98 STEREOGRAM ANIMATIONS: Now see 'Magic Eye' pictures move!

A.36 KOZMIC 4: Complete version of the stunning psychedelic pattern creator.

A.1 ANI ST: Commercial quality animation program (once cost £60.00 to buy!).

A.84 GEMVIEW: Load, view, convert just about any picture format (1Mb).

A.45 CRACK ART: Demo version of the excellent German art program.

A.75 POLYFILM by Martin Brownlow. Make films from multiple 3D polygon objects.

A.44 FANTASY SLIDESHOW: Spectrum 512 pictures on fantasy theme (over 16's only).

A.35 IMG UTILITIES: Convert Degas, Neo, Spectrum Mac and Tny files to IMG.

clip art

(Where PCX and IMG formats are offered you must state which you require)

A.109 CHILDREN (3 disks/£4.50 PCX/IMG): Over 90 quality clip art images of babies and children. ***NEW***

A.103 OFFICE CLIP ART: 33 IMG or PCX images of office related items.

A.107 HANDS CLIP ART: Over 70 IMG images of hands; pointing, waving, writing etc

A.100 ANIMALS CLIP ART (5 disks/£7.50): Over 170 IMG or PCX images of animals.

A.101 ASTROLOGY CLIP ART (3 disks/£4.50): 36 IMG or PCX images of zodiac signs.

A.102 SPACE CLIP ART: 38 images of the final frontier in PCX or IMG format.

A.106 CHRISTMAS CLIP ART (3 disks/£4.50): Over 150 images in PCX or IMG.

L.26, L.27, L.28 TYPE WRITE CLIP ART: 4 disk sets of quality clip art in IMG format. (£10.00 per set).

utilities

U.86 BLITZSCHNELL (S/W): A hard drive defragmenter and optimizer from Germany.

U.80 ZORG: A 'Disk Doctor' type organiser.

U.77 THING: Alternative desktop (1Mb).

L.111 SUPER HACKER: Replace a picture in almost any game or demo with your own! (£3.00).

U.67 ST TOOLS: An exhaustive collection of Atari ST utilities.

U.53 TERADESK V1.36: Replacement desktop for the ST/STE (1Mb).

U.20 FASTCOPY 3: Excellent disk copier for cover disks.

U.48 PREMIER PACKERS: 13 of the best program packers, plus a de-packer.

U.42 PICTURE HUNTER: Rips picture screens from other programs.

U.47 PROBE ST: Handy utility. Grabs music/graphics, disk/memory editor, etc.

U.52 VAULT & TURTLE: Fast hard disk back-up utilities.

U.88 CD PLAYER: Audio CD player for ST or Falcon.

ST FORMAT PRODUCTIVITY PACK

(TOP 40 UTILITIES) FOR £25.00

A special bargain pack of the top 40 PD and shareware programs (excluding games) as selected by ST Format magazine in issue 75. The programs are: Atomik 3.6, Autosort, Cardfile, Chameleon, Compact Office Manager, Crack Art, DB Master, Easy Text, Elf Backup, ESS Code, Everest, Fast Copy 3, GEM Spool, GEM View, Hypergem, Idealist, Kivi Qwk, LHArc, Marcel, Magic Story Book, Mouse-ka-Mania, Movie Master, Octalyser, Opus, POV Ray Trace, ProCalc, Revenge Document Displayer, Sagrotan, Second ST Manual, Selectric, Soundlab, SpiritEd, ST Diary, Superboot, Sweet 16, Teddy Term, Teradesk, Tom Shell, Turbo 407 and X Control.

miscellaneous

M.202 LEAGUE TABLE MANAGER: Maintain up to 8 soccer type league tables. ***NEW***

M.199 COSMOLOGISTS' EQUATIONS: Calculate age of universe, etc. Experts only! ***NEW***

M.196 MAGIC NUMBERS: Polygon regression and cluster analysis. ***NEW***

M.189 NATIONAL LOTTERY SIMULATOR: The fun way to pick your numbers. (1Mb, 2 disks/£3.00).

M.177 LOTTERY COMPANION: Valued statistical assistance with your lottery entries.

M.195 ELEMENTS PLUS: Information/help disk for chemistry students ***NEW***

L.134 FILM DIRECTOR ELITE: Multi-media language system - from slideshows to packages (2 disks/£4.95) ***NEW***

M.194 ROLL IT: Selects lottery numbers randomly and calculates chances of winning a prize ***NEW***

M.193 OUT OF THIS WORLD: A 'fun' typing tutor - type the tumbling letters before they crash.

M.183 HOUSE EXPENSE MANAGER: Daily household expense management program.

L.103 LEXICON: The ideal program for word game fanatics. Solve crosswords, anagrams etc (£3.00).

L.111 SUPER-HACKER: Put your own picture into demos, games etc. (£3.00)

M.146 AWARD MAKER: Design and print awards certificates.

M.155 ROUTE FINDER: Route finding program for England, Wales and Scotland.

M.161 THE GARDENER: A special database for gardening enthusiasts.

M.175 FISHERMAN'S DATABASE: The ultimate record program for the keen angler.

M.19 AIR WARRIOR: Flight sim with World War II aircraft.

L.17 ADDRESS BOOK: Neat and easy to use database for names and addresses (£2.50).

L.18 CIRCUIT: Easy to use electrical circuit diagram producing program (£2.50).

M.93 STITCH MATRIX: Pattern making program for knitting machines.

M.77 THE BIBLE: King James authorised version (3 disks/£4.50).

M.76 FORM-FINDER: Proven horse race analysis and prediction program.

M.81 NEWSDISK: Construct your own newsletters and magazine disks.

M.100 GERMAN TRANSLATORS: Three programs to translate German text to English.

M.26 GENEALOGY: Two programs for the family historians to trace their forebears.

M.5 YOUR SECOND ATARI ST MANUAL: Text files to supplement the official manual.

M.17 WORD PUZZLE: Stuck with word games? Then this disk may help.

M.30 EXTRA WORD LIST: 70,000 extra words to use with disk M17.

M.111 NORTHERN & EQUATORIAL STAR ATLAS: Superb serious astronomy program S/W.

M.1 PLANETARIUM: Excellent, easy to use, astronomy program.

M.173 THE BIBLE: Complete King James, Old and New Testaments (3 disks/£4.50).

L. 89 GOLF: Database for the golfing sports-person. (£3.00)

programming

U.85 EXTRA v3.21 (S/W): A powerful extension for the STOS language, 60 + extra commands. ***NEW***

F.53 STOSTESTERONE: A magazine disk devoted to programming STOS on the STE (issues 1 to 3 available).

P.53 IMAGINARY WORLD: Easy to use language to write your own role-play adventures.

U.76 LIBRARY CREATOR: An essential tool for GFA programmers to construct a single file.

P.55 STOS CYBER EXTENSION: An extension to the STOS programming language

P.44 GFA V.2: Full version of language with tutorial & compiler! (N.B this disk is not PD - L.A.P.D. have permission to distribute it.)

P.16 GFA EXPERT: Massive text file and help routines for GFA-Basic 3.0

DSP.1 SOZOBON C: A complete C compiler with documentation.

P.24 MENU-MAKER: Make your own menus with music, sprite and scrolling message.

P.33 ZX SPECTRUM EMULATOR: Emulate the old Speccy on your ST/STE (1Mb).

P.17 68000 PROGRAMMING COURSE: 10 'How to do it' document files.

P.16 C ADVENTURE TOOL KIT: Write professional quality adventures in C.

P.57 68000 PROGRAMMERS INTRO TO DEMO TECHNIQUES: Set of help documents.

P.16 C ADVENTURE TOOL KIT: Write professional quality adventrues in C.

music

S.160 GUITAR REFERENCE: Useful program for anyone learning or playing.

S.4 YAMAHA PSS: Patch editor and facility to print tablature music.

S.156 FINAL SCORE: A music score printing program (mono only)

S.144 EKSEQ 1: A 100 track, 240ppqn sequencer with many features.

S.145 OPTRONIX MUZAK: Rip and play music from other programs.

S.8 NOISETRACKER: Soundtracker .MOD player with eight starter tunes.

S.7 ACCOMPANIAST: 16 Voice Henry Cosh sequencer (full instructions on disk).

S.19 ALCHIMIE JR: Impressive Swiss multi-window, multi-task sequencer (1Mb).

S.158 SWEET 16 LITE: An easy way into MIDI sequencing.

business

M.182 ST DIARY: A computer diary for the busy executive.

W.25 EASY TEXT: Easy desktop publishing program.

W.21 MARCEL: Super word processor with built in spell checker.

M.106 ACCOUNT-ABILITY: Fully featured accounts program. 10 accounts, 2,000 transactions!

M.148 INVOICE MASTER: Excellent invoicing system for small businesses.

M.13 OPUS 2000: A superb spreadsheet program (1Mb).

M.83 INVENTORY PRO: A stock control system.

U.23 DOUBLE SENTRY: Impressive accounts package for the small company

U.33 FAST BASE: A powerful and flexible database.

W.3 FIRST WORD: Word processor that set the standard for others to follow.

W.24 GDOS FONTS: A large assortment of fonts (2 disks/£3.00).

educational

M.188 G.C.S.E. MATHS & CHEMISTRY TUTOR: Two study aid programs.

M.20 G.C.S.E. STUDY AIDS: Help with Algebra, Trigonometry and Geometry.

M.187 TYPING TUTOR: Several courses to improve your skills.

M.186 KIDZ EDUCATIONAL: Nine learning programs for youngsters.

L.20 SUPER SPELL: Teaching games for the 4 to 9 year old (£2.50).

L.37 SUPER FUN: More teaching games for the 4 to 9 year old (£2.50).

G.266 WITCHES, MICE & FAIRY TALES: Games for younger users.

G.83 NOAH'S ARK: Collect the animals, two by two - addictive for adults too!

M.95 ABOUT THE HOUSE: Excellent collection of programs for young children.

M.28 KIDZ EDUCATIONAL: Alphabet, Maths Test, Numerical-Go-Round & Number Maze.

M.37 KIDZ DISK #1: Colouring Book, Spell Pic, Word Pic and Flash Card.

M.42 KIDZ DISK #2: Dot to Dot, Keyboard Capers & Matching.

M.67 BODY SHOP: Graphic quiz-type human anatomy tutor.

M.104 SOLAR SYSTEM GEOGRAPHY: Effects of the sun & moon on tides, seasons, etc.

M.16 KIDZ COMPILATION: Kid Graph, Grid, Music, Notes, Piano, Publisher, sketch and story.. all on one disk!

PRO.26 EARLY LEARNING MATHS 1: A collection of teaching programs for youngsters

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C.27 OASIS: Complete replacement for KA9Q internet software.

C.28 INTERNET ACCESS PACK: WWW access for the Atari.

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L.113 BBS DIRECTORY: Money saving directory of UK BBS's (£5.00).

C.22 TEDDYTERM: A superb multi-function communications program.

C.7 VANTERM V4: Excellent multi-function communications program.

M.138 MORSE CODE TUTOR: Practice and perfect your skills.

C.24 OFF-LINE READERS: Four off-line reader programs.

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B.39 ASTEROIDS: A loving restoration

B.20 HACMAN: Pacman action

B.27 FROGGY: The arcade classic

B.58 GALAXIANS: Diving Invaders

B.51 COLOSSAL CAVE: The original adventure

B.15 ROLL 'N' NUDGE: Fruit machine

B.36 8 BALL POOL: Bar game simulation

B.50 STAR TREK: Save the Federation

B.44 FLY ROBIN: Cute children's game

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VISA Access

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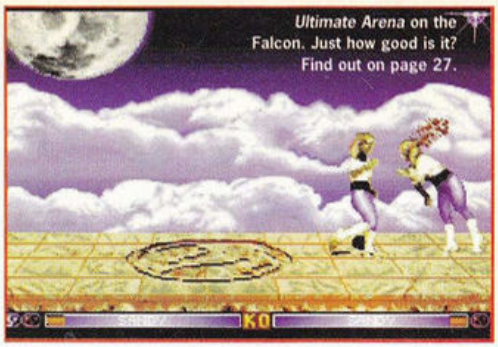
ST FORMAT



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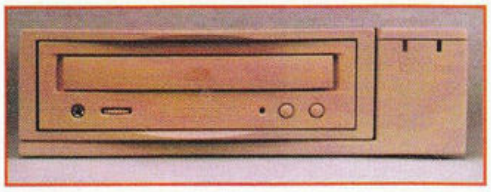

System Solutions new CD-ROM drive is both quick and easy to set up. We drooled over it on page 21.

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If speed isn't enough, System Solutions' new CD-ROM drive is also easy to install. Go all gooey at the prospect.

22 HD DRIVER
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23 THE ULTIMATE CUBASE CD-ROM
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24 ATARI COMPENDIUM CD-ROM
It's the indispensable guide to the Atari, and now you can access it from CD-ROM. Brilliant!

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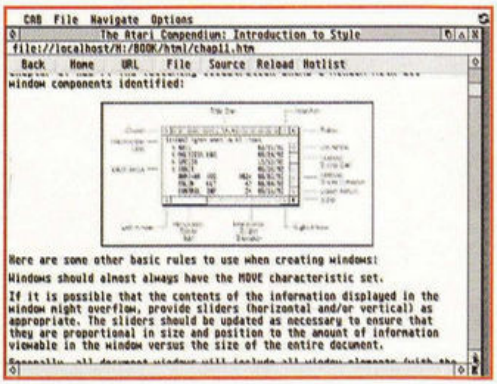

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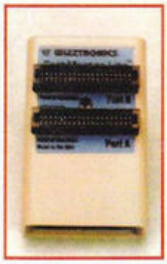

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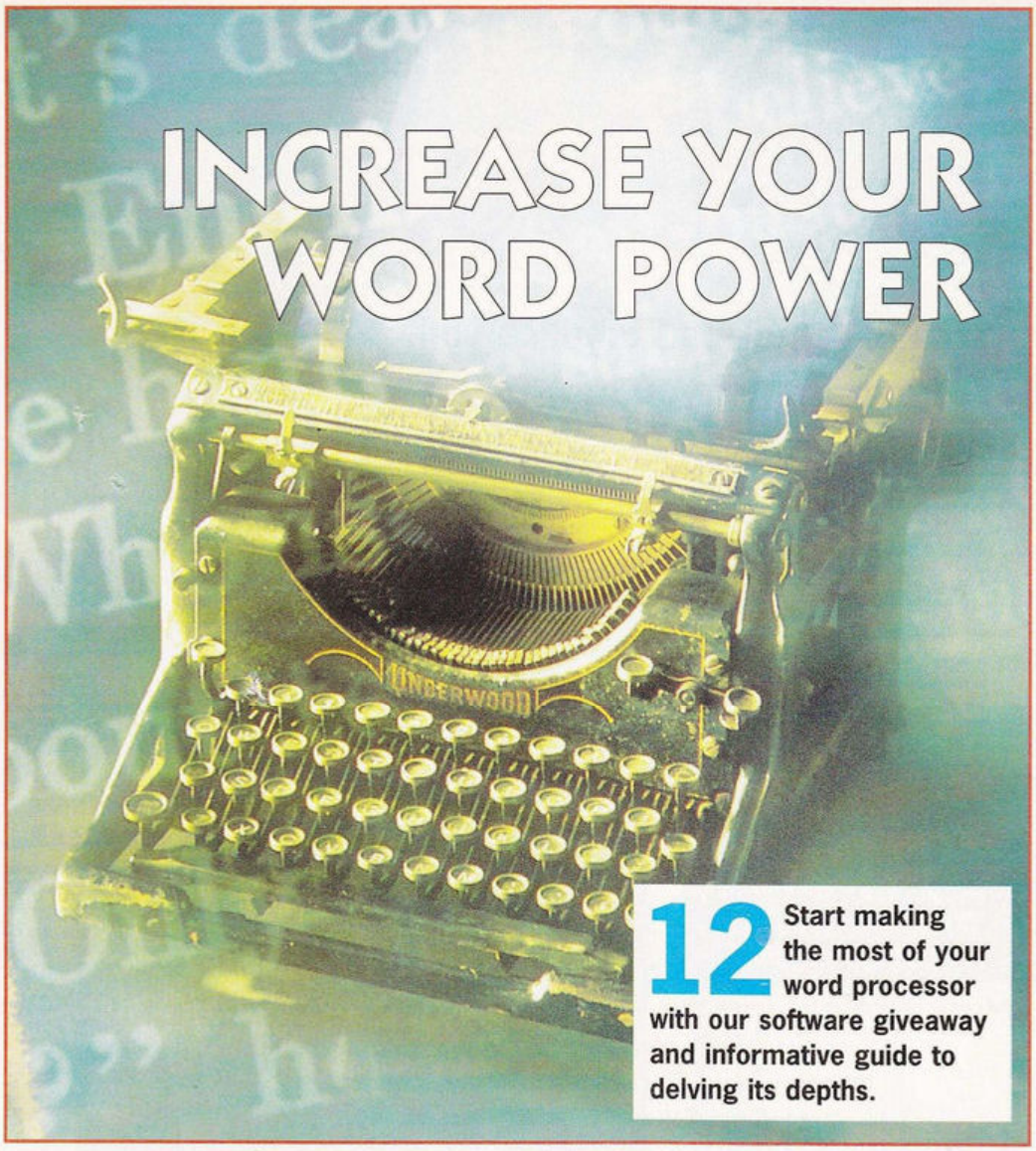


12 Start making the most of your word processor with our software giveaway and informative guide to delving its depths.

COVER DISK 83

THIS MONTH...

BIO HAZARD 2: Take command of a crack squad of marine cyborgs in this exclusive demo of Village Software's latest strategy release. Runs on all Ataris, 1Mb required. Uncompressed size: 354K

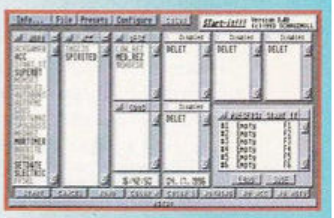
MARCEL: This shareware word processors has enough features to give the commercial giants a run for their money. Uncompressed size: 183K

MARCEL DICTIONARY: British dictionary for use in *Marcel* as a spellchecker. All Ataris, 1Mb required. Uncompressed size: 454K

START-IT!: Feature-packed boot disk manager program. Only run Auto programs and accessories when you want to! All Ataris. Uncompressed size: 332K

GENERIC STOS FIXER 1.1: Fix *STOS* programs for TOS 2.06 and Falcons without losing backward compatibility. All Ataris. Uncompressed size: 67K

IPRN 0.46: Boost your printer's speed by a factor of eight and free up your Atari for other applications. Register and get an even bigger speed increase! All Ataris, all printers. Uncompressed size: 21K



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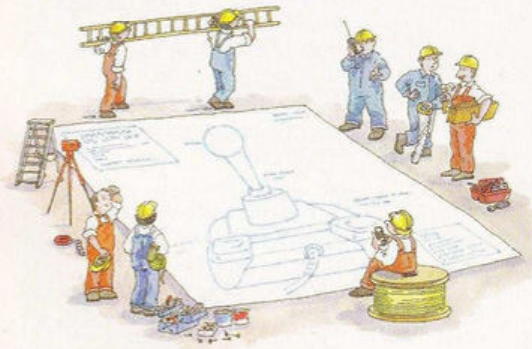
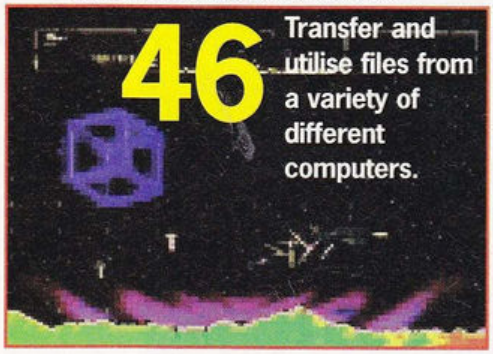


35 Learn the ins and outs of designing a game for your Atari.



46 Transfer and utilise files from a variety of different computers.

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This magazine comes from Future Publishing, a company founded just nine years ago but now selling more computer magazines than any other publisher in Britain.

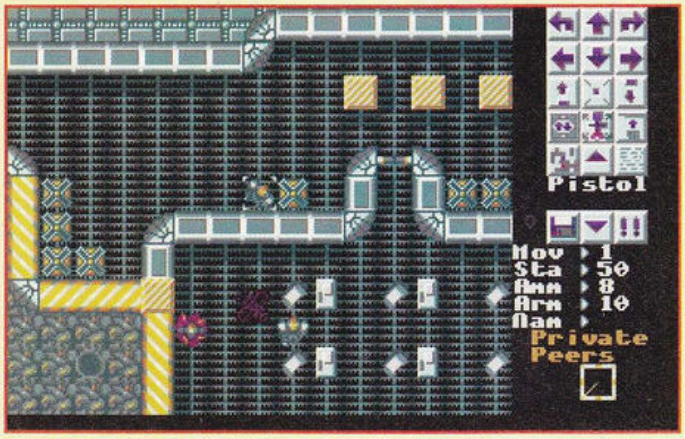
A few words about the world's best-selling ST magazine:

ST FORMAT exists to give you all the information you need to get the most out of your ST, STE, Falcon and Jaguar. Our advice is reliable, easy-to-follow and honest, and unlike other magazines, *ST FORMAT* is completely independent, so we can say what we really think. That, we believe, is why more ST owners choose *ST FORMAT* than any other ST magazine: we're the best-selling magazine, because we're the best.

All our features, tutorials and news stories are written by experts. Our reviews offer crystal clear buying recommendations and information – how much something costs, what it does, how well it does it and whether you should buy it. And we always look at the price – we understand you're spending your own money, not waving a fat corporate cheque book.

Cover Disk

Five storming programs to tempt and tantilise you. The ever-helpful Nick Peers shows you how to get started with this packed Cover Disk.

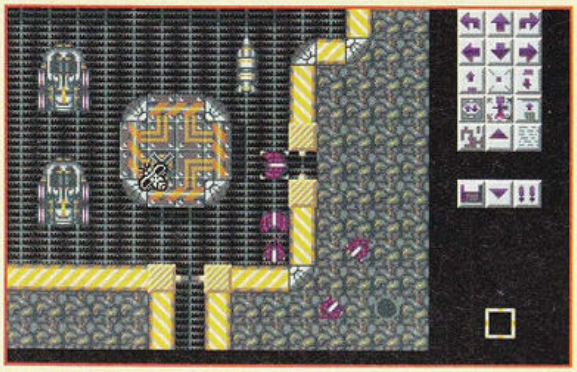


Some familiar names pop up in *Bio Hazard 2*. But Private Peers? Surely he's been passed over for promotion a few too many times.

JAM-PACKED

We've had to do two things to cram the software on to this month's Cover Disk. First, there was no room to include the *BackUp* utility on this month's disk – use a version from a previous Cover Disk to ensure you don't corrupt the programs on your disk.

Second, we've archived *iPRN*, *STart-It!* and *GenFixer* into a single TOS file, entitled OTHERS.TOS. Just double-click on it to dearchive the three folders containing these three programs.



I don't like the look of those aliens. I just fixed that door the other week...

BIO HAZARD 2 – THE XENOWARS

By: Village Software
Machines: All Ataris
Memory required: 1Mb
Resolution: ST low
Uncompressed size: 354K

Can you, mankind's last help, defeat the scurge of the Xenomorphs in this exclusive demo of Village Software's one- or two-player strategy game for all 1Mb Ataris?

Half machine

Humanity's final weapon in its losing struggle with the Xenomorphs is the newly formed Imperial Marine Corps. Some 2000 volunteers have sacrificed their humanity to become cyborgs. Using the latest hi-tech weaponry, they, under your command, will take the battle back to the Xenomorphs.

> **Your task is to prevent the aliens from infesting your stations**

Your task is to prevent the aliens from infesting your stations, which means killing them with an increasingly violent array of weaponry which is picked up as you progress.

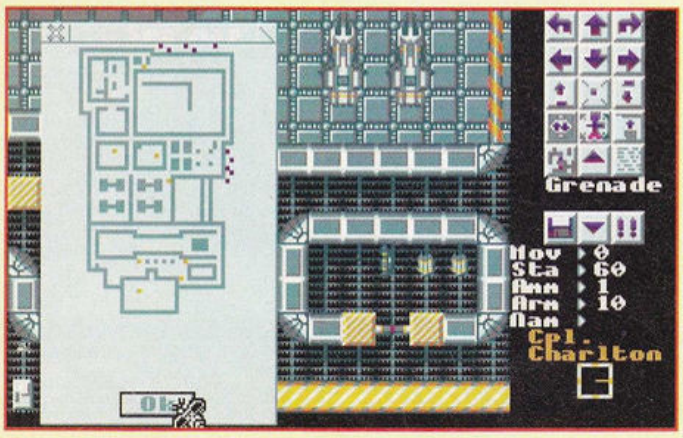
The main screen features a portion of the game screen and the various icons you can click on when making your moves. Use the map to locate your active characters (they're represented by the orange dots) and then click on them to bring them to life.

Get around

Each character has a set number of movement points each turn. Each time he rotates or moves he loses one or two movement points respectively. Other manoeuvres, such as loading or firing weapons, opening doors, picking up objects and so on, use up more movement points. Once each character has exhausted his points or been moved to your satisfaction, go on to the next one. Once all your characters have been moved, it's your opponent's turn.

The marines also have other attributes, such as stamina, protection (determined by the amount of cover currently offered to the marine) and weight. These should all be carefully monitored because you don't want to find yourself hopelessly outclassed in a tight situation. It's not fair on Private Peers for a start, great chap that he is.

Full instructions can be found in HELPME.TXT. Falcon owners should read FALCON.TXT to configure the program for your machine.



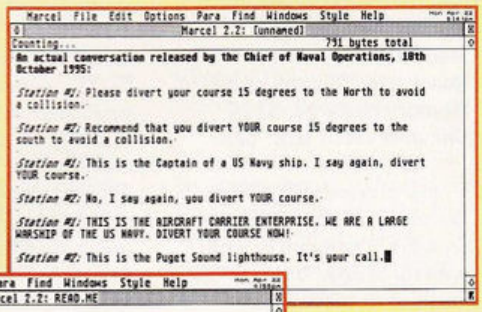
The map is invaluable for locating your active characters. Corporal Charlton has just exhausted all his moves, so abandon him and find someone else to boss around.

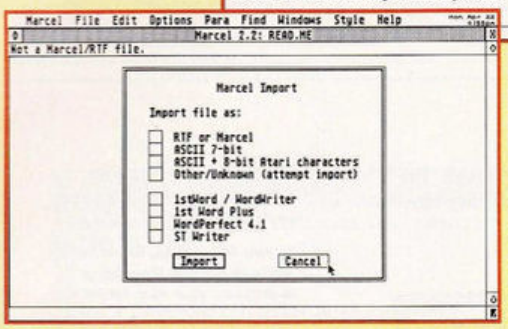
FULL ON

To get the full version of *Bio Hazard 2* send a cheque or postal order for £19.95 (and £2.50 P&P if ordering outside the UK) to: Village Software, BioDemo, 10 Oak Dr, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QS. Make it payable to Village Software. Any queries about the game should also be sent to this address.

MARCEL 2.34

Mixing and matching different text styles is easy peasy with *Marcel*.





Marcel supports several text formats, making it possible to transfer files between different machines and packages without losing the formatting.

By: Marcel Software
Machines: All Ataris
Memory required: 512K
Resolution: ST med or high
Uncompressed size:
183K *(Marcel)* and 454K (British Dictionary)

Marcel is the premier shareware word processor for the Atari. We've included it on the disk to accompany our Increase Your Word Power feature on page 13.

Word Up

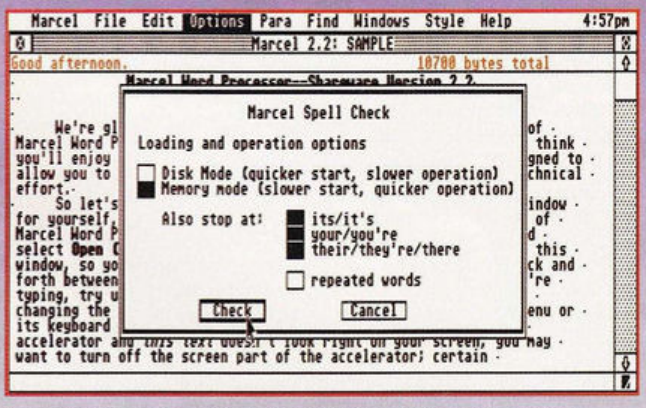
Marcel offers many extras over other shareware word processors. You can import and export text files in a variety of formats, including Rich Text Format. This makes it easy to transfer files to other platforms – see page 46 for full details.

You can format text for attractive presentation and print it out in a variety of styles and fonts. And if that isn't enough to keep you occupied, you can also access detailed statistics about your literary masterpieces. Those of you with 1Mb of RAM can load the enclosed British dictionary and spellcheck your documents.

You'll find a beginner's guide to *Marcel* on pages 14 and 15 of the Increase Your Word Power feature. Don't forget to register if you use the program regularly – see the README text file for details.

For more about word processing in general and *Marcel* in particular, see pages 13–18

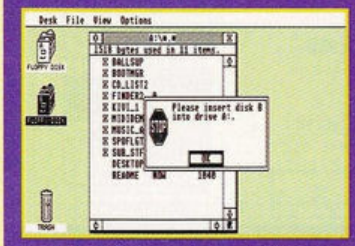
SPELLING



Keep track of spelling errors with *Marcel*'s dictionary and spellcheck function.

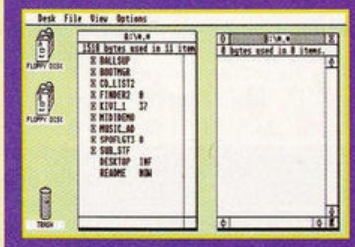
You'll need 1Mb of memory to use the *Marcel* dictionary. To install it, dearchive MARCELDIC.TOS to the same directory as *Marcel*. If you have a floppy drive system, copy it to a separate blank disk and dearchive it. Rename the file MAR_SYSB.DIC to MAR_SYS.DIC using the Show Info option from the File menu and copy it on to your *Marcel* disk. It will then be available when you run *Marcel*.

COVER DISK KNOW-HOW

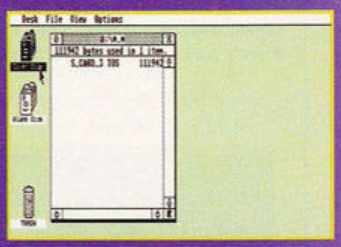


1 Assuming you have a single-drive system, insert your Cover Disk back-up into drive A. Double-click on the drive A icon to access it. Next, double-click on the drive B icon.

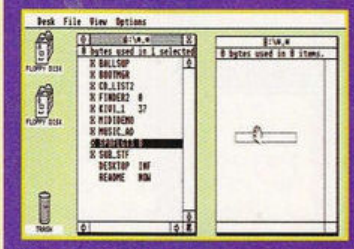
5 Just follow the instructions on the screen until the file or folder you wished to copy has been transferred. It'll be displayed in drive B's window. Now you're ready to dearchive your software.



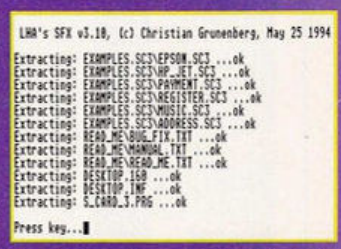
2 When prompted, remove the Cover Disk and insert your blank disk into drive A. Click on OK and a separate window should appear with the contents of the disk within it.



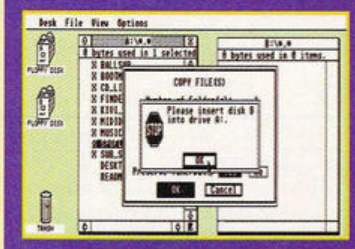
6 Ensure your blank disk is in drive A and double-click on the drive A icon to open up its contents.



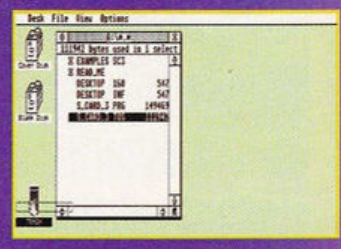
3 Next, click and hold down the left mouse button on the file or folder you wish to copy across to your blank disk. Drag the file over to the drive B window before releasing the button.



7 Double-click on the TOS file to begin decompressing it. A list of files will be displayed as they are decompressed. You'll then be asked to press any key.



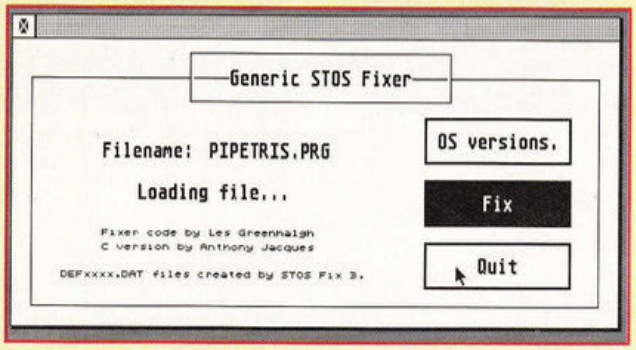
4 An alert box will tell you to insert disk A (your Cover Disk). Do so, click on OK and follow the on-screen instructions.



8 The relevant folders and files should now appear in drive A's window. To free up more disk space, drag the TOS file over the trashcan icon to delete it.

PROBLEMS?

- Write-protect your Cover Disk. Slide the black tab so you can see through the hole.
- Make a backup using the *Back Up* program. Never run anything except *Back Up* directly from the Cover Disk.
- If you have an old STFM and can't read the Cover Disk, you need to upgrade to a double-sided drive.
- If you are having problems with a Cover Disk program, re-read the instructions and any DOC files. If you still have problems, call the Cover Disk Hotline on ☎ 01225 442244 on Wednesday afternoons between 2pm and 6pm only.
- If you can't load, copy or back up your Cover Disk, it may be faulty. Try calling our technical support line on ☎ 0891 715929 (weekdays 10am–12.30pm and 1.30pm–4.30pm). Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p at all other times.
- Alternatively, send the disk, a padded self-addressed envelope and two stamps to: *ST FORMAT* June Disk Returns, Tib Plc, Tib House, 11 Edwards Street, Bradford BD4 7BH (if the disk is faulty we will refund the postage). Don't send faulty disks to our Bath or Somerton offices – we don't keep stocks of Cover Disks.
- If you have any other hardware or software queries, contact the publisher.



The main dialog screen for the *Generic STOS Fixer*. It's simple and straightforward.

GENERIC STOS FIXER 1.1

By: Anthony Jacques
Machines: All Ataris
Resolution: ST med or high
Memory required: 512K
Uncompressed size: 67K

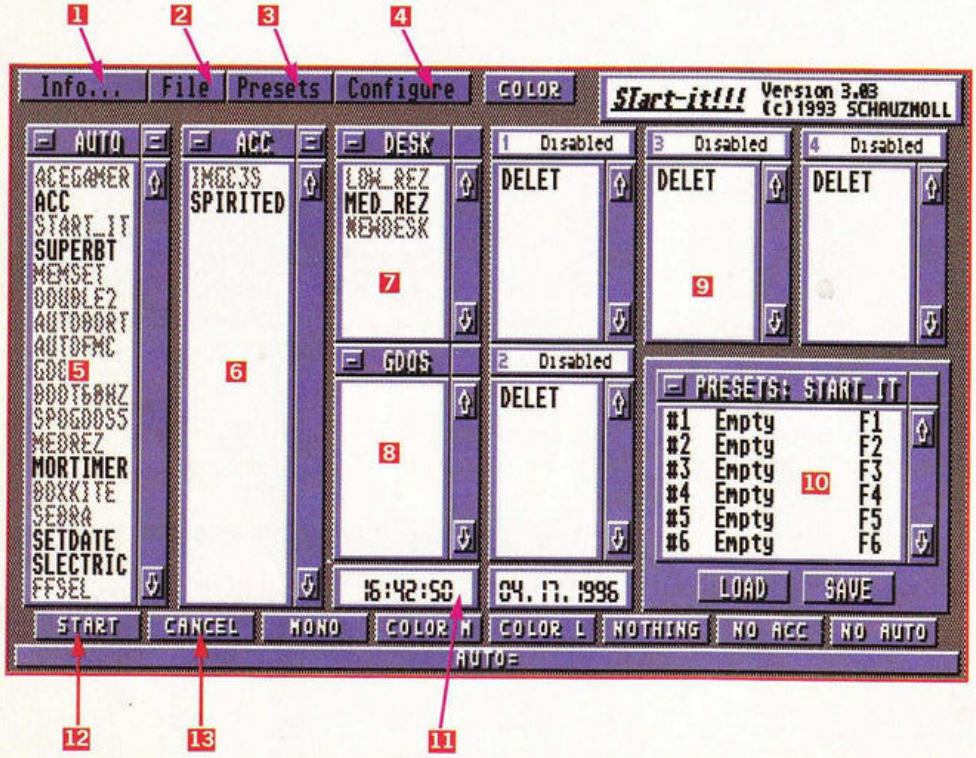
Unlike previous *STOS* fixers, *Generic STOS Fixer* attempts to fix a *STOS* program to work with up to eight different TOS versions simultaneously.

Fix it

GenFixer enables you to fix *STOS* programs to work with up to eight different versions of TOS. Just run GENFIX.PRG and select the eight versions of TOS (from the 14 supplied) you wish the program to run under, then select the program you wish to fix. *GenFixer* will load it in and try to fix it.

GETTING AROUND START-IT!

Here's a quick guide to *STart-It!*'s features. Remember, there's also an on-line help function to explore and comprehensive documentation to read through. The author has certainly tried to make things easy for you.



1. Information about *STart-It!*, including the on-line help facility and memo function.
2. Various file utilities, including the ability to rename files and re-organise your Auto folder.
3. Create pre-sets: enables you to create and store pre-set boot-up configurations.
4. Configure: configures *STart-It!* and the four Files folders.
5. Selection and de-selection panel for Auto programs.
6. Selection and de-selection panel for Accessories.
7. Selection and de-selection panel for Desktop configurations
8. Selection and de-selection panel for *GDOS* system files.
9. Files folder for storing set-up information that you use regularly.
10. Panel for selecting pre-set configurations.
11. Time and date displays. Click on them to alter the system time and date.
12. Run *STart-It!*, as set up, manually.
13. Cancel changes and run *STart-It!* as before.

WE WANT YOUR PROGRAMS

We pay for your software – so if you have anything that's good, original and preferably short that you think deserves to go on *ST FORMAT*'s Cover Disk, send it with this form and full documentation to Nick Peers, Cover Disk, *ST FORMAT*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Daytime phone _____ Program title _____

_____ Total size in K _____

On a separate sheet, explain what the program does and why it's so brilliant.

Remember to: ■ Include on-disk and paper documentation ■ Write your name and address on the disk ■ Use a virus-free disk ■ Keep a copy of your program, contributions are non-returnable ■ Enclose an attractive bribe. *Fast Show* videos would be nice... ■ Not that it makes a difference.

Please sign the following declaration: This program is submitted for publication in *ST FORMAT*. It is wholly my own work and I hereby agree to indemnify Future Publishing against any legal action should copyright problems arise.

Signed _____ Date _____

IPRN 0.46

By: Peter Missel
Machines: All Ataris with a printer
Resolution: n/a
Memory required: 512K
Uncompressed size: 21K

Even the unregistered version of *iPRN* boosts your printer speed by up to a factor of eight, freeing up your computer for other tasks. Registering it unlocks all its features as well as making printing up to 30 times faster.

Ready, steady...

iPRN offers more than just a straight speed increase. It also features printer state tracking, which means it continually checks the printer to see whether it's on-line or not. Normally, TOS takes up to 40 seconds to decide whether the printer is connected or not, so *iPRN* enables you to spend more time running applications instead of sitting around twiddling your fingers. Install *iPRN* in your Auto folder, using *STart-It!*'s sorting utility to ensure it runs after all other programs.

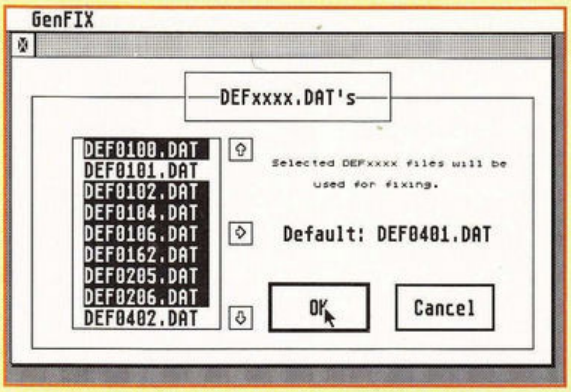
This demo version is restricted in that printer state tracking only works once. The full version offers greater speed increases and also comes with a CPX to set up the timeout, state tracking and deskjet activation. Registration costs £13 from CyberSTrider in the UK – see README.TXT for full details.

For more about printer utilities, see page 18

Don't panic if you get an error message – we got error messages with both *Pipetris* and *Killing Time* from past Cover Disks, but didn't have any problems running them on our TOS 2.06 machine.

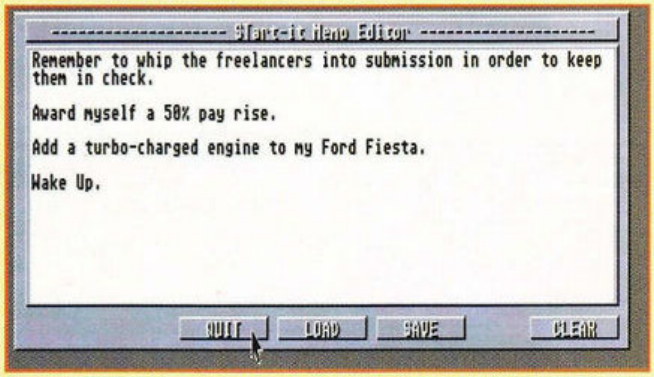
If your *STOS* program is packed, such as *Killing Time*, you'll need to unpack it before using *GenFixer*. We gave away three packer utilities on Cover Disk 77, but a unpacker is a much better option, such as *Mega DePack* 2. Try your favourite PD library if you don't already have one.

You'll find full instructions for using this freeware gem in GENFIX.TXT, which also descibes the problems you may encounter when running the program. Falcon owners in particular should take heed of the warnings given. If you find *GenFixer* useful, do let the author know. It's always nice to feel appreciated.



When you are selecting the eight versions of TOS, it's best to make your computer's TOS the default one.

START-IT! 3.03



STart-It! comes with a handy memo function so you never forget those important tasks for the day ahead. *(Nick often forgets to wake up – Mary.)*

By: Christian Ernst
Machines: All
Memory required: 512K (1Mb recommended)
Resolution: ST med or high
Uncompressed size: 332K

Make auto-booting a more joyous experience with this smart and well-organised boot-up utility.

Kick it

STart-It! is a feature-packed boot manager that not only organises your boot drive to load only the Auto programs and Accessories you require in any given session, but also re-sorts your Auto folder, changes paths for your Accessories, sets the system date and time on boot-up and creates a number of pre-sets.

These pre-sets enable you to set up your machine for particular applications. You could have a setup for programs running *GDOS* or *SpeedoGDOS*, or a setup designed for using *CAB*. Alternatively, you could have a bare minimum setup for memory-sensitive applications.

STart-It! also includes four file slots for particular data files. These are written to the filename given at the top of the slot (such as TIME.INF) and enable you to store different configurations for different programs and accessories (such as a RAM disk).

Run it

As explained in the documentation, you need to copy STARTIT.PRG and the STARTIT folder into the Auto folder of your boot disk (see Absolute Beginners in *STF* 82 to find out how to create an Auto folder). You may need to re-sort your Auto folder using a PD program such as *DirSort* or *Autosort* to make sure *STart-It!* runs before all other Auto programs. Once you've done this once, you can use *STart-It!* to re-sort your Auto folder in the future.

You could have a minimum setup for memory-sensitive applications

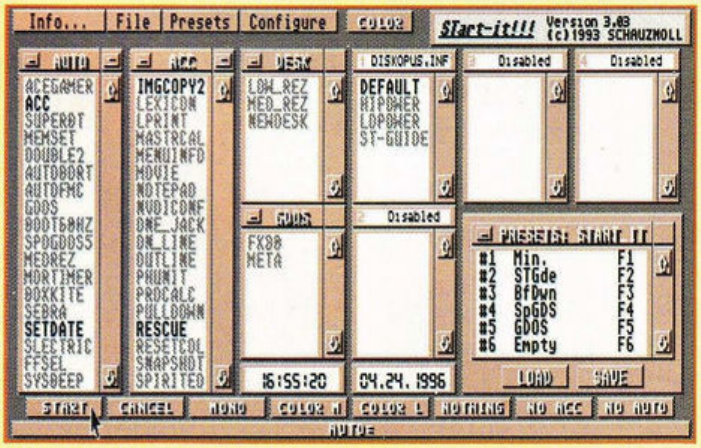
Although you need to auto-boot *STart-It!* to install any Auto programs, Accessories and related files, you can run it at any time to change your preferences.

And more

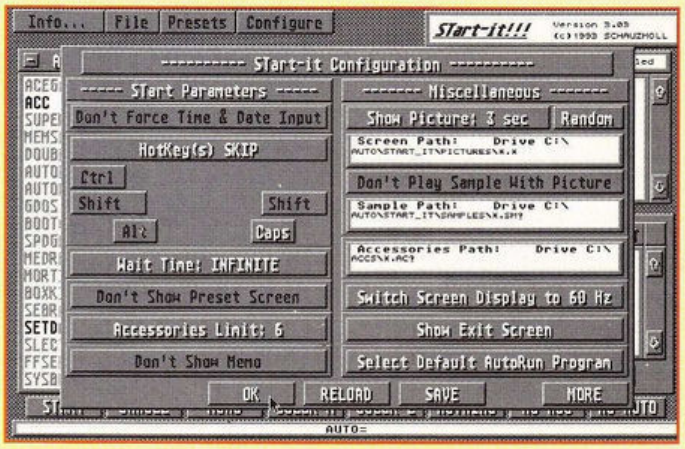
Beginners will be pleased to discover that *STart-It!* includes some of the bug-fix programs featured in last month's Absolute Beginners section. These have been specially configured to run with *STart-It!*. Owners of pre-TOS 1.04 machines will be able to auto-boot GEM programs, and the folder bug is fixed. Also featured is *Memo Edit*, a program for creating and editing memos that appear when you boot *STart-It!*.

Most of the functions are described in the on-line help system, available from the Info... menu. It's shareware, so don't forget to register if you intend using it regularly. See REGISTER.TXT for details.

This obviously gratutious picture of A-ha demonstrates that *STart-It!* can display pictures during boot-up. Nice.



You can even change the colour of *STart-It!*'s main screen if you don't like the default.



This is *STart-It!*'s main preferences screen, as seen on a mono monitor. Great? Wonderful!

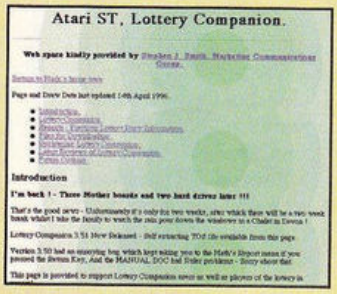
SNIPPETS

- ST and Jaguar games supplier Special Reserve is celebrating its 10th birthday by offering two Nintendo 64 consoles in a competition for new and existing members. For details, call ☎ 01279 600204 or point *CAB* at: http://www.reserve.co.uk.

- Denesh Bhabuta has imported a limited number of copies of Canadian Atari magazine Current Notes, priced at £4.50 each. It's available on a first-come, first-served basis. Further issues may be available if there is sufficient interest. E-mail Denesh at: dbhabuta@cix.compulink.co.uk for more details.

PD & shareware

Mark Butler's Lottery Companion has been updated to version 3.5 and now includes permutations and hot keys. Pick up a copy from Goodmans PDL, Floppyshop or LAPD, or point your cyber-sniffer at: http://www.demon.co.uk/sjspr/lottery.html for more details.



And then we won the jackpot on the National Lottery. Which was nice.

Version 3 of the electronic design and simulation program CLA Digital Developer is now available. It has been completely rewritten and features a wealth of tools for the electronics student or professional. It's also fully compatible with multitasking systems. CLA can't be distributed by PD Libraries, so you need to download it from Internet FTP sites. Try ftp.uni-kl.de and ftp.cnam.fr.

Net news

London-based Internet service provider Aviators Network is extending its service to the general public. With 28,800bps modem links, SLIP connections and a local call access in London, it should be suitable for ST-owning Net surfers. Prices start from £10 a month. Contact Moira Millar on ☎ 01727 868468 or send an e-mail to: info@avnet.co.uk.

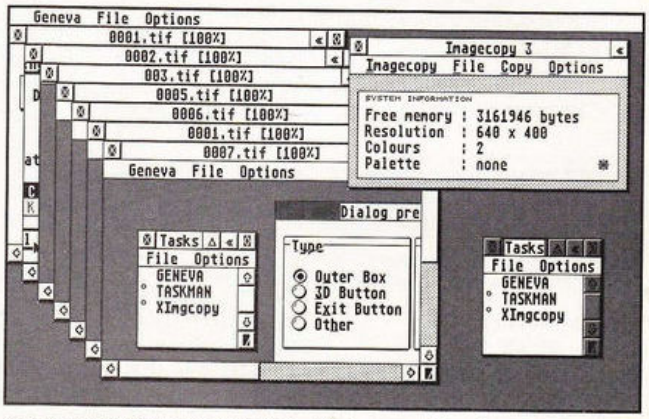
STF News...

Frank Charlton brings you the newest news, the hardest hardware and the greatest game deals.

Where is Compo?

In the biggest blow to the Atari market for a long time, Compo UK has closed its doors. The Huntingdon-based software and hardware distributor, led by long-standing Atari advocate Neal O'Nions, apparently ceased doing business in March. O'Nions was also head of Specialist Publications, the company behind *Atari World*. The future of that magazine is now uncertain.

Liquidator Neville Eckley has been approached by O'Nions for advice, but no concrete arrangements to liquidate the company's assets had been made when we went to press. A spokesman for the liquidators told us that Neal was currently in the process of winding both companies down, and taking steps to prepare for voluntary liquidation.



Gribnif is looking for a new UK distributor for *Geneva* and its other products.

Compo was the UK distributor for a large number of premier Atari products, including *Protext*, *That's Write* and the entire Gribnif range, including *NeoDesk* and *Geneva*. Other distributors are investigating their chances of picking up some of Compo's products – without them there's a major gap in the ST market. Compo's phone lines have been shut down, but mail is being redirected and will be dealt with.

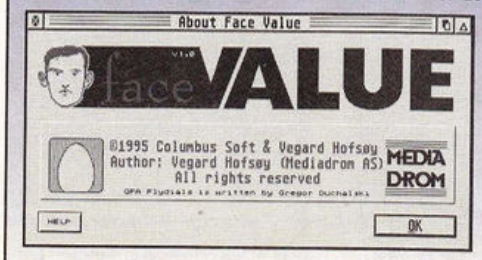
IN YOUR FACE

System Solutions is set to release an exciting new program for users of *GFA Basic*. *Face Value* is an integrated set of tools enabling you to use complex GEM resource files in your *GFA* programs without wading through the complexities of the built-in commands.

As well as managing the *GFA* code, *Face Value* provides the link between the RSC file and your program, making it easier than ever to create smart-looking GEM programs.

A neat extra creates a bare-bones hypertext file, enabling you to distribute your program's documentation in the user-friendly *ST-Guide* format.

Watch for full details and a review next month, or contact System Solutions on ☎ 0181 6933355 for details.



Rumours that this is the face of Ron Manager are completely untrue.

Atari shows

Goodmans International has announced two new Atari shows for 28 and 29 September at Birmingham and London respectively. The shows are sponsored by *ST FORMAT*, and more than ten exhibitors have already signed for one or both. These include The Upgrade Shop, Titan Designs, System Solutions and the FaST Club. Many new exciting launches are planned for the show and we'll bring you more news as it happens. Meanwhile, call Goodmans on ☎ 01782 335650 or ☎ 01973 329562 for details.

Speed kings

Given that the company is called Black Scorpion, its hardly surprising the accelerator has a hard name like Nemesis.

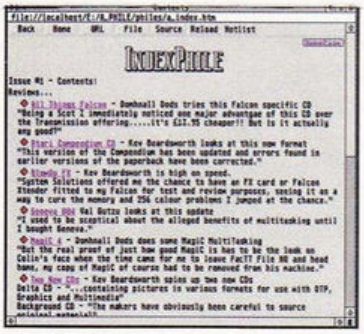
Titan Designs has been appointed official UK distributor for the Afterburner accelerator card for the Falcon. Rather than speeding up the 68030 processor, Afterburner replaces it with the enhanced 68040 chip, producing speed and power increases across the board.

Afterburner is available with either a 68LC040 or full 68RC040 processor, with the higher specification RC chip also providing an on-board maths co-processor. The board also provides two 72-pin SIMM sockets for optional upgrades to 128Mb of TT FastRAM.

Prices are expected to be £449 and £539 for the two models, including VAT and UK postage. Users of *APEX Media* can request a free upgrade to version 2.2 at the same time. The Afterburner's design requires the Falcon to be re-cased, but Titan is expecting to supply the C-Lab Falcon Mk X case upgrades soon.

Black Scorpion's hardware accelerator (see News, *STF* 82) is now called Nemesis and will be priced at about £40 for existing *APEX* users and £50 for everyone else. It is due to be released late May or early June. For more information, contact Titan on ☎ 0121 6936669.

The A-Philes



AtariPhile, a new diskzine for all Atarians.

The Falcon FacTT File has unveiled its latest venture, *AtariPhile*. It's a new disk-based magazine aimed at users of all Atari machines, rather than just the high-end models normally supported by the FFF.

The ever-expanding reviews section has now been separated from their monthly updates, making the information available to non-members. Available on a bimonthly basis, *AtariPhile* is distributed in the popular HTML format.

For a copy, send a formatted double-sided disk and two first class stamps to: AtariPhile, 11 Pound Meadow, Whitchurch, Hants RG28 7LG. Copies are also available from Goodmans PDL (☎ 01782 335650).

For a review of *Atariphile*, see page 33

JAGUAR PRICE DROPS

Following Atari's recent price cuts in American (see News, *STF* 82), prospective Jaguar buyers are set to score in the UK as well. We've had no official news from JTS Atari UK, but Jaguar systems have been spotted on sale in a number of stores, including Virgin Megastores and the hobby shop Beatties, at the vastly reduced price of £59.99. Beatties had two packs on offer – the usual *Cybermorph* pack for £59.99 and a package containing just the Jaguar system for £49.99.

Games on sale include *Tempest 2000* at the all-time low of £13, and the Jaguar controllers are available for £10. Is this at attempt to mop up the remainder of the ailing Megadrive and SNES markets, or just stock dumping? More news as soon as Atari provides us with the low-down.

You can get a Jaguar for only 50 quid if you shop in the right places.

Jag games ahoy

The Console Centre is offering *ST FORMAT* readers a five per cent discount on new Jaguar games and accessories, so drop Matt Magee a line and ask for his new price list. It features over 50 cartridge and CD games, often at less than the recommended price.

Write to: The Console Centre, Shire Link, Halifax Road, Huddersfield, West Yorks HD3 3BS, or call ☎ 01484 544926 during office hours and ☎ 01484 549931 at weekends. Send him the token below and you'll get a generous discount on your order.

ST FORMAT

This token entitles the bearer to five per cent off Jaguar games and accessories at The Console Centre, Shire Link, Halifax Road, Huddersfield, West Yorks HD3 3BS.

Conditions: One token per order. Photocopies are not acceptable. Offer expires 13 August 1996.

SNIPPETS

Toad Computers has established Jaguar Talk, an on-line message area dedicated to the Jaguar. If you can ignore the idiots wibbling about their Sony Playstations being better, point *CAB* at: http://www.toad.net/wwwboard/jagtalk.html.

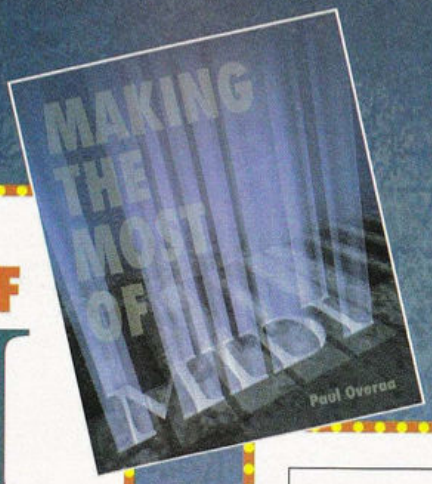
Get involved with Toad's new Web-based Jaguar discussion forum.

The WWW Access Pack is now up to version 1.3. As well as STiK and CAB, the pack includes the POP3-based e-mail system *AntMail*, a telnet utility and Guy Harrison's *STiK* set-up program (see page 42). Connect to HENSA via FTP at: micros.hensa.ac.uk/micros/atari/tos/q/q136, and remember you can only access it after 8pm.

User groups

- If you're one of the older generation of ST users, here's one for you. The Atari Wrinklies Club is a user group specifically for the older Atari user. As well as enabling you to stay in touch with like-minded souls, the Wrinklies Club provides a regular disk and newsletter. To find out more, contact Jim Hornby at: 60 Crumpsall St, Abbey Wood, London SE2 0LR or e-mail: jhornby@cix.compulink.co.uk.
- There's also older Atarians at the University of the Third Age. Aimed at anyone over 50 and not in full employment, the group focuses on both computing and cultural issues using two STFMs and a PAK/68. Contact John Ash at: 62 Fleet Road, Dartford, Kent DA2 6JF.
- The Central Scotland Atari User Group wants you! It provides a technical helpline and regular HTML newsletters and has a PD library of over 100 disks. For more information, write to: 22 Sandyhill Avenue, Shotts, Lanarkshire ML7 5EG or call ☎ 01501 821149 between 4 and 7pm. You can also catch them via e-mail at: csaug2@cix.compulink.co.uk.

£14.95



MAKING THE MOST OF MIDI

A MIDI BOOK UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Although Making the Most of Midi explains the fundamentals of Midi and Midi sequencing for the beginner, it goes much further, dealing with issues that will be of help to more established users.

The author, Paul Overaa, has been working with Midi almost since its inception in the early 1980s. He has worked with Midi using PC computers, Atari STs, and the Amiga. That work includes both reviewing and using vast amounts of Midi software, and writing his own Midi utilities. Paul uses Midi sequencers in a professional capacity, both in the studio and when playing live, so he can throw some light on the practical issues as well as tackling the technical stuff.

Most books which introduce you to Midi do so in ways which are essentially non-technical. The arguments here being that most musicians who want to use Midi are not really interested in what's happening under the surface. Paul's view is that the technical side is too important to dismiss in this way.

Paul has produced a book which looks at various Midi technical issues but explains them in terms that all Midi users will be able to understand. He has also examined some of the more complex issues, including details about fault finding and how Midi oriented computer programs are written.

Beginner or expert, there'll be something in this book for you!

Making the Most of Midi by Paul Overaa £14.95 ISBN 1-85550-006- X
Bookmark Publishing, The Old School, Greenfield, MK45 5DE. Tel 01525 713671.

Date of Order

Delivery details

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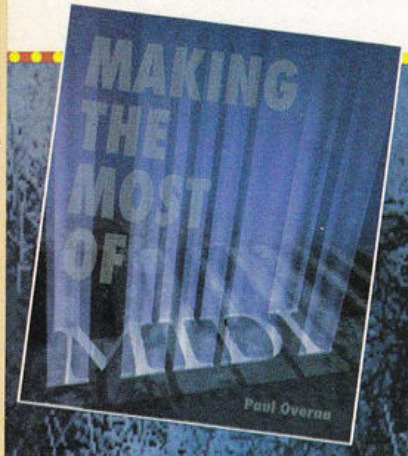

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Picture this: you've just spent months hammering out your first novel on an old typewriter and you're the proud owner of a huge stack of A4 paper. Later on, you decide to make a few minor revisions. What do you do? Scribble on the manuscript with a red pen? Retype the lot? Pull your hair out?

You may not be finely crafting the winner of the next Booker Prize on your ST, but it's a pretty safe bet you use your word processor pretty regularly. Whether you're writing a complex thesis, doing your homework or composing another grovelling letter to the bank manager, the humble word processor can substantially improve your everyday life. Armed with this versatile piece of software, your ST can produce anything you can come up with – and you can chop and change it as much as you like before ever wasting a single sheet of paper.

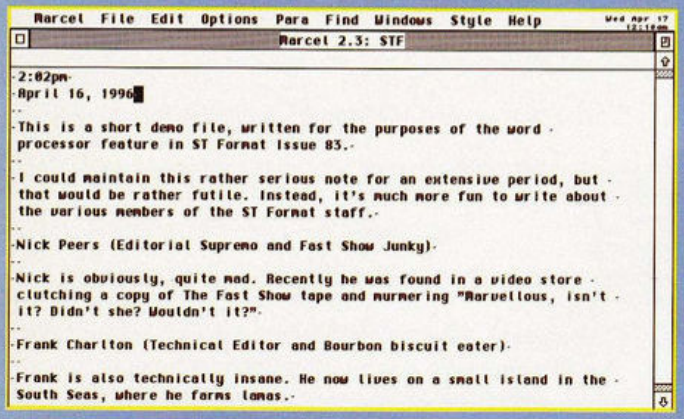
Surveys consistently reveal that word processing is the most popular activity on any personal computer, be it a creaking 8-bit or the latest Pentium PC. No matter which machine you have, from a 520ST to a 14Mb Falcon enhanced up to the eyeballs, there's a word processor just waiting for you. A basic system can run happily on a single-floppy machine.

However, most of us don't even begin to scratch the surface of the average word processing package. When we're writing copy here at *ST FORMAT*, we don't use half of the bells and whistles offered by programs like *That's Write* or *Papyrus*. While there's no doubt using the bare bones of your word processor is a quantum leap from tapping away on a typewriter, if you're prepared to delve beneath the surface, you can make life even easier. Stick with us and be reacquainted with that 'boring' piece of software.

INCREASE YOUR WORD POWER

We all do it, but do you do it well? Increase your word power with our complete guide to the nuts, bolts, bells and whistles of word processing. Frank Charlton and Andy Curtis are your learned scribes.

Nuts and bolts



Type your text into *Marcel*'s main screen. Hopefully you'll be able to find something more worthwhile to write about than the ST "We're only half crazy" *FORMAT* team.

New to word processing? Here's how to get started with this month's Cover Disk offering,

Our smashing cover disk program, *Marcel*, has many features that make documents easy to write and a joy to read. All you have to do is familiarise yourself with its tools.

If you don't like fiddling with settings or special features, you can just type away, much as you would on a typewriter, to create a simple document which you can then print out. However, the real joy of the computer word processor is your ability to edit the text afterwards, enabling you to avoid the dreaded correction fluid (which has never worked too well on computer monitors).

> **The real joy of the word processor is your ability to edit the text afterwards**

Don't be overawed by the features on offer, because many of them demonstrate their power as and when you hit problems. Some jobs can be carried out quite adequately without using the special features, but *Marcel*'s set of tools makes most tasks easier and less time consuming.

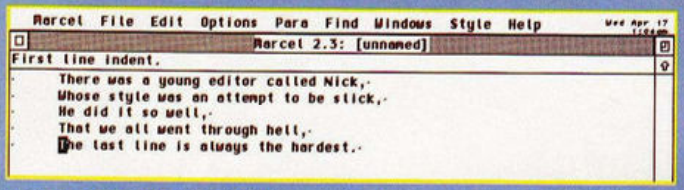
Type it in

No matter how clever a word processor is at helping you with your writing, you still have to type everything in. The great thing about word processors is that you don't have to worry about mistakes. You may not be the world's best typist, but that simply doesn't matter. You don't even have to stop each time you make a mistake – they can be dealt with later.

Already this is very different from a typewriter, which requires you to put in a perfect performance for the document to look good. There is also no need to worry about formatting at this stage, either.

Paragraphs

Most word processors use a system of paragraph styles to control the appearance of the text, and *Marcel* is no



We score a resounding 'nil points' for the quality of the poetry. The indented paragraph system works very well, though, and is useful for quotes and lists.

MULTIPLE DOCUMENTS

Marcel enables you to work with two or more documents at once. This can be very useful: you may have a long document with loads of ideas in it, or documents containing names and addresses. You might even want to compare draft and final versions of a report or essay. Whatever the reason, it is very handy to be able to transfer text from one document to another as you work.

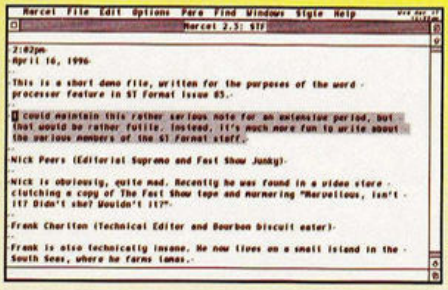
To transfer text, open both documents and choose Split from the Windows menu, or simply press [F3]. Select a block of text and copy it to the clipboard using the Edit menu. Highlight the other document by clicking your mouse on it, move the cursor to the desired paste spot and select Paste from the Edit menu. Once you've pasted in the text, you can close the second document and proceed with your work.

You can also use this technique with the Notes feature. If you want to write down some details while talking with someone on the telephone, all you have to do is hit [F1] to open up the Notes window. Type in the text, then paste it into your main document in the correct places. You can also use this facility to write comments about your document. These notes are just for reference and won't be printed.

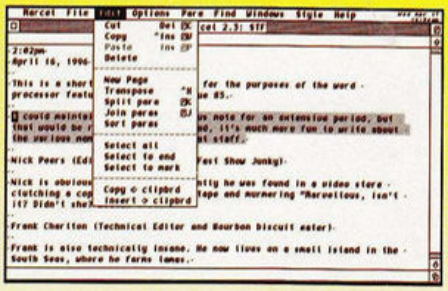
Marcel's split-screen feature makes copying information from one document to another a piece of cake.

You can jot down anything in this handy notepad. Press [F1] to bring it up and make your notes. Press the same key again to return to the main edit screen.

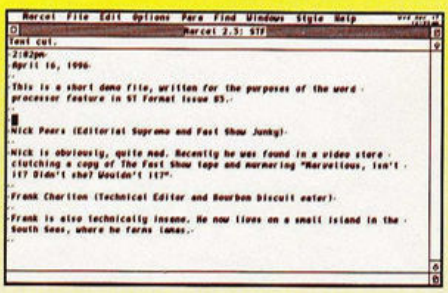
TEXT MANIPULATION



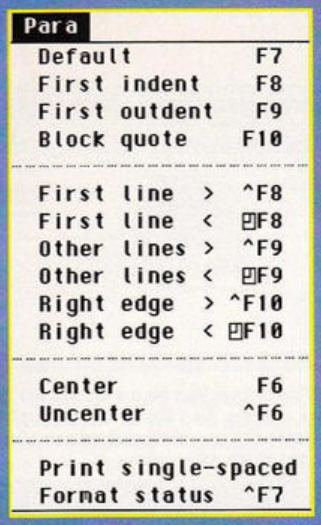
1 Before you can move text, you must select it. Click the left mouse button at the beginning of the block and the right button at the end.



2 Remove the text from the document using the Cut option from the Edit menu. This places the block on the clipboard.



3 Use the [Backspace] key to remove any gaps and make the remaining text look neat. The two small dots in the margin indicate a blank line.



After highlighting your text, simply select the paragraph style you need.

exception. You can either select the type of paragraph as you key in the text, or change the paragraph settings afterwards. The screen grab (opposite page) shows how the Indent style can be used for 'poetry'.

You can also use paragraph styles to create centred or right-aligned text. Right-aligned text is especially useful if you need to write a traditional business letter, which normally has your address at the right. Simply type your text in normally, then right-align it to place the paragraph next to your right-hand margin.

Most professional word processors also enable you to create justified paragraphs. This is done by adding extra spaces, if necessary, so that each line on the page is the same length.

Spell kerrectly

Nobody's perfect, so you will, doubtless, make some spelling mistakes as you type. It's easy to miss them when you read through the printout, because generally you'll see what you intended to write, rather than what you actually typed. In situations like this, the cold, uncompromising eye of a computer is very handy.

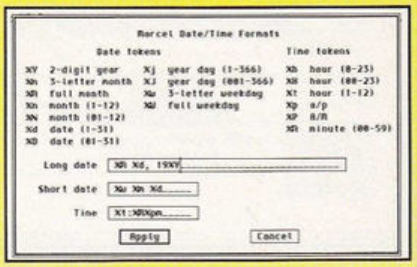
When you select the spelling checker *Marcel* looks at each word in your document, checks it against its dictionary and alerts you each time it finds a mistake. If the word is correct, you can add it to the dictionary or skip to the next 'mistake'. To correct a word, simply type in the replacement and hit [*] on the numeric keypad to continue.

Marcel doesn't suggest replacement words, but many commercial word processors give you the option to change the incorrect word to one of a selection of suggested alternatives. Nevertheless, however rudimentary your spelling checker, it will help you bring your work up to scratch.

FEATURES GALORE

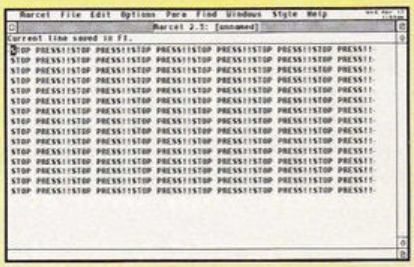
Marcel **is simply packed with features. Here are three of the best:**

● Time and date stamp



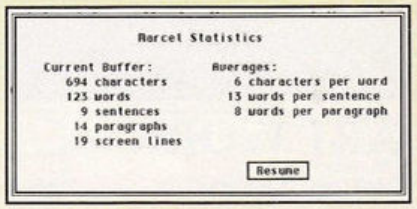
You can customise the way *Marcel* inserts the time and date by modifying these tags. A full key is provided. Leave the % signs as they are and modify the letters according to your choice. Now when you use Insert Time/Date from the options menu, the date and time will be added to your document in the format of your choice.

● Configurable F-keys

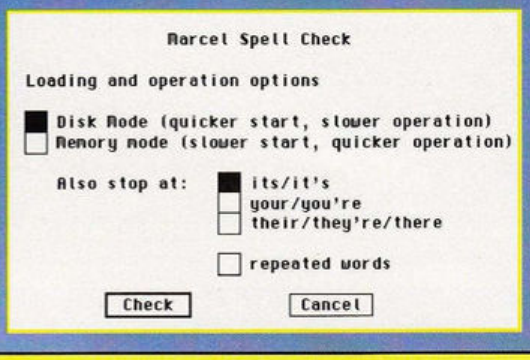


You can attach frequently used text strings, such as your name, company or even a favourite phrase, to the F-keys. Select the block of text, then press [Control]+ [Shift]+ [F1...10]. To access the text held in the F-key, just press [Shift] and the appropriate key. It is pasted in at the current cursor position. Feel free to go completely mad and paste it in loads of times – the temptation is almost irresistible. STOP PRESS!!STOP PRESS!!STOP

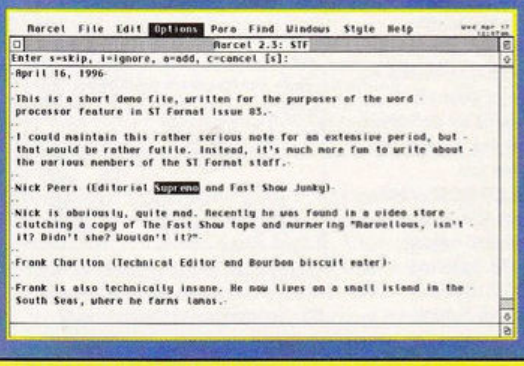
● Document statistics



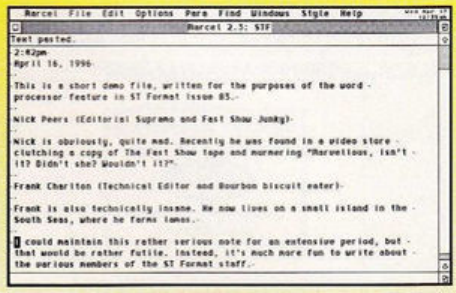
For a complete report on the composition of your document, call up the Statistics window from the Options menu. As well as a word count, you get the average number of characters per word, words per sentence and words per paragraph. There's more than enough detail for the most statistics-obsessed of writers.



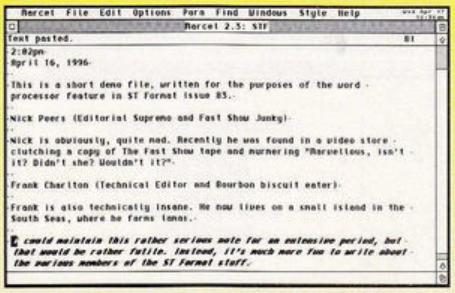
If you want to impress your bank manager, you'd better take advantage of the spelling checker. Everyone makes mistooks.



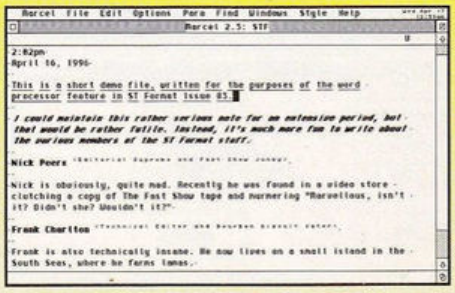
Marcel's spelling checker highlights the unrecognised word and prompts you to add it to the dictionary, skip it, or make your correction.



4 Paste the text back at the bottom of the page using the Paste function from the Edit menu. Text is always pasted back at the cursor position.

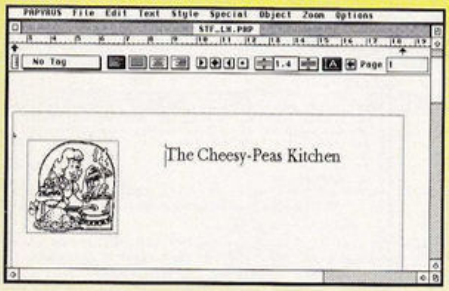


5 You can also change the style of the text. Reselect the block and select Italics from the Style menu. Next, move the text back to its original home.

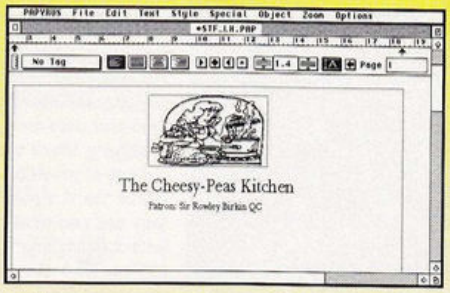


6 The Style menu offers a number of text effects which your printer should be able to reproduce. Simply select each block and assign a style.

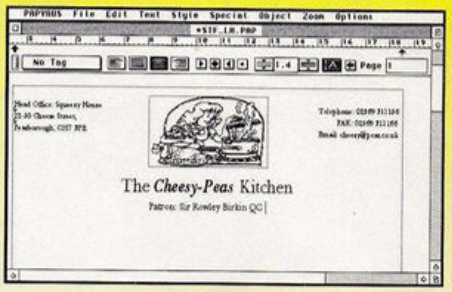
CLASSY LETTERHEADS



1 Paste your image into *Papyrus* in IMG format. Once it's on the page you can adjust the size and shape to suit your design. Add the main title in any font at a large size to work out the basic layout.



2 If you choose a centred layout, simply centre the text and move the picture till it rests neatly above it. We've stretched the picture to spread it across the top of the page. You can now add more text.



3 A small Times font is ideal for the address and telephone numbers. Start with left-aligned text for the address, then add tabs and spaces until the phone numbers align with the right margin.

Letters and cards

Create your own stationary with our step-by-step guide to letterheads and business cards.

Using a word processor to full effect means thinking about the presentation of your documents as well as their content. Your letters, for example, are more likely to impress the recipient – a potential employer, perhaps – if they're smartly presented.

You can pay a printer a lot of money to produce a letterhead and end up with 1,000 copies of something that's out of date a month later. It's much better to have a document template which can be adapted daily, if needs be.

The only expense is a little time, so you can create many different letterheads – a formal one for your business or club, perhaps, and a more informal one for personal use. With a good commercial word processor, such as *Papyrus Gold*, and a few fonts, this is no problem at all. There is really no need to invest in a full DTP package – most high-end word processors provide everything you need to design smart-looking letterheads and business cards.

Letterheads

It makes sense to have a letterhead that you can load into your word processor, rather than producing one in a DTP or art package and holding it in an image file. *Papyrus* makes life very easy because it has many DTP-like features and enables you to produce professional-looking results while retaining the ability to change any of the details at the drop of a hat.

Before you start, prepare the elements of your letterhead and decide roughly how you want it to look. You may wish to design a logo or motif in an art package, or simply search for a relevant piece of clip-art. Either way, you will need some kind of descriptive image to make your letterhead stand out. As a general guide, don't go for a picture which is

ART WORK

Don't worry if you aren't a budding Leonardo da Vinci – if you can't draw, you can use clip-art to enhance your letterhead or business card. There are many thousands of suitable images in the public domain. It may take a while to sift through the collection available on your local BBS or at your PD library, but you stand an excellent chance of discovering exactly the right picture for the job.

If you have a CD-ROM player, there are countless low-cost CDs packed with mono and colour clip-art. Give 16/32 Systems a call on ☎ 01634 710788. Alternatively, we'll be putting a small selection of clip-art on next month's Cover Disk.

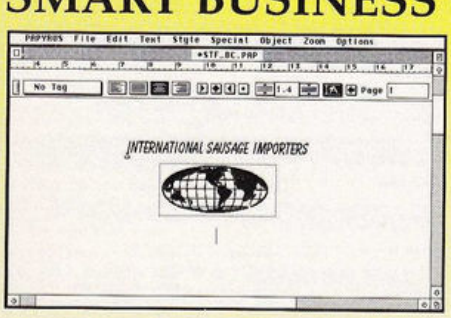
Once you've selected some art work, work through our mini-tutorials to produce letterheads and business cards.

There's loads of clip-art out there. Sift through it until you find a picture that fits your personal or business image.

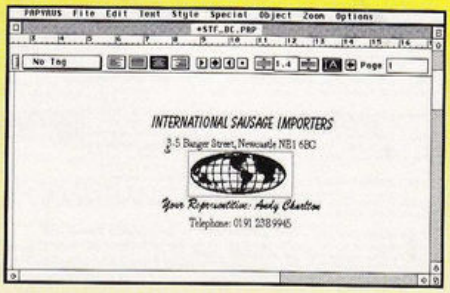
The Cheesy-Peas Kitchen is a subsidiary of *Brilliant!* Licensed Office: 1 Posh Street, London W1

Don't forget to add a footer at the bottom of your letterhead page. You may even want to include another picture here, but make sure you leave some room for the letter...

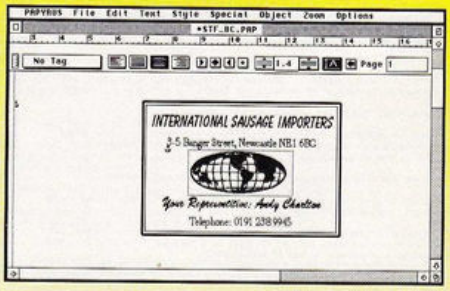
SMART BUSINESS CARDS



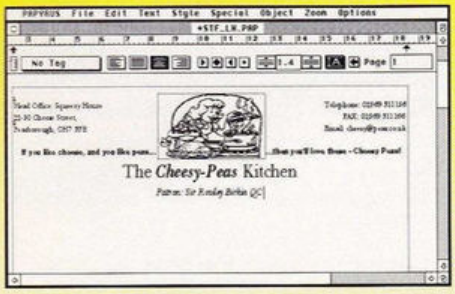
1 These cards are relatively small, so use a high Zoom level so that you can see what you are doing. Get your main title and illustration on to the page, and centre the text. A capitalised font gives a neat title.



2 Next, enter and format the rest of the text. Use the centring feature to achieve a neat and professional look. We have used a cursive font for the name to make it look a little more friendly.



3 The easy way to create a professional border is to draw two boxes around your work using different line widths. Use 0.25mm for the inside box and 0.5mm for the outside box, and try to keep the text box centred.



4 If you want your byline either side of the picture, make sure your phrase splits into two sections easily. The margins and picture frame lines will help you lay out your work correctly.

5 The layout is now complete, so the guidelines are removed to reveal its true appearance. A line across the bottom often helps to neaten up the design. The main title still looks a little naff, though...

6 The solution is to use a completely different font for the title text. This marker-pen font gives a friendly feel to the letterhead, which is now complete. Save it, re-load it, save it with a new name and write your letter.

too complex, because it will be relatively small on the page. Simple black-and-white line drawings work best.

The byline

Finally, think of a good byline – a phrase which describes who you are and what you do, combined with a little self-congratulation. A carpenter might write, "Cabinet Maker to the Duke of Hapton for over 30 years," for example. If your letterhead is purely for personal use, it may be better to leave this out, or think of some witty comment that your friends will appreciate.

Finally, never be afraid to jiggle things around if they don't look right. Often it's easiest to copy text to the clipboard and paste it lower down on the page, change the layout and then copy the text back. This is part of the joy of word processing – nothing is written in stone. You can keep developing your letterhead to reflect changes in your life.

Business cards

Cards are very useful, even if you aren't in business. It's handy to have all your personal information in one neat rectangle, ready to give out to friends and contacts.

Designing a business card is much like designing a letterhead. Choose your artwork and fonts carefully, and think hard about the information you wish to display. There isn't much space on a card, but there is still much that can be achieved with careful design. The logo is even smaller than on a letterhead, so a very basic illustration is needed – keep it to a simple line drawing if you can.

You can produce professional results while retaining the ability to the details

Printing

You can fit several cards on to a A4 sheet. Most printers can cope with lightweight card – look for something similar to the white card used by the business card machines in shopping centres and motorway service stations.

FONTS

Display fonts add personality to your letterhead or business card. Many different styles are available.

A Display Font
FOR TITLES AND HEADINGS
Nice? - Wonderful!

Simple fonts are more useful for smaller text, they still need to be clear and easy to read.

Using Italics often improves the look and may help highlight a part of your text.

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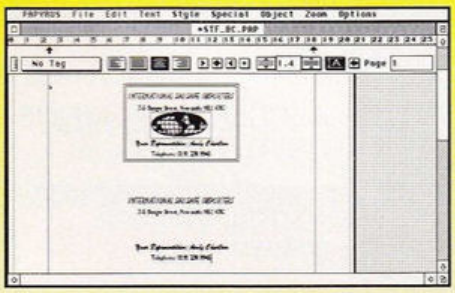
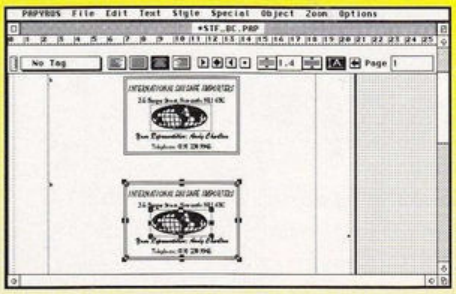
Using Italics often improves the look and may help highlight a part of your text.

Small fonts aren't very exciting, but a good one will improve the appearance of your stationery. Legibility is the keyword.

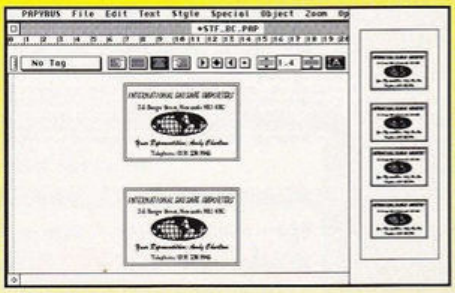
Be careful to select fonts which look good at small point sizes. A lot of the information on your letterhead or business card will be printed quite small, but it must be easily legible. You may want to use a font that is a little more flamboyant for the main title in your letterhead or business card. You'll also need one or two fonts for addresses and telephone numbers – choose something clear and relatively simple.



4 To get the most from your sheets of card, create multiple copies of the business card. Copy the text first, using the clipboard. Don't put the cards too close together, or they will be tricky to cut out.



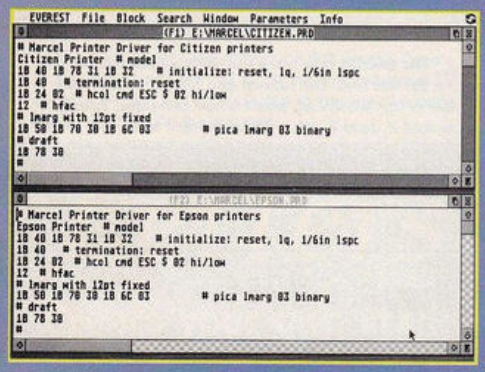
5 Next, copy the graphic elements by selecting the items in graphics mode and hold down the [Control] key as you click and drag. The graphics are all pre-formatted so they fit into place easily.



6 Copy the pair of cards so there are four cards on a page, then remove the guidelines to see how your work looks. Print the cards on plain paper to check for errors, then print them on plain or coloured card.

Printing and fonts

Despite the trend towards all things electronic, you'll probably want to print your document. Here's how.



Marcel's drivers are simply ASCII files, so it's easy to edit them. As long as you have a printer manual, you should be able to customise one of the drivers to suit your needs.

The way you install a driver for your chosen printer depends on your word processor. Programs which can use *NVDI* for output will all use the same *NVDI* printer driver, whereas programs like *Protext* and *Marcel*, which don't support software font systems, must have a printer driver installed within the program itself.

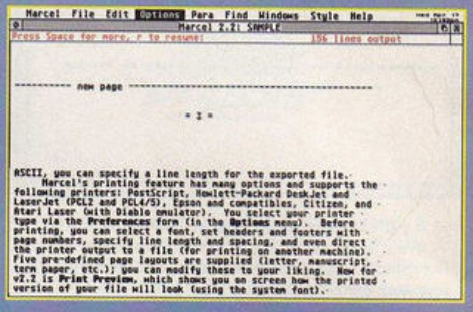
As well as the driver, there are other considerations when it comes to setting up your word processing package with your printer:

● **Choosing a printer and driver:** Be careful if you're buying a printer for the first time. That secondhand dot-matrix model from a company you've never heard of may seem like a bargain, but if you can't get a printer driver for it you could be in for a lot of work. For a full guide to choosing a printer, check the feature in issue 74 (turn to page 50 if you missed it).

Almost every printer can emulate a standard Epson printer though, and every package has an Epson driver. The results may not be quite what you'd get from a dedicated driver, but it'll work.

Make sure your printer comes with a comprehensive manual. Ideally it should include a full listing of the printer's control codes. You can use this information to construct your own printer driver for almost any device.

Don't expect printer manufacturers to supply Atari drivers – they never do. You probably won't be able to find a driver for a brand new printer, but most models released six months to a year ago will have a driver available somewhere. Contact the word processor's author or check the usual PD and on-line shareware sources.



Marcel's nifty preview mode shows you how your document will look before it hits the paper.

● **Draft and NLQ mode:** Most printers offer two modes, often called draft (or economy) and NLQ or near-letter quality. Always use draft mode to check that you have your paper size and margins set up properly – it saves ink, and documents print more quickly. Once you're happy, go for a full quality printout.

● **Margins:** Get to know your printer's limitations before you print anything large or important. Not all printers can print right up to the edge of the paper, so check the manual, or experiment.

● **Paper sizes:** Again, this depends on your chosen printer. Dot-matrix printers in particular can't print right to the bottom of an A4 sheet. If your word processor is set up for A4 paper, the printer may miss lines from the bottom.

A spooler enables you to queue your documents, so you aren't forced to wait

Fonts

The fonts you have available will depend on your choice of printer and word processor. Older dot-matrix printers will have a very limited range of fonts – often in only a single point size – while inkjet and laser devices come with a wide range of on-board typefaces. The built-in fonts on newer models are usually scalable too, giving you superb quality at any point size.

If your printer doesn't have many fonts, you can use software fonts instead. You'll need a font-scaling engine, such as *NVDI 4* (*STF* 82, 93%). It costs £59.95 from System Solutions (☎ 0181 6933355).

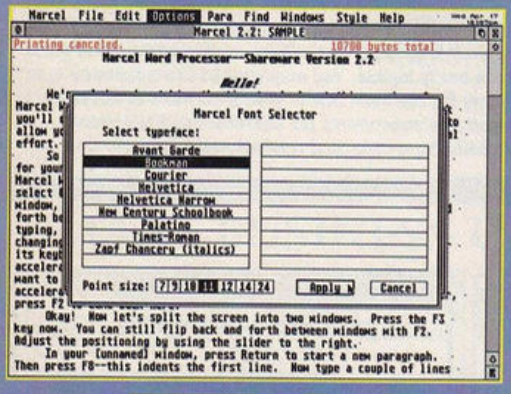
NVDI supports the TrueType font format, giving you access to thousands of PD and shareware fonts. In most cases, you'll find that you only use a few basic fonts on a regular basis anyway – a few strong fonts, such as Times and Bookman, will be adequate for most jobs. For the full story on scalable fonts, check out the Fontasia feature in issue 76.

Enhancements

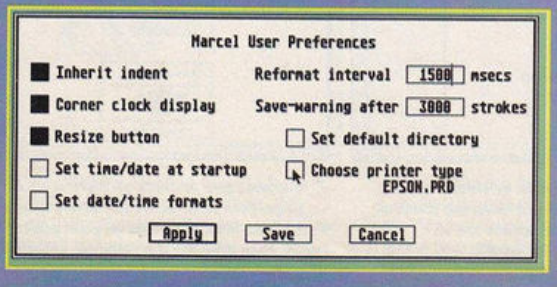
Printer spoolers and accelerators make printing less tedious. A spooler enables you to queue the documents which are ready to be printed, so you aren't forced to wait for the current document to print before you send another one. *GEMSpool*, available from PD libraries, is superb.

Accelerators replace TOS's slow print routines with optimised versions, producing much faster output. The newest is *iPRN*, and you'll find it on this month's Cover Disk – see page 6 for details.

And that's it – you can now put your letter into an envelope, hand in your essay or publish your poems. And good luck with that novel... *stf*



Marcel can't mix and match fonts in a document. You must choose a single font and point size for the entire job.



Telling *Marcel* to use a different driver is as simple as selecting it from the Preferences dialog box.

Palatino, as used by STF!

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnop
qrstuvwxyz

1234567890!@£$%^&*()

A nice font can improve your document dramatically. This the Palatino font we use for both headlines and body copy in *ST FORMAT*.

THE UPGRADE SHOP TEL 01625 503448

All prices include VAT @ 17.5% but exclude delivery.
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1/2 meg	£7.50	1/2 meg	£32.50
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All kits are supplied with comprehensive fitting instructions, testing software and a *free* disk of useful PD / shareware utilities. Free technical support is available as is a competitively priced fitting service.
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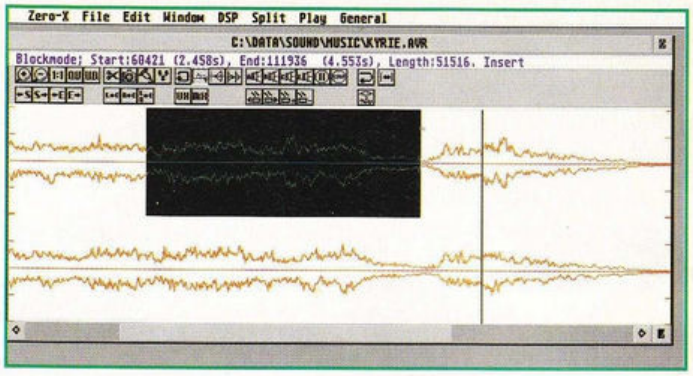
MasterCard VISA SWITCH

Zero-X

Zero-X, featured on last month's Cover Disk, is now on full release. Explore the juiciest bits of this powerful sample editor.

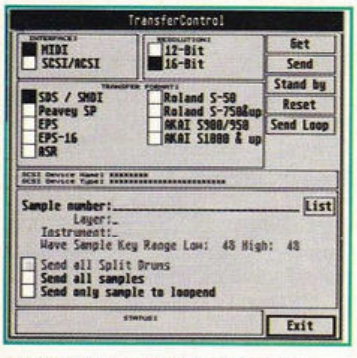


State-of-the-art digital sound processor *Zero-X*, running in colour on the Falcon. ST users need a high-res display or mono emulator.

If last month's *Zero-X* demo dampened your mouth parts, drool no longer. The full version is now available, and it has an impressive range of technical features. *Zero-X* is intended mostly for musicians editing samples for compositions, but anyone with an interest in sound processing should take a close look.

Alas, it still doesn't have a driver for ST sound playback, so only STE and Falcon users can play samples from within the program. ST owners can use all the editing and transfer functions, though.

The full version is copy-protected via a dongle which plugs into the cartridge port, preventing you from running it on more than one machine at once. Two versions of the program are supplied, for 68000 and 68030 machines, with a third for 68030 systems with 68882 co-processors available on request.



Zero-X offers two-way transfer between various SCSI and MIDI devices.

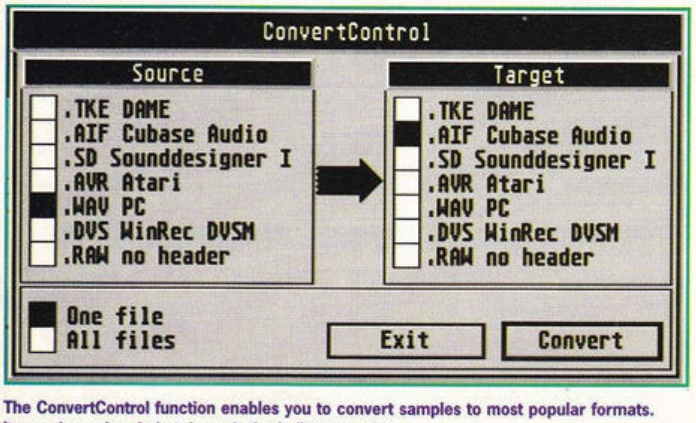
Why Zero-X?

Zero-X isn't the cheapest program around, but it does have some features which make it stand out from the crowd. The usual cutting, pasting and filtering tools are all present and it supports a good range of import and export formats. The enhanced versions for more powerful CPUs are ideal for larger samples, but the real power of *Zero-X* lies in its automatic looping functions.

> ***Zero-X* proves that sound processing on the Atari is alive and kicking**

Looping is simply the repeating of a section of sound, and it enables you to compose musical rhythms with percussion instruments, such as drums. *Zero-X* has all the tools you need to compose your own drum tracks from sampled instruments (or other sounds) and 'loosen up' the programmed track. It even enables you to create a standard MIDI file and a set of percussion pieces which can be transferred to a sequencer and external sampler respectively. You can then change the track's tempo by adjusting the bpm (beats per minute) setting on the sequencer.

Many of the functions are designed to optimise samples for looping. The AutoSearch and AutoLoop controls help you find the optimum looping points and avoid 'clicks' at the start or end, while the Xfade and Gate tools recalculate the sound volume to smooth out the joins. And although the automatic operations are very effective, it is possible to perform these jobs manually if you prefer.



The ConvertControl function enables you to convert samples to most popular formats. It even has a handy batch mode for bulk conversions.

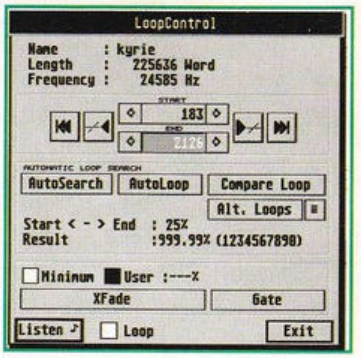
The bad news...

The main drawback is that you can't play samples on a standard ST. This means you have to run a separate player program or transfer the sample to an external device. This is a little frustrating and serious *Zero-X* users should consider upgrading to an STE or Falcon. The other major drawback is the *Zero-X* manual, which in some places is close to incomprehensible.

Zero-X doesn't support direct-to-disk processing, so even Falcon owners are restricted to samples which will fit in memory, and it offers only limited support for some of the hardware samplers in the Transfer Control section. Most of these problems should be sorted out in version 2.0, due later this year.

Zero-X offers many other features that we don't have space to mention. Last month's Cover Disk demo gives a very good idea of the full content, and should help you decide if it's right for your needs. At just under £150, *Zero-X* is undoubtedly a tool for the serious musician, and many of its functions are rather too technical for the sampling hobbyist. However, it does prove that digital sound processing on the Atari platform is alive and kicking, and deserves a detailed appraisal from anyone interested in making music. *stf*

DUG ARMSTRONG



Zero-X's sophisticated looping controls offer automatic and manual positioning of the start and end points.

Product: Zero-X
Price: £149
Supplier: System Solutions
Contact: 0181 6933355
Min system: 1Mb, high res

STF VERDICT

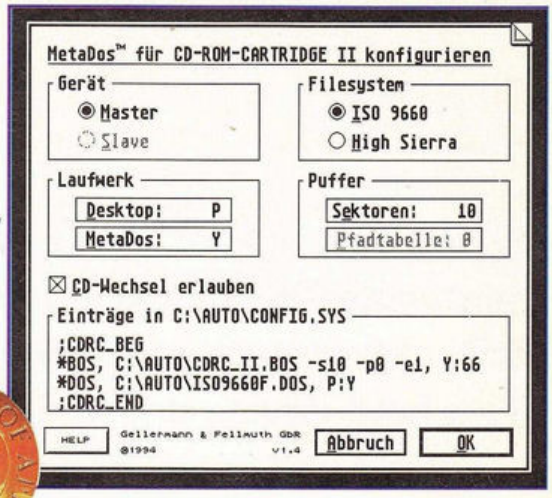
HIGHS
- Massive range of features
- Good import/export
- SCSI and MIDI sample dump capability.
- Uses extra hardware of STE and Falcon

LOWS
- A bit expensive
- Poorly translated manual
- No sound on STFM

In short...
A sophisticated sample editor with an impressive range of technical features.

89%

Six-speed CD-ROM



Don't let the German configuration program put you off, because there's very little you need to change.

Adding a CD-ROM drive to your ST is now ridiculously easy, thanks to this speedy new kit from System Solutions.

Adding a CD-ROM drive can give your ST a whole new lease of life, thanks to the ever-increasing range of Atari-specific discs. It can be a complex business, though, because hard drive owners have potential SCSI ID conflicts to deal with.

The current crop of PC CD-ROM drives generally favour the IDE interface, and consequently they're quite a bit cheaper than the equivalent SCSI models. Until now, though, connecting an IDE peripheral to an Atari has been somewhat problematic.

Plug 'n' play

System Solutions' IDE kit makes it easy to attach a CD-ROM drive to your ST or Falcon, whether or not you're au fait with the complexities of the SCSI system. A small cartridge connects the CD-ROM mechanism to your ST, so you don't have to sort out ID numbers or fiddle with daisy-chained cables. Installing the system takes two minutes: hook up the cartridge using the supplied cable, copy the software to your Auto folder and re-boot.

Once the driver software is installed, you must run the configuration program to assign a drive letter to the CD-ROM drive. The program is completely in German, but that shouldn't be a problem because you only need to change one option.

The driver software is a version of the freeware *MetaDOS*, adjusted to work with the cartridge interface rather than a SCSI connection. While *MetaDOS* is normally difficult for beginners to configure, setting up the supplied version is a doddle. It works very well, too – we ran it for ages on an ST and a Falcon with no problems.

Digital domain

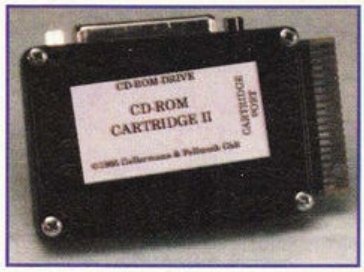
The drive mechanism itself is excellent. The case provides all the connections you need, including a pair of ordinary phono sockets. These enable you to connect the drive to your hi-fi system so you can listen to audio CDs. System Solutions can also fit a digital SP/DIF output, enabling musicians to direct digital audio streams into a DAT recorder or *Cubase Audio* direct-to-disk system. Very few other drives can provide this facility, which costs an extra £20.

The drive is 50 per cent faster than the speediest drive reviewed previously

The cartridge port connection works beautifully. The drive itself has a jaw-droppingly fast six-speed mechanism, making it 50 per cent faster than the speediest drive reviewed previously. It's very fast, and works flawlessly.

There isn't a through connection for other cartridges, making it awkward for musicians to connect dongles, but otherwise we recommend this system wholeheartedly. At this price it's great value, and if you're after a fast, well-designed CD-ROM drive, you're advised to study this beauty carefully. *stf*

FRANK CHARLTON



This small box connects the IDE CD-ROM drive to your ST's cartridge port.

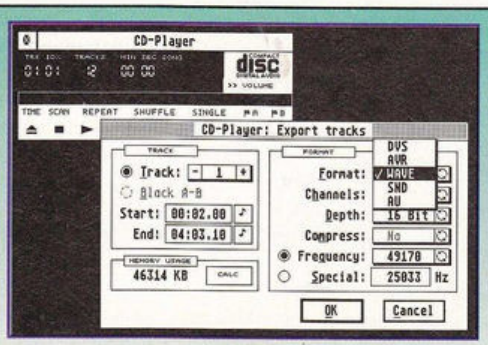
Inside this unassuming box hides a CD-ROM drive faster than a fast thing on fast day. Faster than *The Fast Show*, even.

Product: IDE six-speed CD-ROM drive
Price: £249
Contact: System Solutions
Tel: 0181 6933355
Min system: Any Atari, hard drive recommended

AUDIO CD

The kit includes two applications for playing standard audio CDs. The minimalist option is a simple Accessory which provides controls for starting, stopping and skipping through the tracks.

The better bet is the freeware player from *CAB* author Alexander Clauss, which enables you to create databases of your audio CDs, complete with full track-title listings. If you have enough hard drive space, you can export the audio tracks as sound samples at up to 48kHz in glorious 16-bit stereo. Since the result is a true digital copy rather than an actual sample, the quality is as good as that of the original CD.



Also supplied is Alexander Clauss's superb audio player, which can even save tracks to hard disk as sample files.

STF VERDICT

HIGHS
- Supremely easy to set up
- Very fast
- Excellent audio players

LOWS
- Ties up your Atari's cartridge port

In short...
The easiest way to add a CD-ROM drive. Fast, well built and nigh-on flawless.

95%

HD Driver 4.5

Driving newer hard drives can be hard, unless you have a good hard drive driver, such as *HD Driver*. It's a hard-driving driver.

Now and again *ST FORMAT* gets sent something slightly out of the ordinary, such as this program that drives your hard drive. Surely you get a driver when you buy a hard drive, so why should you need to buy another? And what exactly does a hard drive driver do?

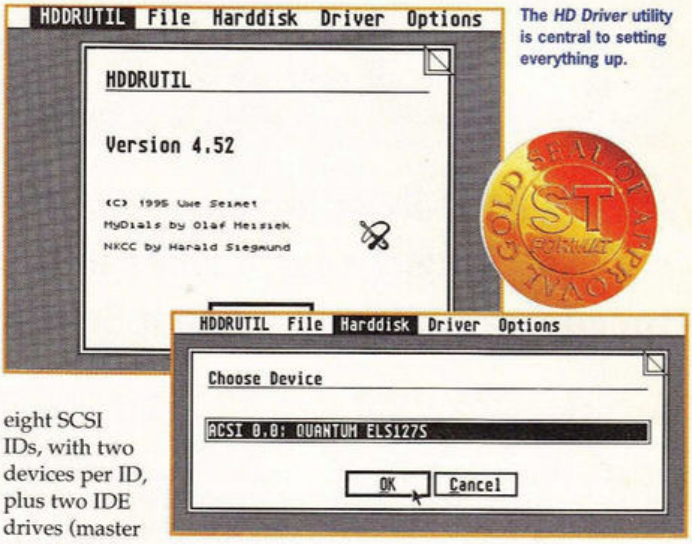
Drive on by

When you start up a system with a hard disk you have to switch the drive on first, so it can get up to speed. You can then turn on your ST. TOS checks whether there's a hard drive connected and if so, finds and runs the driver program in the hard drive's boot sector. This process establishes communication between the two devices, enabling your ST to control the drive and load or save data.

Most ST hard drives come with a suitable driver already installed, usually one that's compatible with *AHDI*, Atari's own driver. *HD Driver* differs from most driver programs in that it's faster and offers more features and facilities, but maintains *AHDI* compatibility.

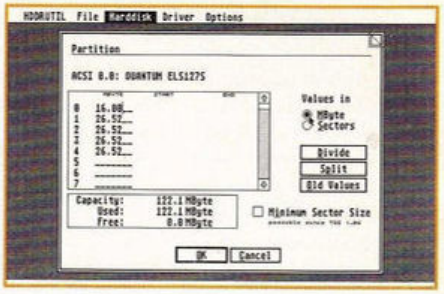
The *HD Driver* package comprises a single disk containing the driver and some useful utilities and a 32-page manual. To install it, run the HDUTIL.APP and choose the partition you want the driver to reside in and boot from. You can even decide to boot your hard drive from a floppy drive, but most users prefer their hard disk to auto-boot.

Once installed, *HD Driver* enables your ST to access up to eight SCSI IDs, with two devices per ID, plus two IDE drives (master and slave). It also offers support for new storage devices, such as the SyQuest EZ Drive, and is under continuous development. This means further updates are likely as new drives and devices appear.



The *HD Driver* utility is central to setting everything up.

HD Driver identifies any storage device connected to your machine.



Partitioning of your drive couldn't be much easier...

Hard driven

HD Driver has a number of advantages over most ST hard disk drivers. It supports background access to your hard drive under *MagiC 4*, enabling you to copy files in the background. The ICD adaptor is supported fully, enabling partitions of one gigabyte, and you can selectively write-protect any of your drive's partitions. It also enables you to choose the order in which devices boot. You can share one hard drive between two computers as long as they are working on different partitions.

HD Driver does everything you expect a hard disk driver to do and more besides. It's difficult to find fault with it because the whole package oozes professionalism and inspires confidence. If you want the definitive Atari driver, this is it. *stf*

PETER CRUSH

Product: HD Driver 4.5
Price: £29.95 (upgrades from v3 £15)
Contact: System Solutions
Phone: 0181 6933355
Min system: Any Atari

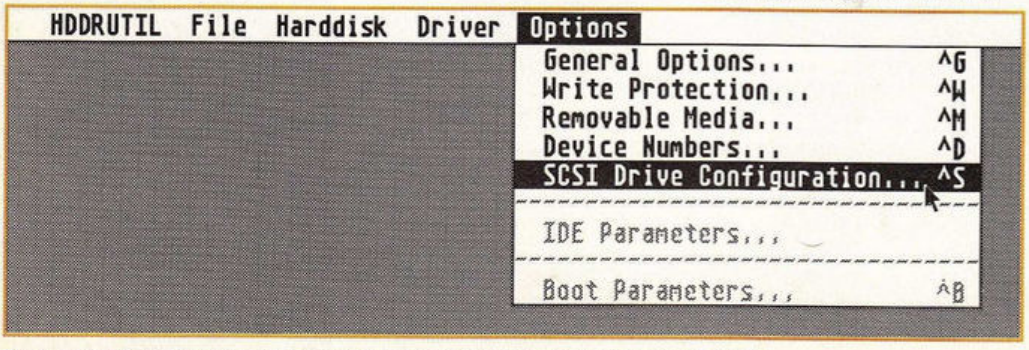
IN YER INTERFACE

ACSI: The type of hard drive interface found on the ST, STF, STFM, STE, Mega ST, Mega STE, Stacy and TT. Developed by Atari, it's non-standard, so you always need an adaptor to connect modern drive mechanisms.

SCSI: Emerged shortly after ACSI and became universal across the computer industry. A SCSI interface enables you to connect other devices, too, such as scanners and CD-ROM drives. The Atari TT and Falcon have SCSI interfaces.

IDE: The most recent type of interface. IDE drives are cheaper to produce than SCSI drives because the circuitry is less complex. Both the Atari Falcon and the ST Book portable use internal IDE hard drives.

Unless you have an Atari-manufactured hard disk you'll need an adaptor to link your ST to the drive. Some drives have built-in adaptors; others use standalone cable connectors such as ICD's Link II, Top Link or The Translator.



There are plenty of useful options to play with and configure, should you enjoy tweaking your system.

STF VERDICT

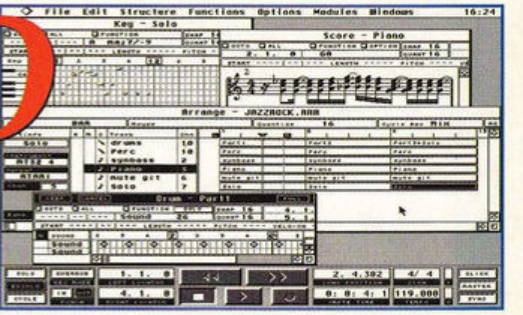
HIGHS
- Supports almost all hard drives
- Technically advanced

LOWS
- No formatting utility

In short...
The best and most up-to-the-minute hard disk driver available for your Atari.

94%

Cubase CD



The Cubase CD is certainly a CD, but is it "the essential CD for all Cubase users?" To CD or not to CD, that is the question.

System Solutions, one of the UK's leading Atari music specialists, has added the first CD-ROM aimed specifically at *Cubase* users to its impressive catalogue. *The Cubase CD* contains over 600Mb of *Cubase*-related software, including samples, loops and MIDI files. It's billed as "the essential CD for all *Cubase* users."

At first glance the CD seems to offer plenty for all to enjoy, with over 1,200 audio recordings, 400-plus loops and more than 300 MIDI files. There is a folder containing *Cubase* arrangements and lots of accessory folders containing mixer maps, drumsets, MROS drivers and related software for users of the Atari, PC and Mac versions of *Cubase*.

Unfortunately...

When you take a closer look this disc isn't quite as impressive as it first seemed. If you use a non-audio version of *Cubase*, there is less than 16Mb of material you can use, and further examination reveals hardly anything new.

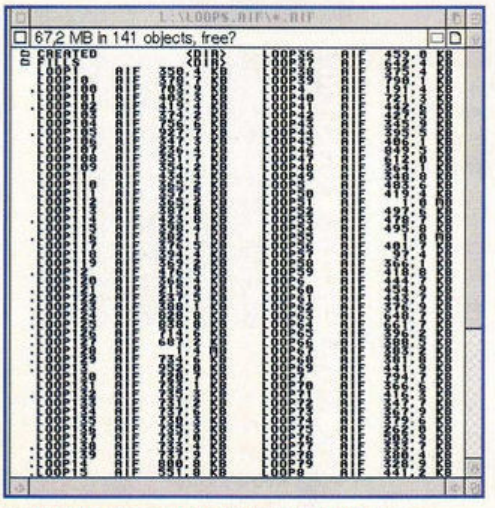
For example, most of the drivers, mixer maps and drumsets are on your *Cubase* Additionals disk, and in any case can be downloaded free of charge from several FTP sites. A quick trawl through just one such site netted over 80 per cent of the mixer maps offered on the CD-ROM. The same goes for the IPS, Accessory and Utility sections, while the Help folder consists mainly of pages scanned from the manual and text files from your *Cubase* disks.

Although the CD contains 346 MIDI files, most of these are readily available PD arrangements of classical pieces and traditional tunes.

> **...over 600Mb of software, including samples, loops and MIDI files**

The main area of interest for most *Cubase* users is the Songwriters folder, which contains MIDI files in 14 styles, ranging from Ballad to Zydeco. There are also 33 *Cubase* arrangements, again listed by style.

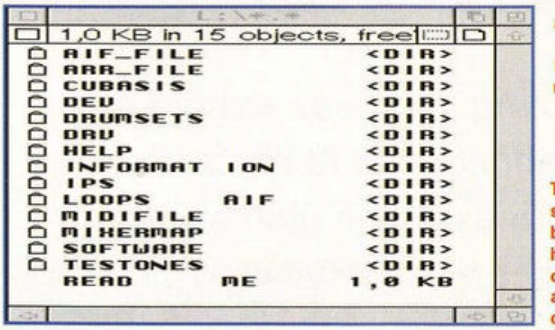
On the plus side, there's a handy program for printing scores more quickly and a useful collection of synth editor-librarian programs, sample editors and patch dump utilities. Again, though, these are all PD and shareware, and they are available elsewhere.



Suffering from insomnia? Try finding a particular groove among this little lot. Sadly, there isn't an index.

Audiophilia

Cubase Audio users are treated to over 400Mb of audio files, grouped into samples and loops. Audio test tones at various frequencies are also provided for calibration purposes.



These *Cubase* arrangement files are useful as a basis for creating music in a variety of styles.

There's plenty of stuff on the CD, but not much of it is relevant to owners of non-audio versions of *Cubase*.

The sampled sounds cover a wide range of modern and orchestral instruments, as well as voices and effects, but unfortunately certain sounds suffer from poor quality. The sampled brass sounds in particular are thin and weedy, and some of the brass stabs sound more like car horns than real instruments. However, the drum samples are much better, especially the Roland 808 sounds beloved of rappers, and the orchestral and synth samples are superb.

The loops consist mostly of one- or two-bar drum patterns, professionally recorded and of excellent quality, and are intended for incorporation into *Cubase* arrangements. There's also a folder containing several sampled drum fills.

Loop the loop

Sadly, the loops aren't arranged by style, and are named LOOP1, LOOP2, LOOP3 and so on. This is confusing enough, but to make matters worse, there isn't an index. Only a few of the loops are grouped by tempo, and these also have numbers instead of names – and again there's no index.

Using the loops in a composition is a thankless task. Instead of looking in the index for, say, 'Hip-hop groove 3, 100bpm,' you have to search through hundreds of anonymous files to find the one you want. Once you've found a loop and imported it into your arrangement, you have to guess the tempo by trial and error to sync the loop to your MIDI parts. Needless to say, this approach doesn't exactly promote creativity.

Naked truth

Unless you use *Cubase Audio*, there isn't anywhere near enough material here to justify forking out £70. The only things not easily available elsewhere are the loops and samples, and there are plenty of sample CDs filled with similar content for appreciably less money. *The Cubase CD* is less than essential. ***stf***

RICHARD MANLY-REEVE

Product: The Cubase CD
Supplier: System Solutions
Contact: 0181 6933355
Price: £69.95
Min system: CD-ROM drive

VERDICT ● STF VERDICT ● STF VERDICT

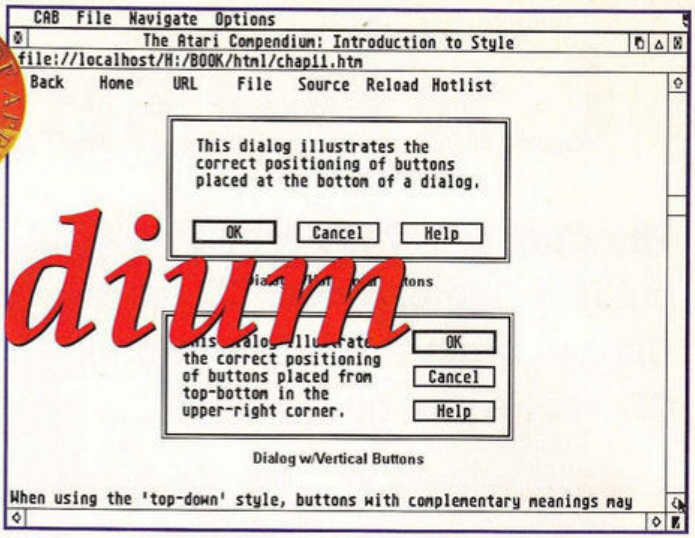
HIGHS
- Some useful arrangements
- ...and utilities
- Quality audio recordings

LOWS
- No loop index
- Little that's new
- Poor value for money

In short...
Promises a good deal, but doesn't deliver nearly enough. Way too pricey.

51%

Atari Compendium

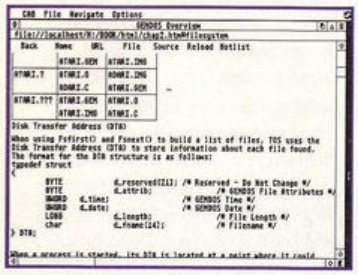


All the illustrations from the original book are included – there's nothing missing at all.

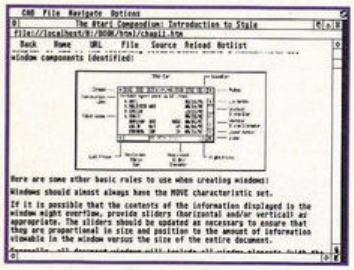
Everything you ever wanted to know about your Atari, but were afraid to ask. The ultimate Atari reference work is now on CD-ROM.

When the CD-ROM was launched, one of the big selling points was its ability to store entire works of reference, such as encyclopaedias, on slimline silver discs. Most other platforms have benefited from CD-ROM's capaciousness, but we've really only seen discs full of shareware and PD on the Atari.

The original *Atari Compendium* was an enormous 800-page volume twice as thick as the average telephone directory. Often described as the Atari programmer's bible, it has long been regarded as the definitive source of information about all aspects of programming Atari computers.



The HTML files make use of tables for a uniform display on any size of screen.



An interface style guide is provided so programmers can all stick to the rules.

H for heaven

The entire text of *The Compendium* has now been squeezed on to CD-ROM in an easy-to-use format. Together with author Scott Sanders, Toad Computers has painstakingly converted the original book into the standard HTML format used for World Wide Web pages. You also get the latest version of the Web browser *CAB*, configured to load the first page of the *Compendium* as soon as it's launched.

The Compendium is also supplied as Adobe PDF (Portable Document Format) files. PDF readers are supplied for Mac and PC owners; ST owners can display these files with *GhostScript*, which is included on the disc.

The Atari Compendium was originally released in 1993, a year when programming documentation was either difficult to find or scattered across multiple volumes, most of which were out of print. The idea was to create a centralised source of information for developers, packed into one convenient volume. *The Compendium* has been universally acclaimed ever since.

It works very well as a CD-ROM, too. While it's a bit awkward to read in the bath, it does contain all the information from the original. Everything from the basics of programming through to more advanced subjects, such as CPX modules and working with *SpeedoGDOS* fonts, is covered. It's a fantastic tool for recent machines, such as the Falcon, because it covers the additions to the BIOS and XBIOS dealing with the 030 machine's expanded hardware. The DSP is also covered, but you'll still need a book on the theory of DSP programming.

Anyone from a dabbler to a serious developer would be daft to miss it

The CD-ROM's paper ancestor was a thick book, likely to suffer the usual problems of hefty reference works, including loose pages and a split spine, whereas the new *Compendium* should last a lifetime. The HTML is well-structured, making it easy to find the section you're interested in, but there are some minor drawbacks. First, if you're short of memory you'll probably have to quit your development system to run *CAB* and look for information. Most programmers like to make notes in the margin as they learn new tricks, but you can't really write on the edge of the disc. It just isn't quite as convenient as the original.

The book was £40, whereas the CD version is just under £25, and it's stuffed to the gills with other tasty bits and bobs as well. The sheer volume of material made the book good value, so this digital version is stupendous. At this price, anyone from a casual dabbler up to a serious developer would be daft to miss it. It's an excuse to buy that CD-ROM drive you've always wanted. *stf*

FRANK CHARLTON

Product: Atari Compendium CD-ROM
Price: £24.95
Contact: System Solutions
Tel: 0181 6933355
Min system: All Ataris, 1Mb RAM and CD-ROM drive required

WHAT ELSE?

Toad claims this CD-ROM could be the fullest Atari disc available. They're not wrong by our estimation, because it contains a massive 649Mb of data. As well as *The Compendium*, the CD contains lots of other goodies:

- *GhostScript*, the freeware PostScript interpreter for Ataris.
- Most of the UMICH Atari FTP site archive.
- Tons of programming tools and source code, including complete C compilers.
- Alternative operating systems, including *MiNT*, *NetBSD* and *Linux/68K*.
- Demos for all Ataris.
- AVI movies of Jaguar games.

STF VERDICT

HIGHS

- Stuffed completely full
- An excellent programmer's reference
- Superb value

LOWS

- Not as convenient as the book

In short...

An indispensable reference work and a must-buy for Atari coders of any level.

96%

HL-1260 laser printer

Twelve ppm is fast and 600dpi is detailed. Peter Crush tests Brother's impressive new laser printer for ST compatibility.

Brother's latest release is an upmarket machine, described as its flagship printer, so it ought to be good. But printers aren't designed with ST users in mind, so such claims have to be checked carefully. We've been taking a close look at the HL-1260 and testing it with Atari software.

The new printer is a solid-looking cream cube that follows the typical styling of many office laser printers. However, it's less bulky and heavy than competing printers and doesn't look out of place in the home environment.

The HL-1260 uses Brother's own laser engine, which is a true 600dpi device. It can also use Brother's High Resolution Control technology to simulate 1,200dpi output.

Setting up the printer is straightforward. A mains lead is supplied, but you have to provide a parallel printer lead to connect the laser printer to your ST. Next, install the toner cartridge, which is a one-piece unit containing both drum and toner powder. Open the printer's top, slot in your cartridge and you're ready to rock.

Gives attractive output even if you only have a simple text editor

High Resolution Control technology simulates 1,200dpi output.

It even prints a picture of itself, if you can think of a use for one.

Brother's 600dpi HL-1260 churns out 12 pages a minute – and costs over £1,200.

Graphic output from *Imagecopy* looks superb at 600dpi.

There's a control panel on the top of the HL-1260, a rare sight now because many modern printers are controlled only via software. The HL-1260's panel comprises buttons and an LCD screen and enables you to control every aspect of the printer's operation manually. You can choose any of the machines's scalable fonts, giving attractive output at any size even if you only have a simple text editor.

We tried it with *Protext 6*, the most competent text-based word processor for the ST. Printed results were crisp and clear and our test page took just 23 seconds to print. Run-on copies of the same page rolled out at the rate of one page every five seconds.

Picture perfect

We also used *Imagecopy 4* to print a JPEG picture of geraniums at both 600 and 300dpi, obtaining near-photographic quality at 600dpi and excellent 300dpi output. A *PageStream* poster printed extremely well at 600dpi, and the manual addendum from *Papyrus* was printed so crisply it could have been used as the master copy for professional printing.

On all the tests, 600dpi output took longer than 300dpi printing, but was worth the wait for important work. Paper can be fed from a tray at the base of the machine or a fold-down feeder on the front, and all the usual paper sizes are catered for. The printer is a bit noisy for home use, but any machine capable of such fast output suffers from the same drawback.

Verdict

Overall, the Brother HL-1260 performed perfectly and has much to recommend it for small businesses requiring serious heavy-duty printing. However, it's over specified for the home user. *stf*

PETER CRUSH

Product:: HL-1260 laser printer
Price: £1,249
Contact: Brother
Tel: 0161 3306531
Min system: Any ST, parallel cable

SPECIFICATION

Size: 13 inches high, 16 inches wide, 16 inches deep.
Resolution: 300 and 600dpi
Speed: 12ppm
High Resolution Control: Improves the output
Cartridge: Prints 6,000 text pages
Greyscale: 256 shades of grey in LaserJet 4 mode
Emulations: HP LaserJet 4 (PCL5e), Postscript Level 2, HP-GL (plotters), Epson FX-850, IBM Proprinter XL. Chooses correct emulation automatically.
Memory: 2Mb as standard, upgradable if required.
Fonts: 75 scalable fonts including Intellifont-compatible fonts, Postscript Type 1 and 2 fonts and a range of bitmapped fonts.

VERDICT ● STF VERDICT ● STF VERDICT

HIGHS
- Versatile and controllable
- Top quality output
- Fast and reliable

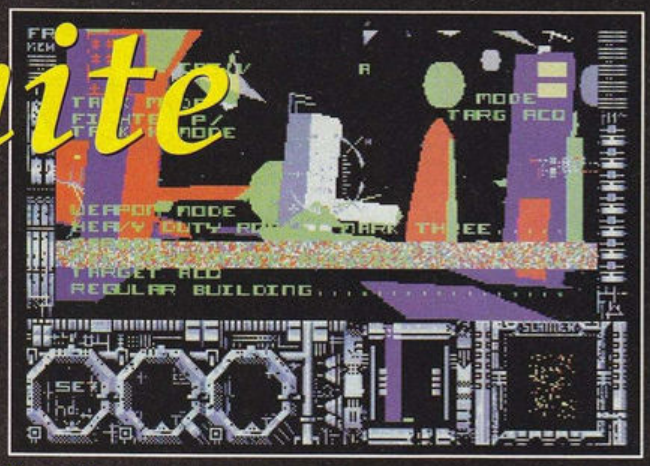
LOWS
- Very expensive

In short...
All you'll need to print anything from your ST – shame about the price.

85%

Kryptonite Data

Ack! It's... kryptonite! Losing... my... powers... Must... review... 3D... game... Must... get...



These buildings may not look tightly packed, but just you try taking off...

Why are aliens always in search of livestock? Why don't huge ships loom over the earth demanding our teabags? It's humans this lot wanted, however, so it's humans they took, bundling them off to an alien landscape and hiding them in buildings made of kryptonite. And as usual, the good guys take advantage of the fact that they can win by sending a single pilot – you.

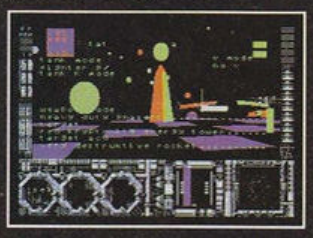
You are in control of a hybrid tank/jet combo armed with a high-powered laser system and explosive rockets, and your mission is to free the hostages by finding the kryptonite buildings and cracking their codes. Each code is a mere anagram, making this an action game of the 3D flight sim shoot-'em-up variety.

Confusion

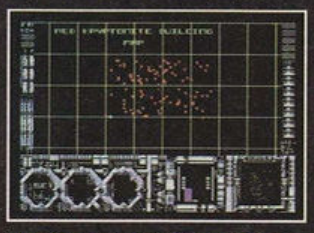
And so you enter the world of defense drones, tanks and gliders, hoping for some shoot-'em-up confusion. You weren't expecting quite this much confusion, though.

The action opens with your in-game view of a landscape strewn with oddly-shaped buildings, roaming enemies and lots of circles. No, really, huge numbers of circles. These circles, when moving, portray alien fire coming your way, and the corruption flitting across your view tells you you're being hit.

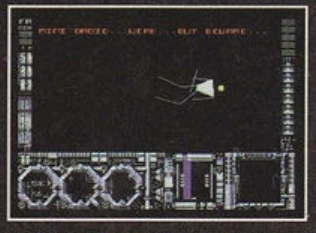
When you attempt to move out of the way you'll discover the weird control system. Using the mouse to steer would be a fairly simple task, were it not for the fact that your velocity is controlled by moving the mouse with the right button held down. It's therefore impossible to steer while you accelerate. Should you get up any speed, you'll discover the frustrations of manoeuvring a jet through densely-packed buildings. You can even hit buildings that you've just passed, bouncing back as said object reappears in your view. You'll also find yourself accelerating into buildings because you can't steer, or taking hits as you reorientate yourself.



Circles, circles everywhere, but not a single one has an obvious purpose.



Okay, so maybe the map isn't all that easy to get along with.



The library contains *Starglider*-style information on the various foes.

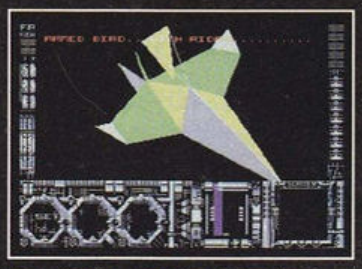
> **Playing *Kryptonite Data* is like tuning a radio when you're really tired**

The only way to avoid this problem, it would seem, is to fly high above the buildings, unable to see anything but empty space (and the occasional mysterious hovering circle). You can then venture down into a spacious area and take on the enemy. Unfortunately, your rockets move so slowly that your targets have time to take a bath, smoke a cigarette or two and phone their mums before moving out of the way. The laser doesn't fire much faster, making it more than difficult to hit the little matchstick men.

When your weapons do hit something, be it enemy, ground or building, the huge explosion of circles gives the bad guys enough cover to slip in a few circles of their own or wander right up to you, stopping you dead. You get damaged but they survive the experience unscathed.

Long-wave

Playing *Kryptonite Data* is like tuning a radio when you're really tired. You spend way too long in the confusion of static buzz, occasionally stumbling upon a few seconds of crystal clear reception – there are times when it all makes sense. It's all too easy to slide back into buzz, though, as you find yourself getting hit, irritated and frustrated. Somewhere, hidden deep under this game – and the text obscuring your view – is a playable, enjoyable shoot-'em-up, but there always seems to be too much going on to enjoy it. If the buildings, enemies and so on weren't packed so tightly together you could get to grips with the control system, speeds, weapons and radar. As it stands, you don't really have the chance.



The author has a lot of good ideas, but you never get to enjoy them in the game.

Alternatively, this could be looked at as an intensely difficult, challenging game. The author maintains that if you play it for long enough you'll get better. We can see how the moments of clarity could get longer and more regular, but there's no starting point. You're either in the middle of an all-out fight or running away. How's the average gamer to get their teeth into this? *stf*

DAVE BARRINGTON

Product: Kryptonite Data
Price: £19.99
Contact: Top Byte Software
Tel: 01622 763056
Min system: 1Mb ST only

VERDICT ● STF VERDICT ● STF VE

HIGHS
- Fairly smooth 3D system
- Looking for a challenge?

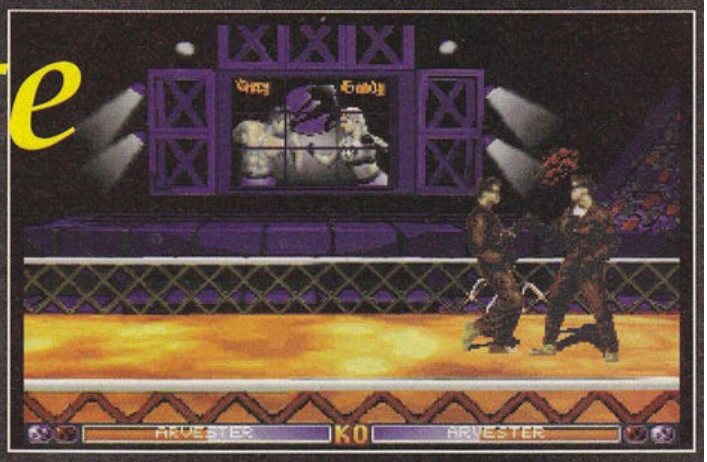
LOWS
- Too much on the screen
- Poor game design

In short...
Confusion, weird controls and flying circles don't make a great game.

60%

Ultimate Arena

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee and rip your opponent's head off like a raving lunatic.



Arnie only discovered his foul breath when he finally met himself.

Violence doesn't pay, but it certainly makes you feel better. There is nothing more satisfying than spending a relaxing Sunday afternoon beating your opponent to a bloody pulp.

With this rather disturbing thought in mind, STeam has released a Falcon version of *The Ultimate Arena*, the beat-'em-up which Nick drooled over way back in issue 74. Our valiant editor put his head on the block by saying that the Falcon version promised to look even better than the original. Now it has finally arrived we can find out whether his prediction was correct.

Literature

As far as the plot goes, very little has changed since the original edition – the scenario still manages to make your average comic look like high literature. You play either Terry or Sandy on a quest to join the elite group of Ultimate Fighters. To achieve your goal you must simply maim and destroy a whole host of Indiana Jones and Terminator lookalikes. Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Think again. Like the ST version, *Ultimate Arena* for the Falcon proves to be more challenging than your average beat-'em-up. Ignoring the fact that your opponents are about as gentle as a wild tiger, it is possible to be knocked off the edge of the playing area or electrocuted on the fence. If that isn't enough, you also need to watch how much damage you suffer in each bout, because you only recover part of your energy between fights.

Look, can't we just talk about this... oof. Guess not, then.

Sandy was swiftly pulverised and hence didn't have a chance to gaze at the lovely scenery.

Medicine

If you take too many hits in an early round you won't have much chance when you come up against tougher foes, such as the nasty skeletal warrior and two hidden adversaries. Fortunately, a novice stage has been added, enabling you to practice hurling your lightening bolts and brush up on your deadly pirouettes.

The biggest improvement is the Rampage mode. It is now possible to select any of the players at the push of a button. Those bored to tears with Terry and June (sorry, Sandy) can step into the shoes of Serena or Kato Chen Fu, a ninja who could show Hong Kong Fooey a thing or two. The new characters bring with them a whole catalogue of special moves, but once again you need to be cautious, because some secret moves can cost you energy and leave you vulnerable.

And so the alien tiptoed over and calmly ripped my face off... which was nice. You meet some charming people in this business.

Wrench your enemy's head from his shoulders and sling it into the air

We must also mention the new Mortality feature. Using a certain combination of moves while the red light is flashing results in certain death for your opponent. It is quite worrying to find yourself jumping up and down with joy as you wrench your enemy's head from his shoulders and sling it into the air in an arc of blood.

Mathematics

However, the most bizarre addition has to be the hidden *Breakout*-style puzzle game. In the middle of all the gore and mindless violence it is possible to switch to a rather dated and, to be honest, dull, bat-and-ball game. Despite its tedious nature, the promise of 200,000 extra points and access to the cheat mode makes it worth persevering with this puzzle.

The additions to gameplay make up for the fact that visually there isn't much difference between the Falcon and ST versions. While the backgrounds are slightly more detailed, the character sprites are no different from the originals. Nevertheless, as the only beat-'em-up specifically written for the Falcon, *The Ultimate Arena* still reigns as supreme champion. It's fast, fun, violent and well worth £20. *stf*

CAVAN SCOTT

Product: Ultimate Arena Falcon
Price: £20 (Upgrades £10)
Contact: STeam, Service Commandes, BP 100, 68220 Hegenheim, France
Min system: Falcon 030, 4Mb, colour monitor and hard disk

STF VERDICT ● STF VERDICT ● STF VERDI

HIGHS

- Play any of the main characters
- New features expand gameplay
- Reasonably priced

LOWS

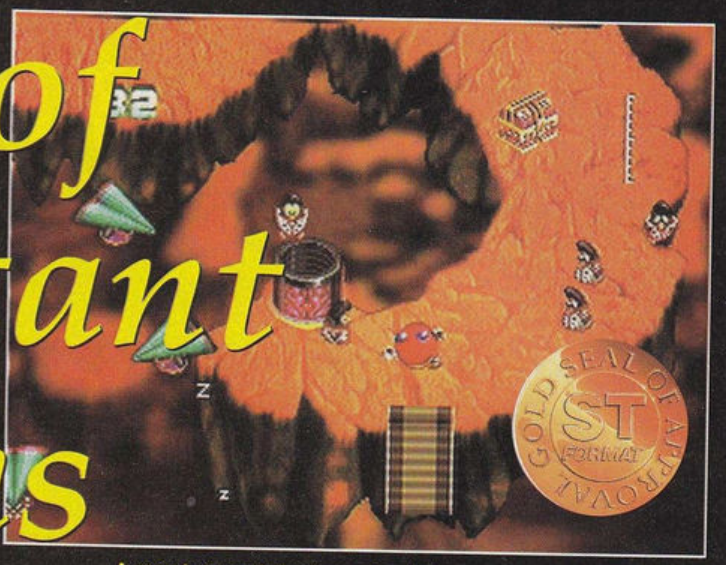
- Visually much the same as the ST version

In short...

Extreme violence was never so much fun, or so painless. Tyson, eat your heart out.

80%

Attack of the Mutant Penguins



A cross between *Lemmings* and a platform game, *Attack of the Mutant Penguins* proves that JTS Atari can get it right if it wants to.

Atari's latest game gives you a new perspective on penguins. You'll never take them seriously again.

Attack of the Mutant Penguins is a game JTS Atari has been getting excited about, and rightly so. Take the best elements of platform games, mix in the addictiveness of *Lemmings*, add a dollop of weirdness and you have the makings of a great game.

Aliens have decided to invade Earth, and their master plan requires that they are disguised as humans. However, when they tune into our television signals to see what we look like, they end up watching a nature program. At the last minute, after they have mutated into penguins, they realise their error. Determined to make the best of a bad job, they dress up in human outfits in the hope no-one will notice.

It begins

And so *AMP* revolves around mutated alien penguins dressed in a strange array of outfits. The only thing that stands in their way is a pair of freelance law enforcers, Bernard and Rodney.

> ***AMP* revolves around mutated alien penguins in strange outfits**

Each level has a theme, such as cowboys and indians, clerics or Elvis. The invaders have a deadly weapon, the Doom Scales, and they need to weigh down the scales to press the Doomsday button. You choose to be either Bernard or Rodney and go into battle armed with your best club (or frying pan) and a collection of devious machines.

Meanwhile, the real penguins are upset at the bad press these upstart mutants are giving them and have decided to help you beat the aliens. If more mutant penguins get to the scales than good penguins, the weapon triggers and it's game over for Earth.

Each level requires you to work out a combination of actions that will allow the good penguins to get to the scales while stopping the mutants. Various chests contain parts of extra weapons, good penguins and other bonus items. To open them you need to collect the blue gremlins and drop them on to the chests.

The game also provides a wonderful collection of death-dealing devices. Some have rotating knives which slice up the mutants as they try to walk past; others grab the bad guys and skewer them on big metal spikes, resulting in a flurry of feathers and gory debris as the victim explodes.

It ends

The different themes result in special tactics for each level. On the Elvis level there are jukeboxes. If you can find a coin and deposit it in the jukebox, music starts to play and any Elvis penguins that pass by have to stop for a boogie, buying you valuable time. Likewise, the cowboy levels have campfires. If you manage to light them, the cowboys sit by the fire, start eating beans and, well, have you ever seen the film *Blazing Saddles?*

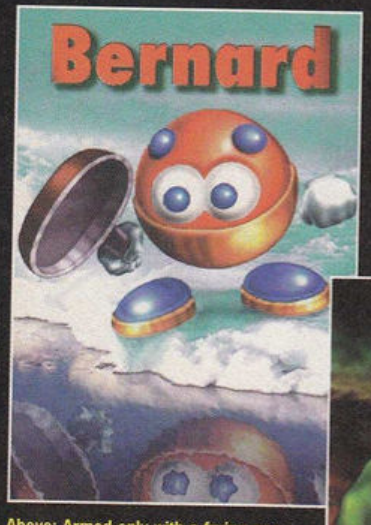
Each completed level results in a random mini-game which can be almost as much fun as the main task at hand.

The first time you play, it can be a little confusing, so JTS Atari has included a tutorial which explains what everything does until you've played a few levels. After that, gameplay continues uninterrupted.

The excellent sprites are so amusing it's often tempting to do things just because the results are funny, rather than because they help you complete the game. The in-game sounds are generally good, but the intro music is terrible.

Attack of the Mutant Penguins can be confusing to start with, but it's worth persevering with. The only real problem is the number of levels: 60 isn't nearly enough when you compare *AMP* to other games of this genre. Nevertheless, if JTS Atari has any sense, it'll be signing up the sequel right now. *stf*

IAIN LASKEY



Above: Armed only with a frying pan, Bernard fights off the mutant penguins. Left: It's hard being handsome.

Product: Attack of the Mutant Penguins
Price: £49.99
Contact: JTS Atari
Tel: 01753 533344
Min system: Jaguar

VERDICT ● STF VERDICT ● STF VI

HIGHS
- Wonderfully amusing graphics
- Fun puzzles

LOWS
- Not enough levels

In short...
Humorous and well drawn, this is one Jaguar game you can't afford to miss.

90%

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OKI ML182/183/192/193/195	3.17	3.02	2.82	2.62

BLACK	1 off	2+	5+	10+
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Seikosha SL90/92/95	5.70	5.55	5.35	5.15
Star LC10/20/100	2.29	2.14	1.94	1.84
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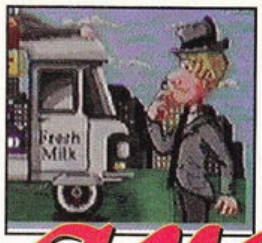


Ain't PD brilliant? With a little help from Frank Charlton, Andy Curtis rounds up loads of great games and utilities that cost next to nowt.

ST Muse

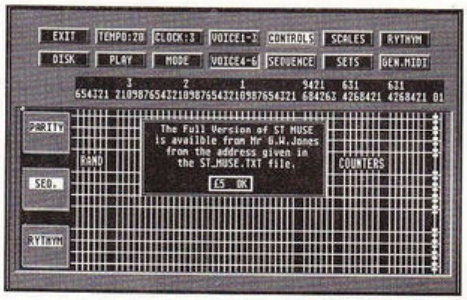
Goodmans, disk GD2773
All STs, low or high res

ST Muse is aimed at the hobbyist MIDI musician who wants to create analogue-style sequencer effects. Written in *GFA Basic 3.5*, it enables you to create repeating patterns of notes which can be modified using a selection of filters. You can also apply random effects.

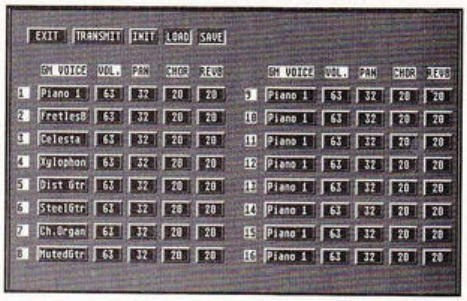
The whole system works on multiple MIDI channels and has built-in General MIDI (GM) compatibility. Easy setup screens enable you to choose GM sounds for each channel. Simply add some notes by clicking on the screen and process away.

Although billed as a full PD release, *ST Muse* is little more than a demo version of the program. If you like it you will need to upgrade to the full version, *ST Muse 2*. Among other things, it enables you to save your creations in GM type 0 or 1 format. *ST Muse 2* only costs £5 if you send the money direct to the author.

STF RATING: 73%

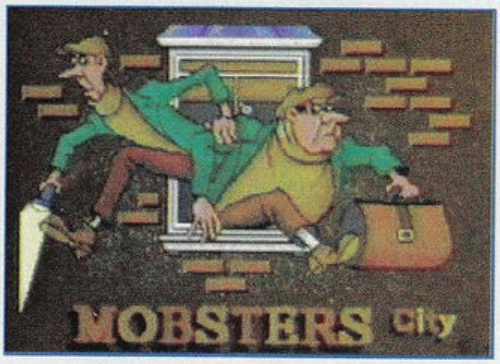


If you fancy creating weird and wonderful analogue-style sequences to use with your MIDI setup, *ST Muse* is well worth a look.



ST Muse works best with a General MIDI synth. Simply set up the sounds you wish to use from this screen.

Mobsters City



Your name is Detective Silly and your job is to root out the gang members and restore justice.

Goodmans, disk GD2778
All Ataris

At last, a full-colour graphical adventure with some of the appeal of *Leisure Suit Larry*. Brought to you by Silly Software, *Mobsters City* offers straightforward gameplay, excellent graphics and reassuringly bad jokes.

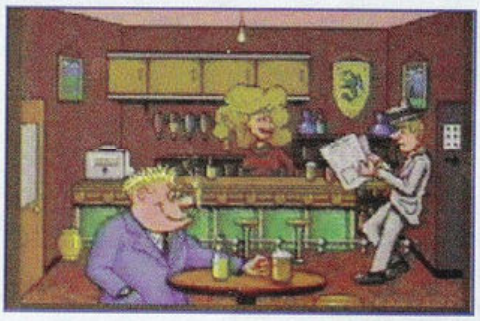
You are Detective Silly and your job is to root out the gangsters hiding away in various towns on your patch. You have to ask a number of questions of every character you encounter, and each has a selection of witty replies. The answers, although unashamedly silly, give you a good idea where to look next.

Each town has a number of locations to visit and, if you manage to stay alive, you can round up the Big Boss at the end of the game and send him to jail. Don't try shooting people just for fun, though, because wanton violence results in your immediate and untimely death.

This is a well-written game with a point-and-click interface that will delight young and old alike. Although it is set in gangland, there are no gruesome blood-and-guts scenes – people die in a polite and cheerful fashion. Even so, it may not be suitable for the youngest players.

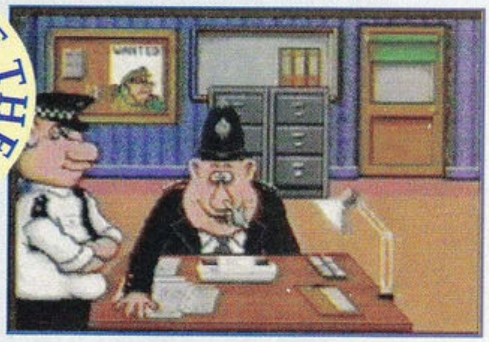
The towns are remarkably similar and there are a great many of them, but the game has plenty to offer. Recommended.

STF RATING: 84%



Be careful when the option to kill people is offered, because you can come to a sticky end if you're too trigger happy.

GAME OF THE MONTH ST FORMAT



Simply click on the person or object you want to interact with. *Mobsters City* is full of dodgy characters.

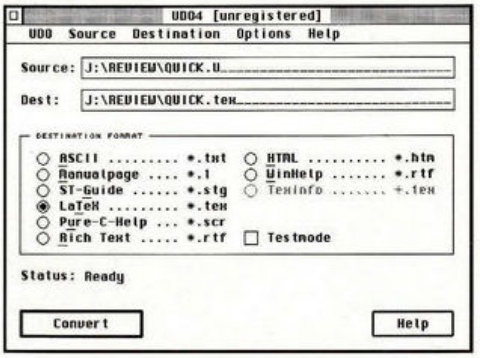
UDO 4

Cover Disk 82
All Ataris and TOS clones

If you need to convert documents into a range of formats, *UDO* may be the answer to your prayers. Despite all the extensive and rather pompous documentation included with the program, it has but one function – to take a text file written in UDO's special syntax and convert it into other document formats. Supported formats include HTML, Rich Text Format (RTF) and *ST Guide* format. Writers of help files and manuals will find it particularly useful.

You will need a good few hours to wade through the manual and all the documentation, though, and be prepared for lots of legal notices and development history. *UDO* takes itself a bit too seriously – it's a document convertor, not a missile guidance system. Nevertheless, its compatibility with absolutely every Atari and Atari clone is to be applauded and the program does its job very well.

STF RATING: 81%

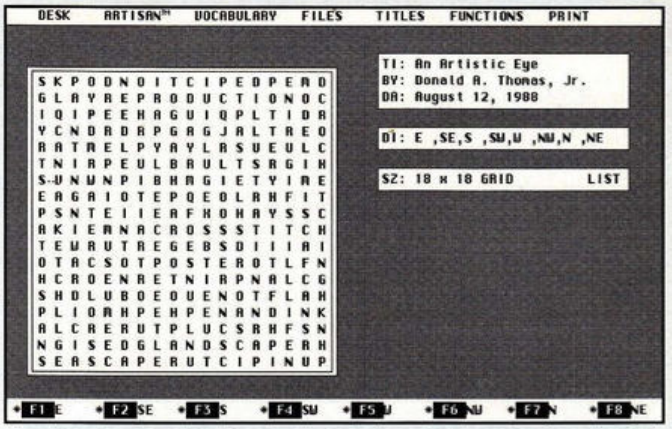


Once you've learnt the special *UDO* text syntax, you can create documents in several common formats automatically.

For a UDO tutorial, see page 45

Word Quest

LAPD, disk G443
All Ataris



Word Quest is just the thing for compiling those annoying word search puzzles.

At home, on the bus, in cafés and almost anywhere you look, there's usually someone with their nose stuck into a word puzzle book, desperately trying to find the hidden words. *Word Quest* enables you to create these puzzles and could be just the thing to add a bit of interest and variety to your newsletters, or to keep your children quiet.

Puzzles can be printed out or saved to disk. If you save them, the result is a plain text file which can be edited or loaded into a DTP package. The printouts from the program itself are very basic.

***Word Quest* was originally available commercially, but is now shareware (send donations from $5–15 direct to Artisan Software).**

STF RATING: 79%

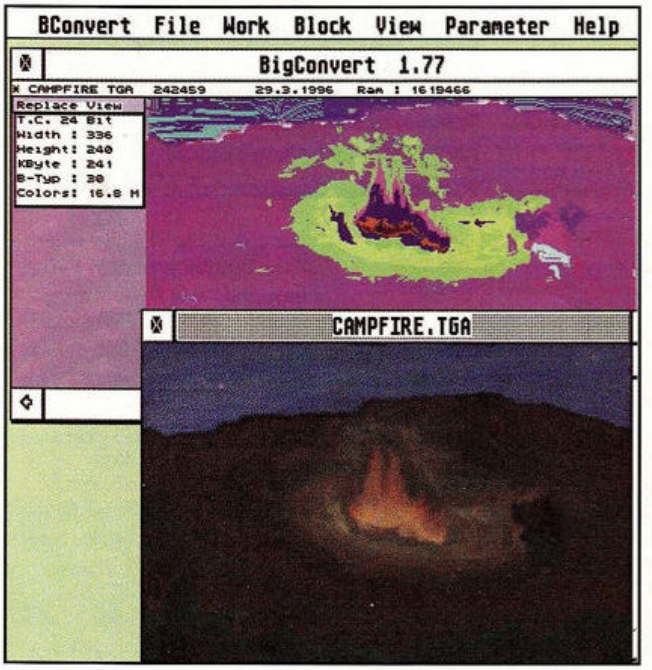
CB Hard Driver

HENSA
All Ataris, hard drive required

This German hard drive formatting and setup software is probably best left alone until an English version comes along. Your hard drive probably came with suitable software, and there's no need to replace it with something which you are unlikely to understand. Clicking and hoping isn't good enough when your precious data is at stake.

Don't experiment with this hard drive utility package unless you are really sure what you are doing.

STF RATING: 0%



We took two picture viewers and loaded the same picture on a Falcon in 256-colour mode. The results for *BConvert* (top) were disappointing...

Big Convert

Goodmans, disk GD2786
All Ataris, 1Mb or more recommended

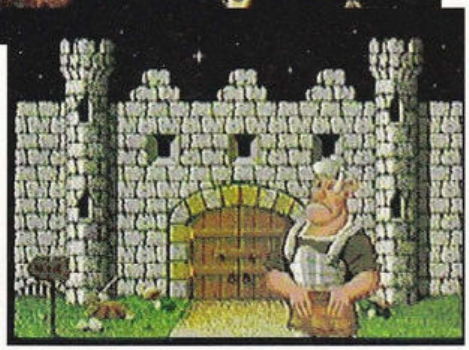
Given the current plethora of picture display and manipulation utilities, *Big Convert* is set to make little or no impact. The program appears to offer some useful functions, including picture conversion and cropping, but there is no English documentation and the actual picture display performance is poor. Even when it is run on a Falcon in 256-colour mode, pictures load in a weird and unnatural selection of colours. Our screen grab shows how badly *BConvert's* effort compares with the same picture loaded into *Imagecopy 3*.

The supported picture types don't include the popular GIF format and there are much better shareware programs available, most notably *GEMView 3* (available from almost all PD libraries). *BConvert* is for determined collectors only.

STF RATING: 57%

Granny's Garden Collection

It's a text adventure set in space, but in granny's garden. Confusing, to be sure, but play it anyway.



Why not fly over to the castle and chat to this fellow? He won't help you, but have a word with him anyway.

Goodmans, disk GD2779
All Ataris (Falcon and TOS 2.06 require *STOSFix 3*)

This disk contains three freeware games, making it excellent value for money. If you auto-boot it in your internal floppy drive a short intro section loads, but you'll need to double-click on the programs from an ST low res desktop to run the games.

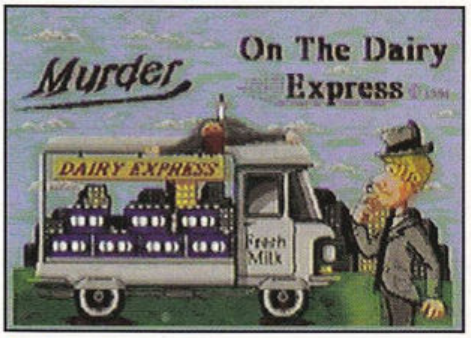
The main program, *Granny's Garden*, is another illustrated text adventure from Silly Software. It's mouse-driven, so you won't have to make random guesses about what to type. You arrive in your spaceship at a city where all the buildings float in the ether, and must fly to the various buildings to deduce your reason for being there and save the day.

Unlike *Mobsters City*, the game doesn't have many 'witty' lines, but there is plenty to explore and plenty of clues to follow. It also has a few off-beat elements, such as the severed foot you are carrying, which reveal the twisted mind of its creator.

It's well worth playing this game just to enjoy the wonderful graphics.

STF RATING: 79%

THE OTHER GAMES...



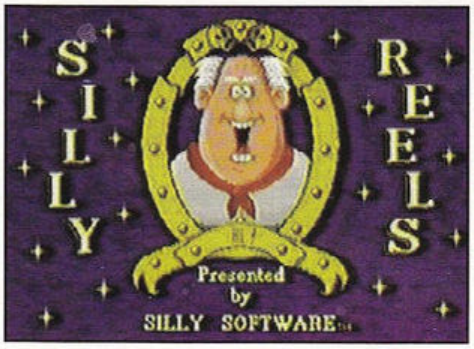
Ignore the constant references to the gerbil, which has nothing to do with the game.

Murder on the Dairy Express

For a pure text adventure to score well, it really has to do something special. Unfortunately, this one doesn't. After the pleasant start-up screen you'll get caught up in the usual business of moving east and west – and then east again. There are always a few exits and something to pick up but it's doubtful whether you will really care who killed the milkman in question.

Another major annoyance is the gerbil. Its activities are reported each time you make a move, but it has nothing to do with the game. It seems the author was as tired of the plot as you will be.

STF RATING: 59%



Here's your chance to waste some time on a fruit machine without losing a stack of 10p coins.

Silly Reels

The third program on the disk is a simple fruit machine game. It has a rather annoying introduction which you cannot bypass, but the game plays very well. The wheels spin convincingly and you can hold and gamble at the appropriate moments.

You start with £4,000 in the kitty and the game obviously isn't true to life, because we ended up with £4,060 after playing for a few minutes. It provides noisy soundchip music rather than fruit machine sounds, but as a (free) disk filler, *Silly Reels* does its job very well.

STF RATING: 67%

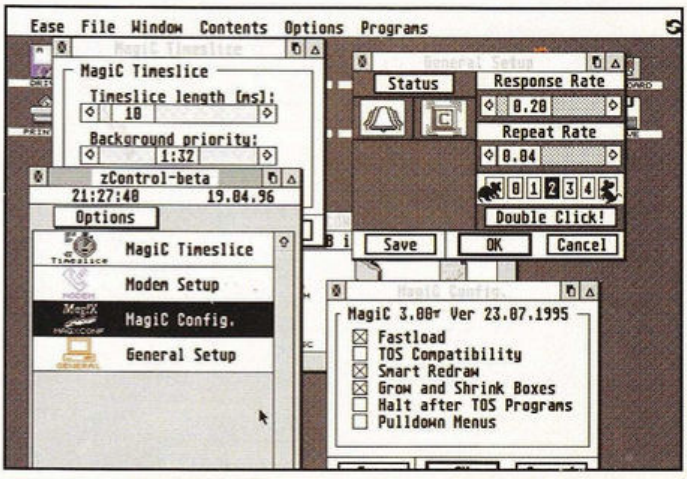
ZControl

HENSA, in /micros/atari/tos
All Ataris, multitasking system recommended

Since Atari gave up updating its software, including the buggy *XControl* panel, we've had to wait for shareware alternatives. *ZControl* is just that: an improved and debugged *XControl* lookalike.

ZControl acts as a host environment for the CPX modules used by its predecessor. Unlike *XControl*, it can have up to four individual CPX windows open simultaneously, and it offers a much improved interface. However, the current version requires a multitasking operating system to work properly as an Accessory, whereas *XControl* runs on all STs.

While it's not a huge improvement over the original, *ZControl* does clean up some bugs in Atari's offering. It is still in development – this is a public beta test version – and could turn into something very useful, particularly when full singletasking support arrives.

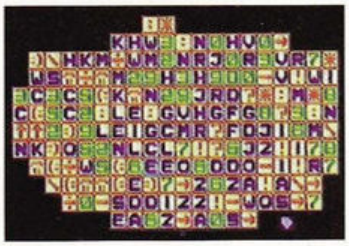


STF RATING: 70%

Look at all those CPX windows. Excited? You need to get out more.

Shrinking Wall Solitaire

LAPD, disk G436
All Ataris, 1Mb required



Shrinking Wall Solitaire is a simple match-the-pairs game, but you won't solve the puzzles without some careful thought.

All you have to do in this puzzle game is match the pairs and clear the grid, but your endeavour is made slightly more complicated by the grid's insistence on shrinking to cover the removed pieces. Only pieces directly next to each other can be paired – diagonal moves are not permitted.

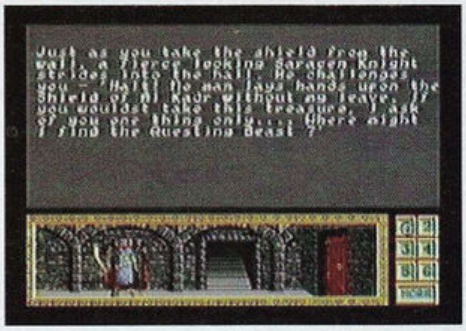
The author has included a wide range of grid sizes and levels of complexity and all his programmed grids are solvable. If you get stuck and want another go, just press [R] to start the grid again. There's also a randomise feature, but it may produce unsolvable puzzles, so it's better to stick to the programmed games if you like to win. Then again, it's the taking part that counts.

This is a well-executed but simple game which will amuse you for days. A clock for timing games would be nice, but the program is well worth having and playing as it is. Solving the larger puzzles by logical deduction takes some serious brain power.

STF RATING: 80%

Flipping the Lid

Was it really worth an extra disk just for some sampled music at the beginning? We think not.



Goodmans, disk GD2771
All Ataris (Falcon and TOS 2.06 require *STOSFix 3*)

***Flipping The Lid* is a text-based adventure with some well-drawn illustrations. It comes on two disks, one of which mostly contains sampled intro music.**

The game is set in the gallant days of knights and damsels in distress, so the title seems a little inappropriate. It's the usual stuff: you have to pick up the right objects, look at the right things and go west at the right moment.

You'll need to start again a few times before you discover exactly what you can and cannot pick up. Most things will help you, but some items, such as a shield early on, will herald your untimely death.

***Flipping the Lid* lacks the gloss and humour of *Mobsters City* but the game works well and will keep you in trouble for a few hours.**

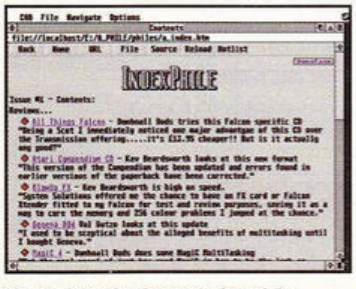
STF RATING: 71%

AtariPhile 1

Falcon FacTT File
All Ataris, 1 Mb required for *CAB*

The latest project from the Falcon FacTT File user group, *AtariPhile* is a disk magazine aimed at all Atari users, including those with STs rather than TTs or Falcons. Eschewing the popular *STOS* interface beloved of disk magazine editors, *AtariPhile* arrives in HTML format, along with a copy of *CAB*.

Like the Falcon FacTT Files's previous disk newsletters, *AtariPhile* reaches a very high standard. You won't find any of the juvenile sensibility that pervades some other amateur publications here, or any of the colourful metaphors used in an attempt to be hip. *AtariPhile* is a well designed, easy-to-read publication that is surprisingly fresh and up to the minute, as demonstrated by the reviews of *MagiC 4* and the *All Things Falcon* CD-ROM. The writing is generally of high quality, and displays a sense of humour without degenerating into banality.



You don't need to be a member of the Falcon FacTT File to read its latest missives.

STF RATING:93%

PD & SHAREWARE ROUND-UP

Yep, it's our ever-so-useful round-up of the best PD and shareware releases from the past four months. If you want to know more than the score, though, turn to page 50 and order a back issue.

TITLE	PD LIBRARY	TYPE	ISSUE	RATING
Let's Spell 1st 500 Words Intro	Goodmans	Utility	82	96%
Warp 4	Keefy	Diskmag	80	94%
EKO System Demo	Falcon Owner's Group	Falcon demo	81	94%
Isle of Glass	Goodmans	Game	80	92%
Deadland	Merlin PD	Game	79	91%
PicScan 2.7e	LAPD	Graphics utility	79	90%
Internet Access Pack 1.15	HENSA	Internet utility	79	90%
PacShell 2.62	Goodmans	Archiver shell	80	90%
Space Monsters	Goodmans	Game	80	90%
Two-in-One 1.51e	Wonder Disk 81	Archiver shell	81	90%
Michigan Mike	LAPD	Game	82	89%
ToDo 1.01	Hensa	Organiser	82	89%
Nishiram	LAPD	Game	81	89%
Songz 1.90	HENSA	Music database	81	89%
Falcon STOS Extensions	Floppyshop	Falcon STOS	78	88%
AstroGuide 4	Goodmans	Astronomy utility	81	88%
Nova 9	James Bird	Diskmag	79	87%
Thing Backgrounds	Ad.Lib	IMG files for Thing	79	85%
Zorg 2.01	LAPD	Disk utility	80	85%
Towers 1.5	LAPD	Game	79	84%
Third Dimension 20	Floppyshop	Diskmag	79	83%
Train Set 2	Goodmans	Game	80	83%
Paula 2.4	Goodmans	MOD player	79	82%
Route Finder 2.2	Wonder Disk 80	Route planner	80	82%
Rollercoaster Experience	Goodmans	Game demo	81	82%
Look and See	Hensa	Graphics utility	82	81%
Pack CDK	Goodmans	Calamus utility	79	81%
List Font 2.1	FaST Club	Font utility	81	81%
Annex	LAPD	Game	81	80%

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We also run a comprehensive PD and Shareware library - disks cost from £1 each - as well as publishing a wide range of sensibly priced commercial software and books. Some of our best sellers are: Imagecopy, Fonty, Address, Calamus Assistant, First Word and Timeworks Publisher Users' Guides, Fontkit Plus, Ultimate Virus Killer, UIS, View II, and Warp 9.

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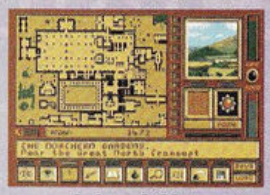
Space Monsters



Isle of Glass

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GD2712 Space Monsters	GD2283 ST Globe	GD1925 Word Finder
GD2659 H.E.R.O.	GD2542 Funtime 1&2	GD2064 Route Finder
GD2651 Magic Darts	GD2299 Laborant Pro	GD2318 Grocery Lister
GD2609 World Of Henry	GD1029 GCSE Maths	GD2477 The Financier

The above selection is only a small example of what is available. Our printed Shareware Guide is now over 250 pages, with screen shots and descriptions for hundreds of disks of all that's best in Public Domain and Shareware for the Atari computer, including all the latest utilities and applications. So if you want the best, discover why thousands of users worldwide have for over eight years chosen Goodman's, send for our catalogue today.

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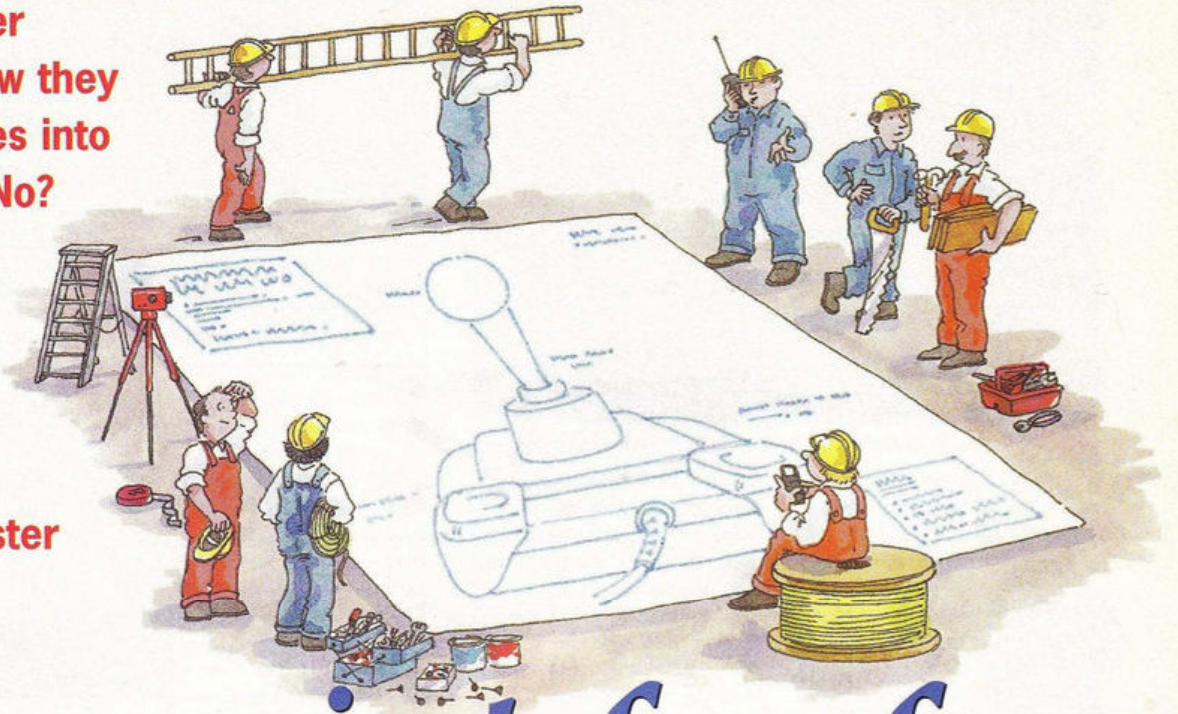
The ST Club	34	01159 455250
The Upgrade Shop	19	01625 503448

Have you ever wondered how they get the stripes into toothpaste? No? Then maybe you've wondered how games are created. Simon Forrester explains.



Blueprint for fun

Games are the most influential driving force behind any home computer. The ST and Falcon were originally designed for leisure applications, because that's the main selling point for home users.

If you're a keen game player, chances are you've thought about creating a game of your own. However fond you are of your favourite title, there's always something that could be improved. Why on earth did the programmer use such-and-such a key, or put the bonus there, or use that strange colour-cycling effect? Any fool knows...

Ah, but it's easy to create a perfect game in your head. Unfortunately, it isn't quite so easy to write one. A word processor only has to shunt text around the screen, and any extra functions simply involve manipulating or analysing that text in memory.

Spreadsheets and databases work in the same way – they display simple text models on screen, perform straightforward calculations and occasionally access disks.

Games, on the other hand, are far more complex – the material they display on screen has to be fast, smooth and graphically pleasing. Their calculations work on a deeper level, too. Whereas a spreadsheet does the bulk of the clever work when the user hits the Calculate button, a game has to keep checking where the sprites are, how they're moving and whether they've collided. It must also monitor everything else on the screen and work out how it affects the player, while maintaining a constant speed and screen update to avoid getting a bad review, peppered with the words 'slow' and 'down'.

It's easy to create a perfect game in your head. It isn't so easy to write one

The other big problems are that a spreadsheet doesn't have to be fun, and a lot of the design is left to the user. When you're writing a game, the design of each level, the challenges held within it and the abilities of the player's character are up to you, and the end result has to be challenging, provoking and entertaining.

Over the next two months, we'll be taking an in-depth look at designing and implementing your own computer game. This month we'll be dealing with the design aspect, because before you think about programming you have to have a game to code.

You need to decide exactly what kind of game you're planning to write. There are several different distinct game styles, including forced scrolling, platform and simulation. You'll find more information about each type in the

SCROLLING GAMES

Forced-scrolling games are those where the player has no control over direction. Classic examples include *Space Invaders* and driving games. These games are fairly easy to design because you already know the path the player will take. All you have to do is arrange obstacles. If you already have a good scrolling routine, these are ideal first projects. They're straightforward to design, but can still be complex and involving for the player.

The *Dizzy* games feature logical problem-solving platform action, but suffer from some pedantic gameplay rules.

Killing Impact plays like a dream, moves like an eagle and steers like a cow.

panels elsewhere on these pages. Your first task, then, is to come up with an idea for a game...

Dream

The first qualification you need to design games is experience. Ideally you should be able to say: "I've played hundreds of them." What type of game do you enjoy the most? With any luck, you'll know exactly what kind of game you want to create. If you're going to spend several months designing, coding and tweaking you'll do well to work on a game type you enjoy. Whatever you decide, ask the following questions:

- **Is my idea easy to understand?** One of the (few) pluses of *Escaping from the Castle of Mystery* (*STF* 82, 20%) was that each part of the game was instantly understandable. The tasks weren't always simple, but the player knew what to do. Conversely, *Kryptonite Data* (page 26) starts with the player wandering aimlessly around the playing area.
- **Is my idea attractive?** Although *Castle of Mystery* players knew what they had to do, the idea didn't capture the imagination.
- **Does the player have incentives?** There has to be a point to playing – fruit machine games are fairly pointless because they always do the same things and don't give out any cash. Be it a gradually increasing difficulty curve or new levels, there has to be a reason for playing, and a reward for playing well.

Drawing board

Though we can break the different aspects of game design up into distinct sections, they're interrelated – your level designs are dependent on the puzzles you want to include, which in turn are related to the abilities of your player's character. These abilities are linked to the player's control system.

There has to be a reason for playing, and a reward for playing well

Control system

The first thing you have to worry about is exactly how the player is to control their character. The recent highly-rated *Killing Impact* (*STF* 77, 85%), stuck to the *Joust* control system. This leads to problems when the player collects extra power-ups, because the ST's joystick only has one button.

If you give the player too many extra abilities, they won't be able to control them all with the joystick. *Killing Impact*'s answer was for the player to hold down [Fire], pull the joystick in a direction and then release the fire button. This wasn't the best solution, because it made it difficult to use a mine or laser quickly, throwing you into scrapes unfairly. When you're designing the characters and playing environment, remember the players are coping with eight possible directions and a fire button.

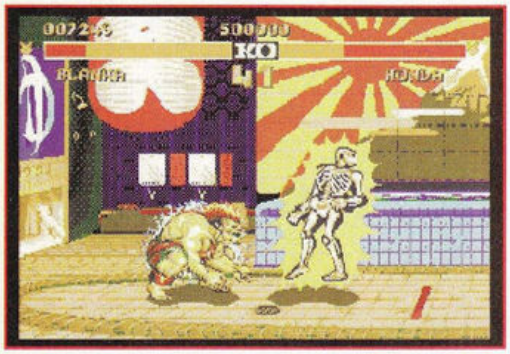
Street Fighter 2 came up with a novel solution to the control problem: the player achieves special moves using a series of joystick waggles. To throw a fireball, for example, you push down, down-right, and right (in sequence), then hit fire. These moves are a balance between fluidity and obscurity – they work in circular sweeps and use natural movements but they're obscure enough not to be used accidentally. Part of the challenge of the game is the mastery of these moves, which push the player's speed and dexterity to the limits.

On the other end of the scale, *SubStation* and *Frontier* rely on the keyboard because the player has a lot to control. There's nothing wrong with this as long as your game warrants it – *SubStation* players rely on sidesteps, weapon changes and so on, and there's a limit to how much you can cram on to a joystick.

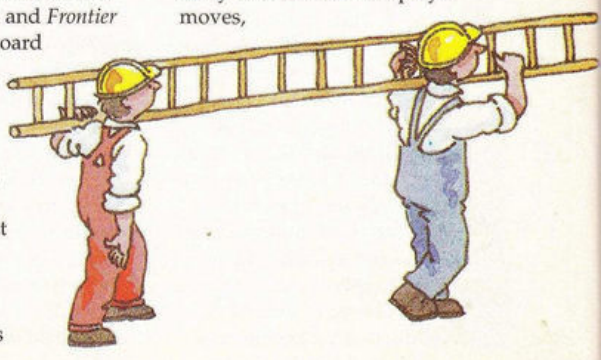
The increased complexity is a result of the designers' attempts at realism. In a game involving hiding behind walls, strafing through doorways and dodging enemies, the more sidesteps, fast turns and dodges the player can use, the better. It takes a long time for the player to become used to all this, but if your keyboard layout is reasonably natural and the initial gameplay doesn't require complete mastery of the controls, the interface soon becomes transparent. If you can avoid the keyboard, though, do so.

Player abilities

So what abilities should your player have? If you're writing a flight sim or driving game, you'll already know the answer. The same applies for scrolling shoot-'em-ups – it's fairly obvious how the player moves,

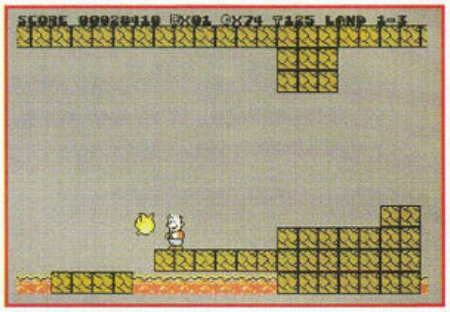


Street Fighter 2's special moves, which are activated by complex joystick waggling, test the player's speed and dexterity.



PLATFORM GAMES

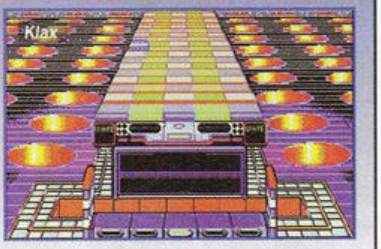
Platform games have always been popular on the ST. Whether it's the classic jumping-about-and-killing formula of *Magic Boy* or the more complicated, explore-'em-up elements of *HERO*, a platformer is easy to get to grips with because it invariably involves a person fighting gravity. Platform games tend to rely on timing puzzles and reflexive action, but the more problem-solving elements you can include in your game, the better.

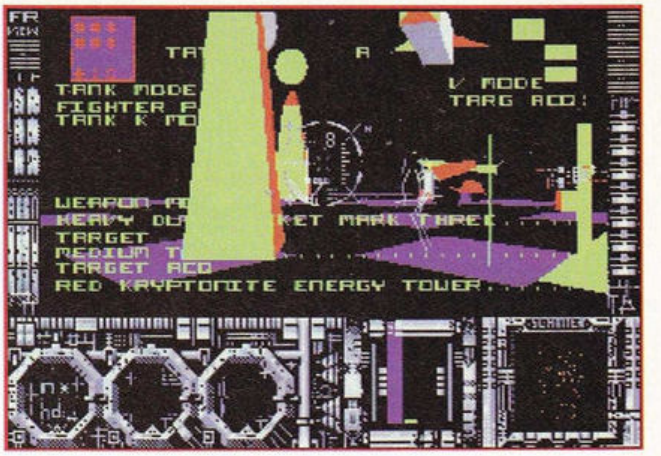


The platform game *STarioLand* doesn't have many secret areas, but it's still a lot of fun to play.

ABSTRACTIONS

And then come the abstract games, a genre encompassing the legions of puzzle games and weirder titles such as *Vaccine* and *E-motion*. If you come up with a completely novel idea for a game, code it immediately – the author of *Tetris* is currently lying by a pool in a sunny part of the USA.





Turn back to page 26 to read this month's review of *Kryptonite Data*.

so only the weaponry needs to be considered.

Weapons are important in action games – if the player is expected to kill things, it's your job to provide the means. Each new weapon should have a new use. For example, *SubStation* gives the player a knife as well as a gun. Unfortunately, its weaponry from then on all follows the same pattern, getting more powerful without becoming more diverse. Where were the ultra-powerful, open-spaces-only rocket launcher and the bouncing grenades?

Similarly, you can't drop someone into a war zone without allowing them to duck. *HERO* is an excellent example of a game with an easily-controlled but flexible character who'll co-operate with the joystick and act fairly intelligently. STario can duck, and fall for miles without getting hurt, but Dizzy, who lived in a world peppered with large drops and trampolines, suffered concussion every time he fell more than half a screen.

Level design

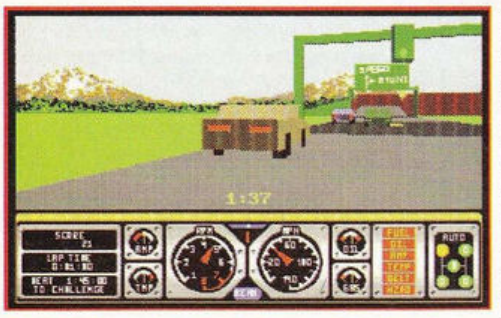
Once you've created your characters, you need to give them an environment to play in. You'll have to fit this world smoothly into an ST, so bear in mind the technical demands of this process.

Each level must have both a start point and an obvious goal. Always remember that the player doesn't know what is around the next corner. If Mr A Perfectgamer walks up to your game, he should be able to complete it without losing a life, because there'll be a logical, perfect solution to every problem. Even the nasty surprises should be fair. If a piece of floor that looks like every other piece of floor suddenly drops away without shaking a little first, giving the player no chance to jump away, he or she has every right to track down the designer and beat him up.

Mr A Perfectgamer should be able to complete it without losing a life

It's wise to only design one level before you start programming, because that's when you'll discover all the glitches. You can then iron out the bugs before creating the rest of the levels.

Try not to make the gameplay too linear. Everybody approaches a problem in a different way, and if you deny players the chance to be creative, they'll hate you. It's also a good idea to put several paths into any level, a feature unfortunately missing from *STarioLand*. Providing more than one path makes the game more enjoyable to play (there's a point to exploring) and increases its lifetime. Players can complete the game several times, finding new things to explore, new routes to take and entertaining new challenges when they go through each level a second time.



***Hard Drivin'*, a car simulation that has you doing loops, jumps and ramps with relative ease.**

Problemo

So, what do these levels contain? There are three main types of obstacle:

- **Enemies:** Whether they're fighters in a beat-'em-up, ships in a scrolling shoot-'em-up or swordsmen in the excellent platformer *Prince of Persia*, enemies provide the challenge in most games. In order to progress, the player must defeat these foes using the controls you gave them. In a beat-'em-up, these controls are specific to fighting, whereas games like *STario* have the player jump on the enemy's head using their normal directional controls.
- **Logistical puzzles:** At the other end of the scale you'll find games like Dongleware's *Oxyd* which, despite being essentially action-based, gets its challenge from puzzles rather than co-ordination. The game features you, as a small black crystal, playing pairs with blocks. You must navigate switches, collapsing floors, lasers, doors, sliding blocks and all manner of other objects in a bid to match the shapes.
- **Reflex tests:** The third type of in-game challenge comes from reflexive puzzles. Usually the goal is to survive rather than win, and these tests tax the player's timing abilities rather than their logical skills. For example, driving simulators call for reflexive control of the car.

Time to program

By now, you should have a good idea what your game needs to be: challenging, involving and fun. Next month we'll be explaining how to take the game from paper to the computer screen.

stf

SIMULATIONS

Eek – sims are almost always 3D and usually involve the player's ability to roam the game world freely. They are therefore difficult to design. Flight sims, for example, can't rely on problem-solving because the player can fly around obstacles. Like most sims, they are mainly foe-based. From a design angle, you must also take care to give the player clearly defined goals – they may not be stuck to following any clear path or route, but they must always know where they're going.

Alternatively, games like our Jag competition entry *Sub Aqua* (see page 38) combine a 3D system with shoot-'em-up-style weaponry. As with all game ideas, the possibilities and permutations are endless...

If you decide to write a simulator of any kind, be careful – they nearly always require large amounts of keyboard-based control. *SubStation* and *Frontier* neatly illustrate the point.

Won a Jaguar!

Who has won the Atari Jaguar? Who has won £100 worth of LAPD shareware? Read on...

Way back in the mists of issue 78 we gave you the chance to win Atari's next gen console, the Jaguar, courtesy of LAPD. All you had to do to get your hands on this luvverly piece of kit was perform the phenomenally simple task of, erm, writing a computer game. Yes.

Of course, we couldn't simply give away one prize. A quick phone call to LAPD ensured the two runners-up £100 and £75 worth of goodies from the *ST FORMAT* PD Library of the Year (1995).

Atari Jaguar

1st And now, live from the Academy, we present the award for best computer game written at tragically short notice:

Gordon Storey for *Michigan Mike*

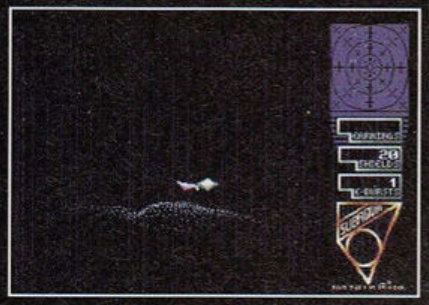
Already reviewed in issue 82's PD & Shareware section, *Michigan Mike* is a platform game that follows all the rules – it's fun, interesting, large and, above all, almost insanely difficult. The game follows our hero, an adventurer in the era of Indiana Jones (erm, 1934), who becomes separated from the rainforest expedition and has to appease the god Zorog for upsetting the Ohla tribe. This involves an assortment of doors, keys, puzzles, roving bad guys and reflex problems, all of which combine to make a winning game. Write to LAPD for a copy. Today.

£100 at LAPD

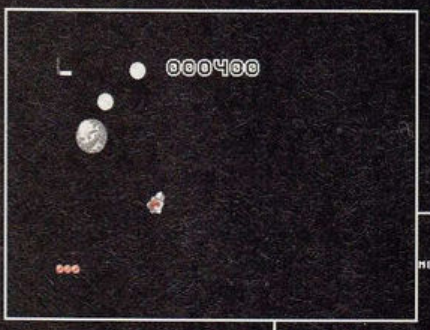
2nd The second prize, for innovation in the face of an over-innovated field, goes to...

Jon Lewis for *Sub Aqua*

Sub Aqua is a weird little game, closely reminiscent of Braben's *Zarch/Virus 3D* shoot-'em-up. Swapping filled polygons for a fractal surface, the game gives you mouse control of a little underwater craft (hence the name). You must rid a fluid-filled planet of alien craft, claim the rich mineral resource as your own. The game combines a simple control system with the stuff sims are made of: intelligent enemy, dog-fights, scanners and scary landscapes. Top stuff.



Sub Aqua: messing around in an underwater boat.



Astro 2000 provides simple, straightforward, shoot-'em-up fun.

Ross McNaughton came quite near the mark with *Empire Star*, but it didn't have enough detail to be a winner.

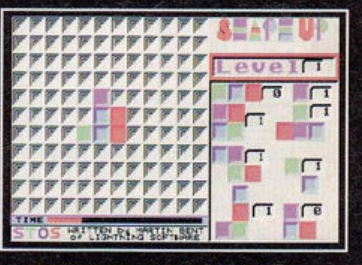
Gordon Storey's platformer shows what can be done with *GFA*. Now all we have to do is get Michigan Mike home safely...

£75 at LAPD

3rd The third prize, for recognition of a classic, goes to...

Simon Scott for *Astro 2000*

Yeah, so *Asteroids* has been done before, but few have had the chance to experience the Falcon's *Astroidia*. Recognising this fact, Simon has produced a modest version of one of the original video games, incorporating wrap-around action with replenishable shields and tougher asteroids. He wins more PD than you can shake a zirquon-encrusted stick at. Well done, Simon and, indeed, Jon and Mike. *stf*



An honourable mention for Martin Bent, author of the only puzzle game entered in the competition, *Shape Up*.

45 SECONDS

We wish to thank:

- LAPD, for generously sponsoring this competition
- All the people who took part
- Our publisher, for employing us (then again...)
- The staff of *arcane*, for not quite pushing us out of what used to be *our* office
- The sandwich man... (Loud music drowns out remainder of speech). The winning titles are available from LAPD (☎ 01773 761944).

ST Answers

Mary has a Greek suntan and Nick has a Welsh raintan. Meanwhile, Frank Charlton and Mac Marsden slave away to bring relief to bothered users everywhere.

Atari's ill-fated ST Book, the portable ST that never was. Shame.

BY THE BOOK

Q I have read about the ST Book in past issues of *ST FORMAT*, but I can't find anywhere that sells them. Can you please tell me where I can get one, and how much it will cost me?
Jason Smith, Bristol

A *The ST Book was Atari's successor to the portable STacy, but was never released properly. Some models did apparently go on sale in Europe, but we didn't see any over here before Atari dropped it. They're quite rare, and occasionally turn up for sale as second-hand – but it's a long time since we came across one.*

Sadly, it seems the only real option for someone who wants a portable ST-compatible computer is an Apple Macintosh Powerbook running the MagiCMac *operating system (STF 77, 75%).*

DODGY DMA

Q I recently purchased a secondhand 1Mb STE and I have a few questions for you:

1 What is the best monitor for displaying all three of the ST's screen modes? 2 Although my STE says its TOS is copyright 1989 (and should therefore be TOS 1.62, I believe), I am unable to save the DESKTOP.INF with the screen preference set to medium resolution. Does this mean I actually have TOS 1.6?

3 What exactly are CPX programs? 4 I intend to buy a hard drive. I have read that there is a design fault in the STE's DMA circuitry that can lead to data corruption. Is this fault found on all STE machines? If it isn't, which STEs are affected?
Peter Hall, Kent

A *Welcome to the ST, Peter. As for your questions:* 1 *The only monitor capable of displaying the colour low and medium resolutions as well as the high-resolution monochrome mode is a multisync monitor. Standard colour monitors work with a screen refresh rate of either 50 or 60Hz, while a dedicated mono monitor refreshes at 70Hz for a rock-solid display. To display all three resolutions, a monitor must be able to sense and adapt to the incoming rate – hence multisync, or multiple synchronisation. Try First Computers on ☎ 0113 2319444 – it sells the excellent Microvitec 1438 model for £275.*

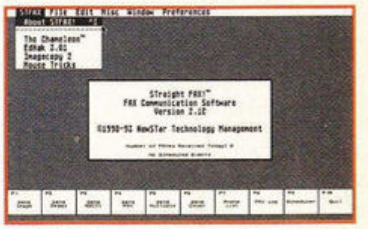
2 *Yep, you've got the older bugged version of TOS 1.6. There are any number of patches available to correct this problem, so check with any of the PD libraries advertising in* ST FORMAT.

3 *A CPX is a Control Panel eXtension – a small program designed to run with Atari's* XControl *enhanced Control Panel accessory. They're usually small programs designed to configure a larger program, such as the setup CPXs which come with* MagiC *and* NVDI. *Again, any PD library should be able to provide you with* XControl *and a decent set of CPX files. Floppyshop in particular has a good selection.*

4 *It wasn't a design fault so much as a bad batch of DMA chips which caused this problem. Atari stated a long time ago that all faulty machines had been successfully recalled and repaired, so you should have no reason to worry. We've only come across one machine since Atari's announcement, anyway.*

A FACSIMILE

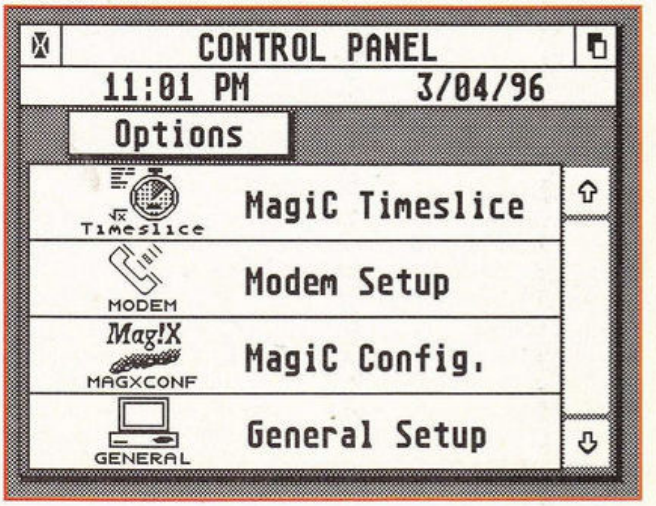
Q I recently obtained a secondhand fax machine and I was wondering if I could use it as a full-page scanner. If so, could I connect it to my computer via a modem, then save the data to disk for printing and so on?
Stephen Rogers, Cornwall



STraight FAX can save fax messages as standard IMG files, so you could conceivably scan images by sending yourself faxes.

A *It's conceivable, yes. You could use the fax machine to scan a document in, then fax it to yourself. You'd need a fax modem and some fax software for your ST.* STraight FAX 2 *(£69.95 from First Computer Centre, ☎ 0113 2319444) is the most flexible package. It can save incoming faxes to disk as standard IMG picture files, so it does the job – in a fashion. In theory, you should also be able to hook the fax machine directly to the modem. We don't have the facilities to try this, though, so we can't say for sure whether it works in practice.*

Bear in mind, though, that the scanning heads built into most fax machines are relatively



CPX programs are often replacements for Desk Accessories. As you can only have six Accessories loaded at once, CPXs are generally more convenient.

HISOFT C CENTRE with Mac Marsden

If you have any questions or would like a particular subject covered, write to: HiSoft C Centre, *ST FORMAT*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW, or send an e-mail to: mac.marsden@dial.pipex.com

PANEL ONE

```
/* example to get a keypress and display it on screen */
main()
{
    char key1,key2;
/* Here we could have declared key1 & key2 as int or short */
/* the end result would be the same */
/* key pressed key values */
key1 = evnt_keybd();
    key2 = evnt_keybd();
/* Display characters */
    putchar(key1);
    putchar(key2);
/* wait for any key to be pressed to end program */
    evnt_keybd();
}
```

SILLY ME!

Q I am just getting into *HiSoft C* and would like to ask a silly question. How can I wait for one key to be pressed and then print this character on the screen?
Mark Harrison, Dover

A *Mark, there is no such thing as a silly question in programming. The answer lies in the statements* `evnt_keybd()` *and* `putchar()`. *You make the computer wait until a key is pressed using the line:*

```
key1 = evnt_keybd()
```

The value of the key pressed will then be held in the variable* `key1`. *To display this on screen you add the line:

```
putchar(key1);
```

I have included a listing (Panel One) to show you how to set up the function. Before everyone writes in saying 'I don't do it that way,' let me point out that the above is just one possible solution.

ASCII ANOTHER

Q I would like to display the ASCII characters, but I haven't a clue how to start. Could you please help?
Martyn James, Dunbar, Scotland

A *Martyn, I am happy to oblige. The listing in Panel Two (right) should help you.*

DON'T CURSE ME

Q I want to manipulate the cursor to make it invisible, stop it flashing and so on. Does *HiSoft C* have a command that will help me do this?
Christian Simpson, Hull

A *Christian, the statement you are looking for is:*

```
Cursconf(period, attribute)
```

which sets the cursor attributes. The options are:

Attribute	Action
0	The cursor is invisible
1	The cursor is displayed
2	Flashing cursor
3	Non-flashing cursor
4	Set the flash period
5	Returns the current flash period

You use this command as follows:

```
int ret, period, attribute;
ret = Curconf(period, attribute);
```

low resolution, so the resulting image isn't all that good. We recommend you use the fax machine as it was intended and look for a good hand scanner instead – the quality will be much better.

DOOM, GLOOM

Q I'm experiencing Jaguar problems and I hope you can help me find the cause. When I am playing *Doom*, the map mode is cutting off the bottom of the status bar. Also the sound of an opening door can occasionally be heard when strafing, and I'm reasonably sure that this isn't a manifestation of one of the game's 'secrets'. Assuming the cartridge was faulty, I returned it for a replacement. However, the new copy again exhibits the same faults.

More recently, the same game crashed between levels, giving out a continuous high-pitched tone and displaying a black screen with vertical and diagonal lines. I only managed to clear the system by switching it off and on again. I have a couple of other games and they seem fine. Can you enlighten me as to what the problem might be?
Rob Torr, Ilford

A *A faulty cartridge would be my first assumption, too. It is possible you have another faulty one – there could have been a bad batch manufactured, and another copy from the same retailer could contain the same fault, if it was from the same batch.*

On a more practical note, try cleaning the metal edge connectors on both the Jaguar itself and the cartridge. Make sure your machine is disconnected from the mains – this is very important – and use a cotton bud dipped in a little isopropyl alcohol (from any chemist) to rub the connectors carefully. Sometimes bits of dirt can cause an improper connection, leading to odd faults.

If all else fails, we can only suggest you contact JTS Atari (☎ 01753 533344) and see if its technical support people can help.

CD OR NOT CD?

Q Is it possible to link a PC CD-ROM drive to my Mega ST 4, and how do I do it? If so, can I then play PC CD-ROM games and other PC software on my ST?
David Knight, Bristol

A *Yes and no, David. You can connect a PC CD-ROM drive to your ST, but doing so won't turn it into a PC. This means that while you can get at the files on PC CD-ROMs, you won't be able to run any programs on them. They're designed for the Intel processors used by PCs rather than the Motorola 68000 series. You can, however, access lots of PC CDs containing clip-art, sound samples and so forth.*

Note also that PC CD-ROM drives are usually IDE rather than SCSI, so you'll need an IDE interface to connect the two together. Coincidentally, if you turn to page 21 you'll see System Solutions has just released a device that enables you to connect an IDE CD-ROM to any ST via the cartridge port. Thankfully, it's rather splendid.

GFA WORKSHOP with Mac Mar

If you have any questions for Mac, write to: GFA Workshop, *ST FORMAT*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. If you are connected to the Internet, an e-mail to: mac.marsden@dial.pipex.com will get through more quickly.

BREAK OUT OF HERE!

Q I have been programming in *GFA Basic* for a while now and have written a few small programs. Is there any way in which I can stop anyone using the 'three-finger salute' to exit my programs? I know this is a small point but I would like to be able to control the way people use and exit my programs.
Joseph McCluskey, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham

A *Joseph, you will need to place one of the following commands at the beginning of your program code:*

- `ON BREAK GOSUB proc`

(where* `proc` *is your defined procedure). When the user presses [Control]+[Alternate]+[Delete] your program will jump to this procedure. You could display a message telling the user the keys have been disabled or, if you're feeling mean, put in a very long delay and make them wait and wait and wait.

- `ON BREAK CONT`

will simply ignore the keypress.* `ON BREAK` *turns the 'normal break' option back on.

To give you an idea of how it works, I have included a small example program opposite:

PANEL TWO

```
/* Example program to display the ASCII character set */
main()
{
/* Declare for loop variable */
    int ascset;
/* Start for loop 32 to 255 */
    for (ascset = 0; ascset < 256; ascset++)
    {
/* Display character */
    putchar(ascset);
/* Only allow 16 characters to be displayed on each line */
    if ascset % == 16 )
/* Move down one line */
    printf"\n");
}
/* wait for keypress to end program */
    evnt_keybd();
}

status = Cconis();
```

MONITOR ME

Q I need to monitor a key being pressed, but do not require any keyboard value to be kept. How do I do this?
Barry Ives, Nottingham

A *Barry, the command your require is* `Cconis();`. *It will return -1 if a character has been typed on the keyboard and 0 if no key has been pressed. You use this command as follows:*

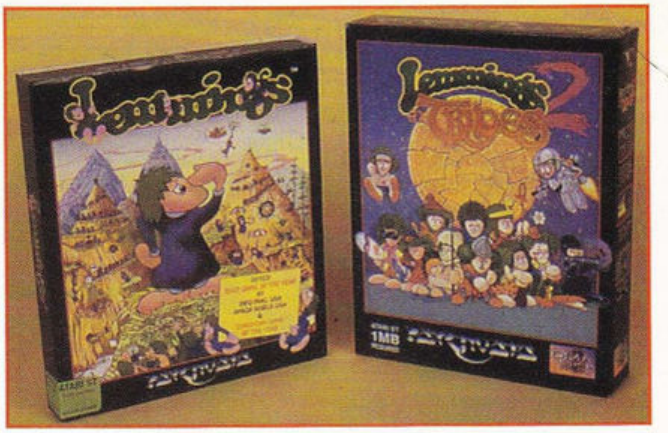
```
int status;
status=Cconis();
```

LITTLE GEM

Q I've written a program using the ROM cartridge version of *FaST BASIC*, then turned it into a standalone PRG file using the supplied *TAGGER* software. It works well if I run it from the Desktop, but I really need it to auto-boot on startup.

However, as yet I'm unable to make this happen.

I've tried putting the program into an Auto folder but, although the program seems to load into memory, it crashes or produces a garbled display. It seems the Desktop is not being initialised correctly. Is my analysis correct, or do you have another explanation?
Jamie Fraser, Derbyshire



Pesky little lemmings get almost everywhere – but not on some Falcons, apparently.

A *You're right about the Desktop not being initialised, Jamie. Any programs placed in the Auto folder run before your ST runs GEM, so they can't make use of such GEM functions as menu bars, file selectors or the mouse.*

If your program avoids GEM and outputs text using the standard TOS text console, it'll work. If you're not using any GEM commands, it could be that FaST BASIC *is compiling the program with the GEM libraries anyway, causing the crash. Check to see if the compiler enables you to turn off GEM mode.*

Failing that, there are ways to auto-start GEM programs. If you have TOS 1.6 or above, you do this via the Install Application dialog box. If you have an older version of TOS, check this month's Cover Disk, because STart-It! *contains a program to auto-start your program after GEM has initialised.*

FIDDLY FLOPPIES

Q I need some help fixing damaged data on my disk. I want to load a song into *Cubase*, but I keep getting an error message telling me the data on Drive A may be damaged. I also have another error – I get TOS ERROR #35 when I try to start a PRG. It's not all PRGs, only the ones for high resolution monitors. I'm using a colour television and a program called *Sebra* to get the high resolution mode.
A Sewell, Witon

A *You're using* Cubase *on a colour telly with* Sebra? *Brave man. The problems you describe are closely related. TOS Error #35 indicates that the file you're trying to launch is damaged, or isn't actually an executable file. The fact that these programs require high resolution is pure coincidence –*

en

```
REM break test program
ON BREAK GOSUB mac ! first line of code
PRINT "Go on, give me the three-finger salute ;-) "
'
DO ! wait for salute to be made
LOOP
'
PROCEDURE mac
    PRINT "I SALUTE YOU BACK - press any key to return to normal"
    ON BREAK ! return to normal break option
RETURN
```

YOU WANT A RESOLUTION?

Q I have just acquired a STE and I am confused by the three graphic modes. Could you please explain the differences between them?
Rosemary Browning, Chesterfield

A *I am happy to oblige, Rosemary. The ST has three graphic modes, one black and white and two colour. An overview is given below:*

	Screen resolution (Coordinates)	Colours (Colour register)
Low res	320x200 (0 to 319) (0 to 199)	16 (0 to 15) from 512 colours
Medium res	640x200 (0 to 639) (0 to 199)	4 (0 to 3) from 512 colours
High res	640x400 (0 to 639) (0 to 399)	2 (0 and 1)

WAIT! HAVE A REST

Q Please could you explain the difference between `PAUSE x` and `DELAY x`?
Sam Herrington, South Shields, Tyne and Wear

A *The main difference is that the command* `PAUSE` *suspends program execution for x/50 seconds.* `DELAY` *has a similar effect, but the argument x is specified in seconds with a theoretical resolution in milliseconds.* `DELAY` *uses the GEM routine* `EVNT_TIMER` *and is, therefore, recommended for use in GEM programs. In the listing below both statements stop program execution for two seconds and then go on to display the contents of the next* `PRINT` *statement.*

```
PRINT "begin"
PAUSE 100
PRINT "a pause"
DELAY 2
PRINT "exit"
```

Sebra *doesn't affect the workings of your ST's floppy drive.*

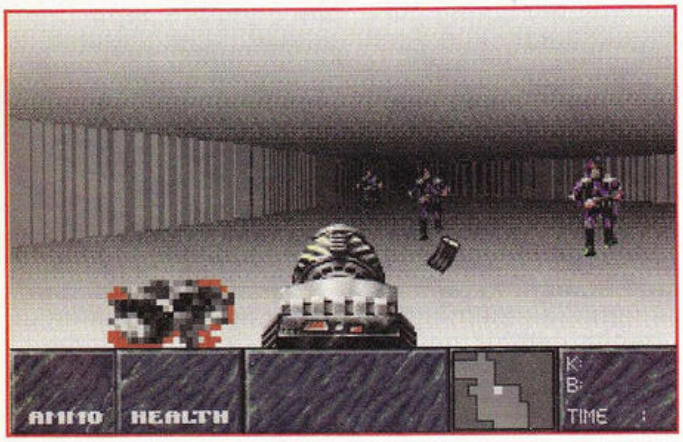
If you're seeing this problem a lot, it could indicate a fault in your disk drive. You really should have your ST looked at before you lose more important data. As for trying to fix your disks, search out the PD program Fastcopy 3. *It can make an intelligent guess about the contents of bad sectors, and does a fair job. Once you have a working copy, create another backup just in case, then throw the original damaged disk away.*

OFF THE CLIFF

Q I bought *Lemmings* when your special offer pages assured me it was Falcon compatible via *Backwards*, but I can't get it to work. I have the latest version of *Backwards*, and I'm a registered user. Since *Lemmings* is an item in the *Backwards* library, I assume it should run.
Jon McNamara, Bishops Stortford

A Lemmings *does indeed run on the Falcon with* Backwards *– but not all Falcon machines, it seems. It looks as if the tightly written copy-protection system used on the disks is falling foul of the floppy drives fitted in a small number of Falcon machines, preventing the game from loading or causing it to crash* (Ouch – Mary).

Obviously we weren't aware of this fault when we first offered the game, because Lemmings *runs perfectly on both our Falcons. Package up your copy and send it, along with an explanatory letter telling them we sent you, to: Customer Services, Future Publishing, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6TB. We'll get a refund sorted for you – and please accept our apologies.*



SubStation **is a lovely game, but it loses a lot of character and playability when robbed of its superb STE sound. Somehow violence and carnage just isn't as satisfying when you can't hear your gun go bang.**

SOUNDING OFF

Q I have a 520STE upgraded to 1Mb which I bought in 1990. I recently bought one of your excellent reader offers, The Black Box Collection (*Substation* and *Obsession*). The gameplay and graphics are excellent, but I have one problem – no sound in either game. I have tried both the television and the hi-fi, to no avail.

Is this due to a fault with my STE, lack of memory, the version of TOS (1.6) or defective software? I've had no problems with any of my other software, but these are the first STE-only games I've bought.
Richard Parker, Gateshead

A *We contacted Phineas Pope at Merlin, distributor of both games. He told us that 1Mb is sufficient for both games, and that the TOS version isn't an issue either. He also said that the music and sounds are so closely linked to the game that they'd both crash if the files on disk were defective, so bad disks can be ruled out.*

That leaves only one option – there's a fault with your STE, possibly in the DMA sound system. To be sure, get hold of one of the many STE-only demos available from PD libraries and see if it produces any sound. You'll probably need your machine looked at by a professional repair outfit, though. Try The Upgrade Shop, First Computer Centre, Fast Atari Repairs, or Analogic – see page 53 for a complete list of telephone numbers.

NOAH'S ARK

Q Would you please tell me what the System and Archive options in the Show Info option of the File menu of replacement Desktops, such as *KaosDesk*, are for? Why does a file disappear when I select System and click on OK, and can it be retrieved?
Ben Senior, Leeds.

A *Avoid using the System flag for files, Ben. It's a relic from the PC's early MS-DOS days, when the files used to load the operating system needed this flag set. It makes them invisible to prevent users from casually deleting them, unless you have a replacement desktop such as* Teradesk *or* Ease *which can display such files.*

To retrieve them, you'll need a disk editor which can work with individual files and view them regardless of whether they're invisible or not. HiSoft's KnifeST *will do the job, but it's more than you need if you just want to fix this problem. Check with your favourite PD library for a low-cost alternative.*

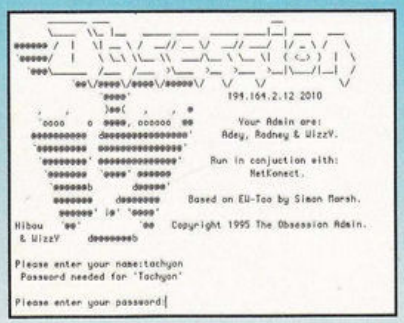
The Archive bit is a good deal more useful. When TOS versions 1.4 and above create or modify a file on disk, they switch this bit on. This enables you to create 'incremental' backups using HiSoft's Diamond Back *and most shareware backup programs. The program uses the archive bit to identify the files which have changed since your last back-up session, backs them up and switches the archive bit off.*

ALT.COMMS.STF@ with Frank Charlton

If you have any questions, write to: alt.comms.stf@, *ST FORMAT*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW, or send an e-mail to: de18@dial.pipex.com. Please put STA in the subject line.

TALK IS CHEAP

Q While on Internet Relay Chat recently, I was intrigued to see someone mention 'talkers', which I gather are a bit like IRC. Since I like to sit and chat on IRC at the weekends when it's cheap, I'd like to know a bit more about these talkers, please. Can I access one using my ST's Internet connection, and do I need any special software for the job, as I do for IRC? If so, where do I get it?
Dave Gretsky, via e-mail



Talkers – a cool place to lurk, or havens for sad comms anoraks? Well, we like them, so...

***A** Talkers are a bit like IRC, in the sense that you chat in real time to other people. That's really where the similarity ends, though. A talker is a program which resembles an old-style text adventure game in the way it looks and behaves.*

When you connect to the talker, you're presented with text descriptions of the room you're in. There's no actual gameplay though; the idea is to wander about, make friends, and generally have a natter with like-minded people. Different talkers adopt different themes – science fiction, medieval, that sort of thing – but the theme is purely to create a sense of atmosphere. When you get right down to it, they're all just chat forums.

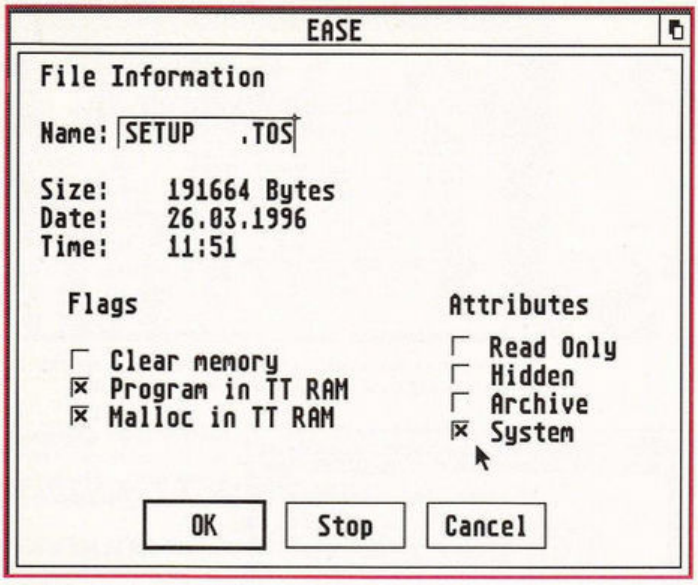
As for software, you only need something capable of initiating a telnet connection. Either AtariNOS *or the telnet client for* STiK *will do the job. Once you get on to one talker, you'll soon pick up the addresses for others.*

The talker hosted by service provider Netkonect is a good place to start. Open a telnet connection to obs.netkonect.net *using port 2001 and you'll enter the world of the Obsession talker. It's a fun place to hang about. You may even bump into one or two* ST FORMAT *bods...*

VOX POPULOUS

Q I've just seen adverts for the new range of Sportster Vi modems from US Robotics. The ads mention that they include 'voice mail'. Am I right in thinking this is a computerised answering service? As I doubt US Robotics will supply ST software, is there any other programs available to take advantage of this feature?
Luke Hamilton, Seahouses

***A** Saying that USR is unlikely to supply ST software is the understatement of the year, Luke. It doesn't even supply Mac software with half its*



The System bit – don't touch it. No, really. We mean it!

YO HO HO!

Q I recently visited a car boot sale where I saw a number of pirated games, for both the ST and other formats, being sold. I notice you don't print the number for FAST, the Federation Against Software Theft, in your Essential Contacts section, so does it still exist or not?

I'm prepared to help in any way I can because I believe this sort of thing will drive the remaining ST software publishers away. I was also most upset to see the full *Obsession* game for sale. Please don't print my name or location for obvious reasons.

Concerned Citizen, Mega City One

A *Sadly, even with most publishers abandoning the ST games market, you still see idiots trying to grab some money by ripping off others like this. It's no wonder* Obsession's *developer, UDS, recently abandoned us, is it?*

FAST does indeed still exist, and is on ☎ 0800 510510. I would imagine that Merlin – Obsession's *distributor in the UK – would be interested in some information about this, too. Call ☎ 01452 770133 and tell the manager what you saw. Oh, and well done for bucking the trend and coming forward like this. A car-boot retailer in my area was recently fined for selling pirated games, and ST software was included in the haul. Some people never learn, do they?*

TAKE NOTICE

We very much regret that we can't reply to your questions personally. Producing *ST FORMAT* takes all our time *(And then some – Nick)*, so we simply don't have time to reply to everyone who writes. Sending stamped addressed envelopes or international reply coupons won't get you an answer, either, so please don't waste your money. We aren't ignoring you when we don't write back, and we'll try to answer your question in the magazine, so do please keep writing.

Send your questions to: ST Answers, *ST FORMAT*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW, or e-mail them to Frank.Charlton@dial.pipex.com. Please put STA in the subject line.

RAM OR ROM?

Q Is there such a thing as RAM which does not erase when the power is cut off? If so, how do I get hold of it, and how do I find out what all the pin connections are?

Sam Penny, Shrewsbury

A *You're describing EPROM chips – Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory. An EPROM chip is programmed using a hardware device called an EPROM blower, which writes the data on to the chip. EPROMs hold their contents when the power is off and can only be erased using ultra-violet light. Some Falcons have their TOS stored on EPROM chips.*

Years ago a company called Lakmeyer marketed a device which could create EPROMs. Data was loaded via the ST's cartridge port. Unfortunately, the blower itself was very expensive and therefore didn't take off. Without involving a professional EPROM company, you're out of luck I'm afraid.

HANDHELD

Q I recently bought a secondhand Atari Portfolio, and I would like to transfer data to and from an ST. I have the parallel interface for the Portfolio, but not the manual. It supports file transfers in both directions, but needs software running on the ST. Do you know of anything, commercial or in the public domain, which would do the job, please?

C Nelson, Gosport

A *A quick trip on to the Internet located a suitable program. It's called* PORTLINK *and runs on the ST. It's in Norwegian, but you should be able to manage it easily enough. We've passed a copy on to Ad.Lib PD. Call ☎ 0191 3702496 for full details or to order this piece of software.*

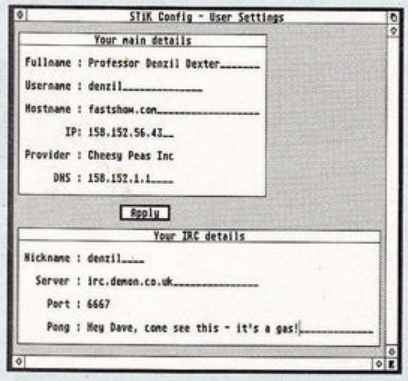
You can also get software for your Portfolio from: Any Port in a Storm, 90 Ivy Avenue, Bath BA2 1AN. Send a cheque for £1, made payable to K Swaine, for a disk-based list of titles available from his organisation.

STIK SETUP

New users of *STiK* seem to fall into one of two camps: those who have no trouble and get a smooth connection first time, and those who endlessly beat their heads against the wall in vain, never quite getting it to work *(Perhaps they should stop beating their heads then – Nick)*.

If you're one of the unfortunates in the latter camp, here's some good news. Guy Harrison has been burning the midnight oil putting the finishing touches to his new *STiK* configuration program. It takes advantage of the standard GEM interface and enables you to configure every aspect of *STiK*'s connection painlessly.

Guy was kind enough to let us see a beta test version of the program, and it looks smart. Its intuitive interface and common-sense on-line help should enable you to banish those configuration blues once and for all. We don't know quite when it's due for release, but rest assured you'll read about it in *ST FORMAT* as soon as we have news.



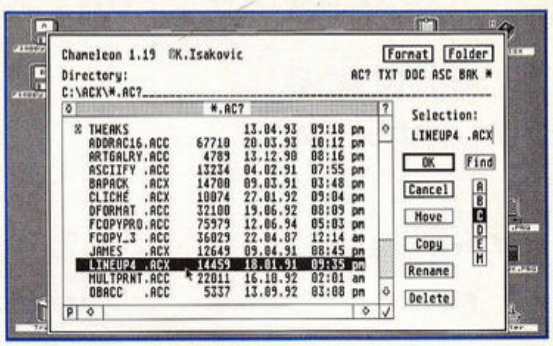
At last, an easy way to configure *STiK* without risk of your head exploding.

modems – it's* Windows *on the PC or nothing.

Having said that, the modem will chug along nicely in normal mode with any comms software, and should also work with standard fax software. The only voice-capable software we've come across is the shareware* CoMA*, and we're not sure whether it works with the Sportster Vi – we haven't tested this modem yet.

As for the nature of voice mail, you're essentially right. It uses the computer as an answering machine and stores the incoming messages on your hard drive. Considering that answering machines and tapes are much cheaper than gigabytes of hard drive space, you have to ask whether you really want a system like this anyway. We have voice mail systems at Future Publishing, and they drive us mad.

Absolute beginners



Chameleon allows you to load any other Accessory into its slot after you have booted up. You can swap Accessories in and out at will.

What's a Desk Accessory? What does it do? How do you set one up? Your tutor is Peter Crush.

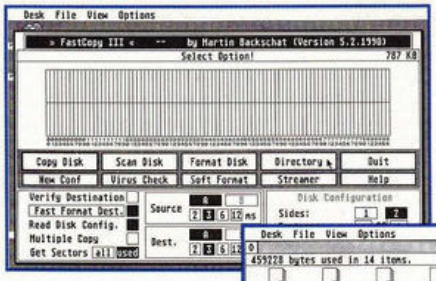
In issue 81 we explained how to create a boot disk and set up your ST to suit your particular requirements. Boot disks also enable you to load Desk Accessories, small utility programs that help you work more efficiently. Here's how to make the most of them.

Call the DA

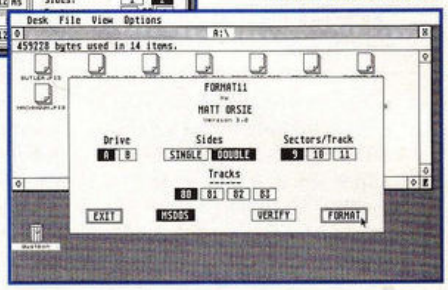
If you copy an Accessory on to your boot disk, your ST loads it into memory when you switch on the computer. It then sits in memory, waiting until you need to use it, and is said to be 'memory resident'.

If you are running a GEM program (most programs that use windows and menus run under GEM), you can stop whatever you're doing at any time, select an Accessory and carry out some completely different task. You then quit the Accessory and return to your main program (it's like time travel). For example, you might pause halfway through a letter to your bank manager to run a calculator Accessory and do some quick calculations.

Up to six Accessories can be in memory at once. Finding the best ones is where the fun begins: there are hundreds of Accessories, most of which are PD or shareware. There are a few notable exceptions, such as *Harlekin* and *Imagecopy*, both of which are commercial programs.



FastCopy 3, one of the best ever PD Accessories. It copies a whole disk quickly and with a minimum of disk swapping.



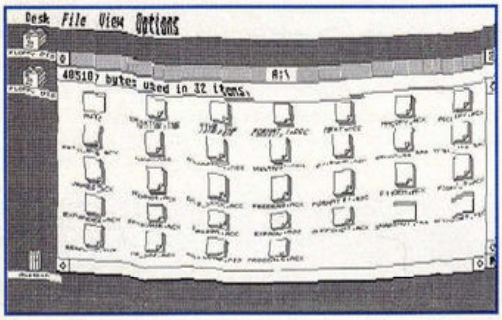
Format 11 can format a double-sided disk to an amazing capacity of 923,648 bytes, using the settings 11 sectors and 83 tracks.

Six-plus

There are so many good Accessories you may want to use more than half a dozen. Unfortunately the ST's operating system only allows you to have six resident at once, but there are ways around this little problem.

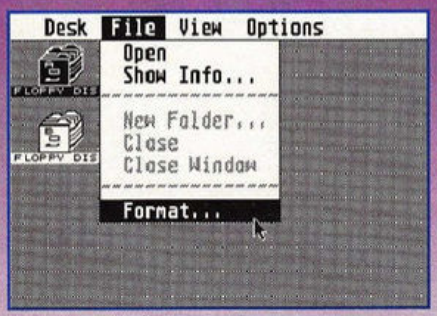
- You could have more than one boot disk, with a different set of Accessories on each disk, but this is a bit messy.
- Try using the PD Accessory *DC Stuffer* which enables you to have up to 32 Accessories in memory at once. It works, but uses huge amounts of memory.
- Use an Accessory loading program to select the utilities you want at boot-up time. You put all your favourite Accessories on one disk and the loading program enables you to pick the six you want.

For example, if you're using *Degas*, you won't need the *Mouse Accelerator* Accessory, but you might like a program which loads images in *Tiny* format. And when you switch to word processing, utilities for disk formatting and word counting will be more useful. Bear in mind that some Accessories clash and some early programs won't run on the latest versions of TOS. Just experiment until you find the setup that suits you best. *stf*

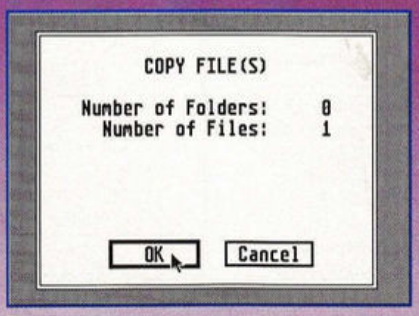


Melt is just for fun. When you click on it, the screen slowly 'melts' into a gooey mess. Click again to restore your Desktop.

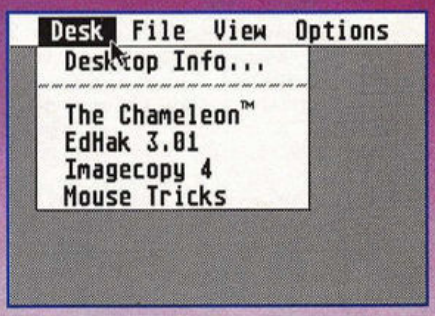
A BOOT DISK FOR ACCESSORIES



1 Take a new, blank floppy disk, put it into your ST and format it. You need to have the ST's Desktop on screen with drive A highlighted. Move the mouse pointer to the File menu and click on Format.



2 Copy some Accessory programs in to the root directory. You can recognise them because the name always ends with ACC. You can get Accessories from PD libraries, or from *ST FORMAT* Cover Disks.



3 Make sure you have no more than six Accessories on the disk, then press the re-set button on the back of the ST to load them into memory. When the Desktop appears you'll find the programs listed in the Desk menu.

You can UDO it

Save yourself some work by getting to grips with universal documentation. Frank Charlton shows you how to use *UDO 4*.

Just a few months ago (*STF* 78–80) we showed you how to create sparkling hypertext documents using HTML. Now you've mastered that, here's a new challenge – a package which can convert your work into more than one document format. Write once, convert many times, as they say.

UDO isn't an editor, and strictly speaking it isn't a convertor, either. The name – *Universal Document Organiser* – reveals its real purpose.

Language lab

Regrettably, *UDO* doesn't actually do everything for you. You'll still have to put some work in, and there's yet another new language to be learned. Unlike HTML, which specifies how a document should be displayed, *UDO*'s language is used to build a source file which can be translated to other formats easily.

Once you've learnt *UDO*, you can present your work in standard ASCII, Rich Text Format (RTF), the *ST-Guide* hypertext format, HTML, UNIX MAN format, the LaTeX page description language and as help files for use with the Pure C compiler and even *Windows*. Rather than mastering a multitude of different languages, you can get by with just one. If you've used *ST-Guide*, you'll find the *UDO* syntax isn't a million miles from what you're used to.

Like any new language, *UDO* looks frighteningly complex at first. Like any good language, it enables you to experiment with the most basic commands first, adding extra functions as you learn the language. The documentation is a basic ASCII file, which is adequate, but hardly the best medium to learn from. Thankfully, the author has also included the *UDO* source, so you can convert it to the user-friendly format of your choice.

The results are very good: they're clean, correctly written and tidy

As we've covered *CAB* extensively over the last few months, it would help to have the documentation in the HTML format. No problem: follow the four steps in the Spinning a Web panel. You'll need your copy of *CAB* from Cover Disk 78 or 81 and a standard text editor, such as *PenPal* (also from Cover Disk 78). We'll show you how to take your first steps with *UDO* as we recreate the manual for use with *CAB*.

Finishing off

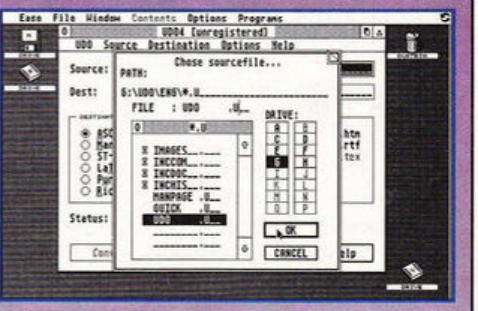
As with all universal systems, the final results are never quite as polished as documents created in the required language. If you want to take advantage of the HTML extensions for coloured or image backdrops, for example, you'll still need to get your hands dirty. The results are generally very good though: they're clean, correctly written and don't need any tidying. ***stf***

SPINNING A WEB

Here's how to convert a UDO source document – the manual – into HTML. You'll need a text editor, a Web browser and the UDO.U file.

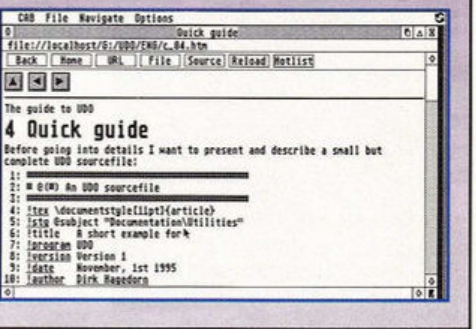
1 First, tell *UDO* which external programs you want to use as the editor and the final viewer. Any program capable of saving raw ASCII text is fine for editing files. Click Source-Editor and use the file selector to locate your program, then click WWW-HTML and locate *CAB*.

2 Back at the main dialog, click the box next to Source to call the file selector again, and tell *UDO* we want to work with the UDO.U file. If you don't have a hard drive, copy the files to a RAM disk if you can. The compilation process is disk-intensive and using floppies takes ages.



3 *UDO* will fill in the destination filename for you, but you can easily change it using the method outlined in step 2. Click the Convert button to begin the conversion. You'll see the files being processed in the status line at the bottom.

4 Finally, go to the Destination menu, and select External to launch *CAB*. If all has gone well, *CAB* will automatically open a new browser window and display the finished HTML documentation. Now it's as easy to navigate as any HTML document – far better than dull ASCII text.



REGISTER UDO!

A lot of hard work has gone into *UDO* and you should register if you intend to use it regularly. A single-user licence costs £15, and you can register by sending a cheque for that amount, made payable to Denesh Bhabuta, to: CyberSTrider, 203 Parr Lane, Bury BL9 8JW. As well as that cosy feeling of legitimacy, you'll get a registration key to unlock the program, a full master disk and the opportunity to use the technical support services via post, phone and e-mail.

Alien worlds

Moving files from one computer to another is much easier than you might think. Frank Charlton conquers the alien files...

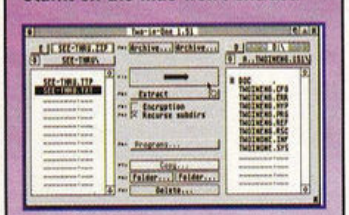
Most of us bump into a fair number of computers in everyday life, and they aren't usually STs. Whether it be PCs and Apple Macs at work or college, Amigas at the local computer club, Acorn machines at school or even big *UNIX* machines at university, you're likely to have access to an alien machine at some point.

Often you'll want to transfer files between these machines and your ST. *ST FORMAT*, for example, is written mostly on STs, laid out on Apple Macs and typeset via a *UNIX* system. As long as you have the right software, this is a relatively trivial process. With foresight and a little work, almost any data file of any type you care to think of can be converted and used on your ST.

ARCHIVERS

When you're transferring files from one computer platform to another you'll often come across archived files, particularly if comms is involved. An archiver takes a bunch of files and collects them into a single file, then compresses it to save space.

Every platform has its own favourite archiving system, but with the notable exceptions of the PC's new RAR format and the LZX archiver on the Amiga, a suitably equipped ST can cope with almost all of them, including ZIP, LZH, LHA, ZOO, TAR, GZ, ARC and ARJ. Even more esoteric formats such as the Mac's SIT archives can be unpacked, but sadly archives produced by the latest versions of *Stuffit* on the Mac won't extract.



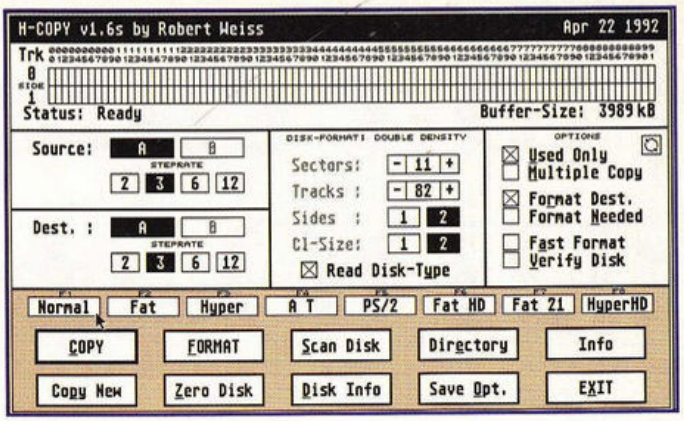
Take the pain out of extracting foreign archive formats by using a shell, such as the excellent *2 in 1*, to control the individual archivers.

Disk formats

The first problem you might encounter is the differing disk formats used by these other computers. The easiest to cope with is the PC, because any ST can read a disk formatted in a PC. Ataris fitted with TOS 1.4 onwards will format PC-compatible disks as standard. If you have an older verision of TOS, you can use shareware formatting programs such as *Fastcopy 3* and *HCopy* to prepare a PC disk.

Apple Macs users can read, write and format PC disks using the *PC Exchange* software supplied with the latest versions of their operating systems. Even the Amiga, which uses its own cryptic format, can be forced to play ball by using specialist software such as *CrossDOS* or *MessyDOS* to prepare PC disks. Use the PC format as the common ground in all disk-based transfers and you can't go wrong.

If you already have a batch of ST disks formatted under an older TOS version, you can still make them PC compatible.



The shareware *HCopy* can format PC-compatible floppies easily. These disks are your starting point for all file transfer operations.

Little PC programs, such as *ST2DOS*, can add an extra couple of bytes to the boot sector, enabling you to read the disks on a PC.

However, given the massive number of different file formats used by alien computers, merely being able to read disks isn't quite enough. Depending on the type of file you want to convert – sound samples, animations, pictures or word processor documents – you may require an arsenal of programs, or just one solitary application. Let's take a look at what you need.

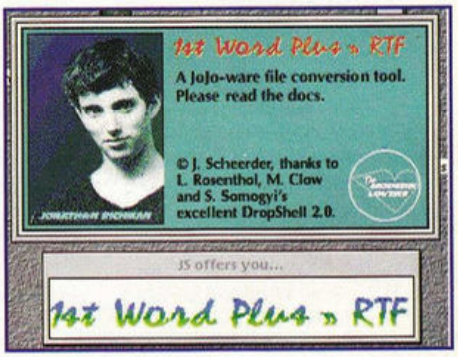
Text documents

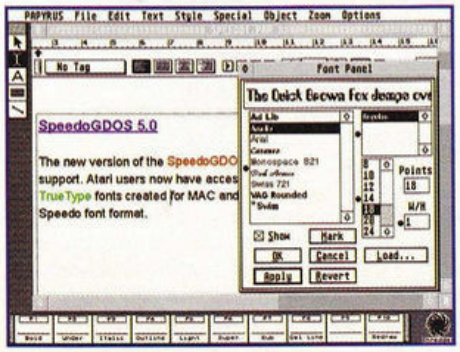
You're more likely to want to convert word processor documents and text files than any other type of file. You might be bringing work home, or printing ST files on a PC at college, but either way you'll want to avoid retyping all those words. If you aren't bothered about complex text formatting, the easiest route is to save your files as bare ASCII text, which every word processor under the sun can import.

If the formatting is important, the best cross-platform solution is to use Rich Text Format (RTF). RTF files contain most of the document's formatting and font information, but they don't support graphics. Both *Papyrus* and *AtariWorks* can work with RTF files, and the shareware *Marcel* does an excellent job, too.

Again, there are literally dozens of tiny programs to convert between specific formats, such as *First Word Plus* and RTF. The best is *FWP2RTF*, which includes programs for Mac, PC and *UNIX* machines in the same archive as the ST utility.

If you have information on the file format of specific document types, Kevin Millican's *The Ultimate Convertor (TUC)* can be taught how to convert them. It takes work, but Kevin supplies conversion templates for many popular file formats. *TUC* lives up to its name and is a must-have tool.





This nifty application converts *First Word* documents to RTF and includes Mac, PC and even *UNIX* versions.

***Papyrus Gold* can import RTF documents from other platforms, keeping formatting and font information intact – presuming you have the right fonts.**

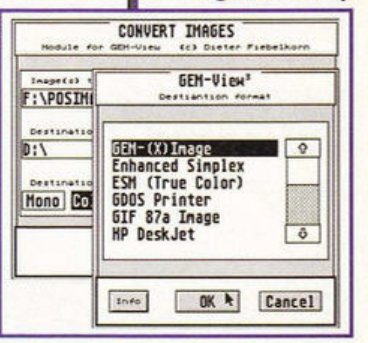
NULL MODEM CABLES

Sometimes you'll have a file which is too big to fit on to a disk, or a big batch of files which would take half a lifetime to copy on to floppies. In this case the best option is to link the two computers together via their serial ports. All you need is a specially constructed cable called a null modem cable and comms software on each machine.

The cables are easy to make and the parts are available from any electronics shop, but you'll need the pin-out diagrams for each computer's serial port. If you can't find the information you need, watch for a brief guide in a future issue. We're hoping to provide you with simple wiring diagrams for the ST, Falcon, PC and Mac.

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: *GEMView* is king in the image conversion world.

***GEMView* can also process batches of pictures without your help – simply select Convert and enter *.* into the file selector to convert all images in a directory.**



Picture files

Even before you get involved with other computers, the ST itself provides a mountain of image formats. If you also want to deal with alien file types, such as the Amiga's IFF, HAM and LBM, and cross-platform formats designed for multiple computers, such as the popular GIF and JPG, you'll need a powerful tool to cope with all your images.

The shareware solution is the superb *GEMView*, which deals with 99 per cent of the images you'll come across. With the exception of the Mac's strange PICT format, which can be any size and colour depth and uses lots of different compression methods, *GEMView* will read and write images in all popular bitmap formats.

If you're on a tight budget, the freeware *IMCON 1.1* from Cover Disk 80 is a good alternative – turn to page 50 if you missed it. Conversely, if you're prepared to spend your hard-earned dosh on a commercial application, *ImageCopy 4* (£34.95) comes with our highest recommendation – call the FaST Club on ☎ 0115 9455250 for details. Finally, if you prefer separate applications for each task (you masochist, you), the PD arena is full of conversion utilities for every imaginable format.

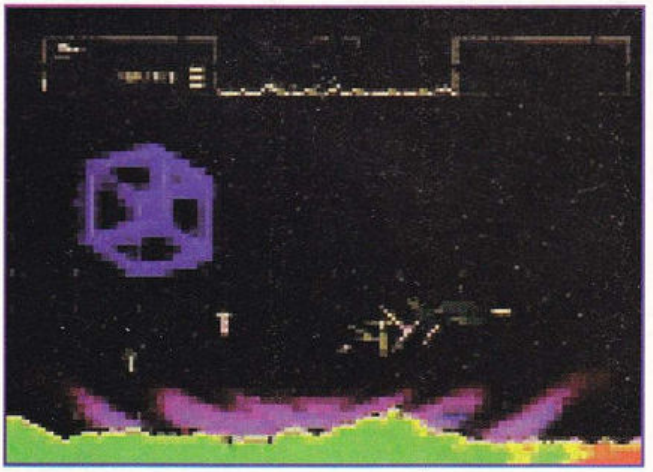
The choice is more limited for vector graphics. The most comprehensive tool is FaST Club's *Vector Graphics XChange* (£14.95) which copes with PC and Mac vector formats, although it does convert colour images to mono ones.

Moving pictures

Video and animations are perhaps the most awkward areas. There isn't much in the way of convertors, but there are plenty of viewers and players. Viewing utilities for the Mac's *QuickTime* and PC's AVI formats exist for all Ataris, but they run slowly and don't play the sound data.

Movies in the heavily compressed MPEG format can be accessed, too. There are some excellent players for the Falcon, including Griff's *PLAYMPG*, and ST users needn't feel left out, because the French *FEVER* suite of MPEG utilities runs on all Ataris and does a passable job of decoding these movies.

The common FLI animation format is well catered for with PD players. Titan's superlative *APEX Media* animation program can load and save FLI files and ANI files from the Amiga.



It's now possible to play AVI digitised movies from the PC platform, such as this movie of the Jaguar game *Defender 2000*.

Sound samples

Now that most PCs are multimedia capable, you'll come across one sound format more often than others – the WAV file. Like the ST's AVR format, WAV samples can contain sound data at different sample rates, and come in 8- and 16-bit resolutions, in mono or stereo. Thankfully, one piece of software, the excellent *525*, copes with almost any sound format you care to throw at it.

As well as being able to convert to and from the WAV format, *525* can cope with some less popular formats, including the DVSM files produced by *WinRec* on the Falcon. It even converts samples from *UNIX* machines. Pick this up and your sample conversion problems are solved straight away. (Subscribers will find the latest version on this month's Wonder Disk.)

Databases

This is really the only area where the ST is sorely lacking in conversion tools. Most database programs use their own format, so life can be difficult when you need to swap data files between platforms.

The only real option is to choose your database software carefully. Most big applications can export the current data, or selected items, in the comma-delimited format. Basically, the database will dump the current records to disk as an ASCII file, separating each field with the comma. This is the nearest to common ground you'll get with databases, and most applications can be persuaded to import these files.

Fonts

Most PCs and Macs now use the TrueType font format, and your ST can use these fonts too if it is equipped with a copy of *SpeedoGDOS* or *NVDI 3* or *4*. Mac TrueTypes won't work most of the time, due to the Mac's tendency to add extra information to the file headers, but PC fonts won't need any conversion. Other font types, such as Mac bitmaps, can be converted to bitmapped *GDOS* fonts using *FontKit Plus 4* (£24.95 from FaST Club, ☎ 0115 9455250). *Calamus* users can import PostScript fonts too, using the font editor *Fonty* (£11.95 from FaST Club).

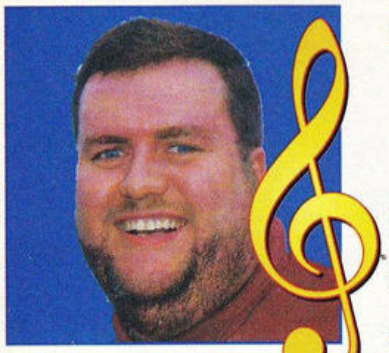
And so?

So, all you need to trip happily across green grassy meadows of a wide range of alien worlds is a handful of utilities and some PC disks. And an English-alien dictionary, of course. Happy travels. ***stf***

GET THE SOFTWARE

All the PD and shareware we mention in this feature should be available from most PD libraries, bulletin boards and on-line services such as HENSA.

If you don't want the hassle of hunting everything down, Ad.Lib PD has prepared a special *ST FORMAT* File Conversion Pack, neatly compressed on to four disks. To order, send a £5 cheque to: Ad.Lib PD, 22 Alexandra St, Pelton Lane Ends, Chester-Le-Street, Durham DH2 1NT. Ask for the *ST FORMAT* pack and make your cheques payable to Ad.Lib.



The Score

He's creepy, he's kooky. Andy Curtis smiles in a slightly unsettling way, gets everything synchronised and introduces *The Score*. Be afraid, be very afraid.

The S2000, pictured on the top of this lovely pile of samplers, offers loads of features and is now available at an incredibly low price. Most shops are selling out fast.

Price squeeze continues

Thankfully, from a purchaser's point of view, price competition between music equipment manufacturers remains fierce. This is exhibiting itself not only in price cutting, but also in major new aggressive pricing policies from the leading brand names.

Akai, long the darling of the sampler market, is offering its S2000 model through some outlets for as little as £950 for the 2Mb RAM version. This effectively puts top-quality sampling within the range of the average punter and, given the music industry's current reliance on these machines, now is a good time to buy or upgrade. The downside is that your secondhand S950, which might have been worth around £650 a year ago, is now worth a very great deal less.

The S2000, with its easily upgradable internal architecture and full SCSI support, is selling very well, so get one while you can.

Soundcraft mixing desks are now available for up to £400 less than the January 1996 prices. A typical 16:8:2 desk costs just £1,099, rather than the £1,499 of recent times. The price reduction makes these well-featured and reliable desks the number one buy for home studio owners on a tight budget. The specification includes a four-band equaliser, with the two mid ranges sweepable, four auxiliary returns for effects and sub-mix returns with two-band equaliser. With products like these improving in quality and dropping in price, we could hardly ask for more.

Contact Sound Control on ☎ 0191 232 4175 for more about both these products.

Sync or Swim

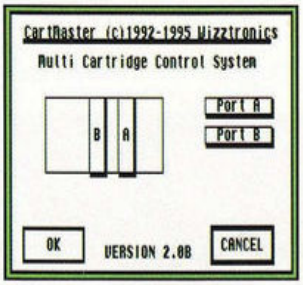
Are you wondering if you need a sync box? Or what on earth a sync box is? Whichever the question, we'll do our best to supply the answer.

Suppose you've finished your latest masterpiece using your favourite sequencer and want to add some live guitar and vocals, or even a live sax solo. Without sync, you'll have to mix your arrangement on to two tracks of your four- or eight-track recorder, then add the live instruments.

The disadvantages of this are obvious. Not only have you lost two tape tracks for the stereo mix, but also you are committed to that one mix with no possibility for later change, unless you replay the live sounds. Add to this the quality loss that a tape copy induces and you really could do with a better solution. Enter the sync box.

CARTMASTER LITE

£69.95, System Solutions
☎ 0181 6933355



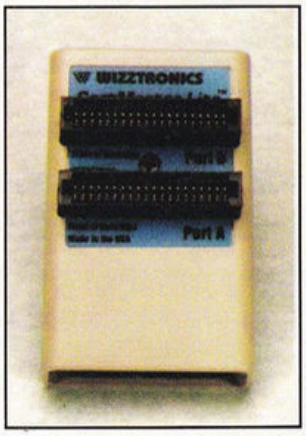
The supplied software is very easy to use. Just click on the port – A or B – you want active.

CartMaster Lite is a simple solution to an age-old problem. Given the growing number of uses for your ST's cartridge port, the need for a multi-cartridge adaptor is obvious. Unfortunately, your ST can only address one cartridge at once, so a switching system is required to utilise any extra cartridges you have.

CartMaster Lite is a two-cartridge adaptor with software which enables you to switch painlessly between the two. The software takes the form of an Accessory and a simple program file which you can run from the desktop. Operation is simplicity itself: click on port A or B and your ST will look there for the active cartridge. There's also an Auto folder program which enables you to boot using port B instead of the default, port A.

The device also changes the angle of your cartridges so that they point upwards instead of outwards, saving you desktop space. The only problem is that insufficient space is provided between the ports for some of the larger cartridges. If you have a clock cartridge, for example, it is unlikely you will be able to fit another cartridge into port B. If, however, you just have two dongles for protected software, you should have no problems.

***STF* RATING: 78%**



Plug this into your cartridge port and you have two ports for your hardware dongles. No more plugging and unplugging and plugging...

Tape synchronisation makes your tape recorder into an extension of your sequencer by enabling them to run exactly in time with each other. SMPTE code on the tape feeds your computer a constant flow of song position data, enabling your sequencer to stay in time with the tape. The sequencer must continuously reposition itself. (If you don't believe this, try starting a tape and your sequencer at the same time and see how long they stay together. You'll notice the lack of sync within 30 seconds.)

STRIPY TAPE

It is best to stripe a whole tape at once. Simply plug your Sync box in as shown on the diagram and use the highest track (4, 8, 16 or whatever) as the sync track.

Your portastudio will probably have a special sync output for connection back into the sync box. If it hasn't, use an auxiliary effects output.

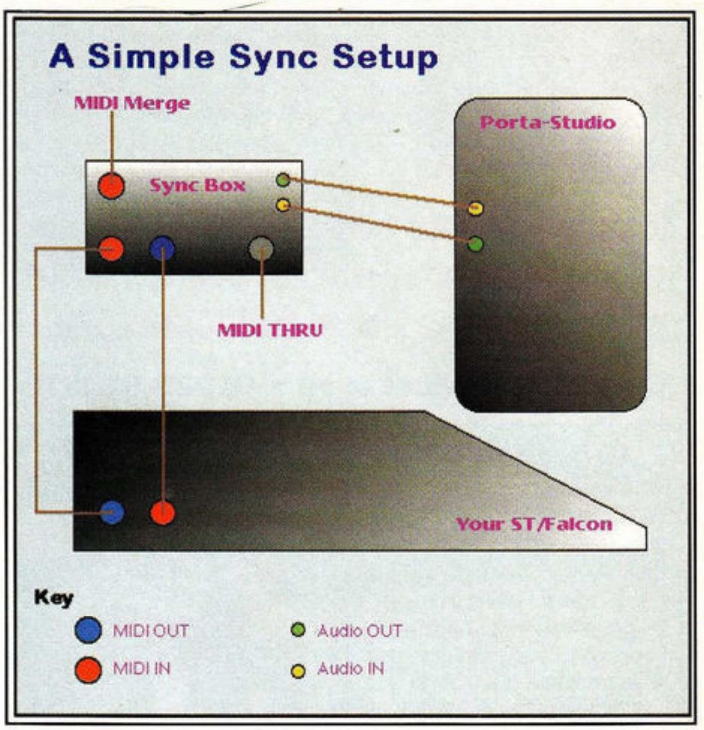
To stripe the tape, put your tape machine into record mode and start your sequencer, having first set it to transmit MIDI Time Code (MTC). Alternatively, there may be a SMPTE generate feature built into your sync box. Once the whole tape is recorded you can replay it with your sequencer in Sync mode. Your sequencer will jump to the time position the tape feeds it with.

Unless you have a machine-specific sync box – such as MTC1, companion to the Fostex R8 – you will need to control the song position from the tape recorder when you are in sync mode. With dedicated systems, the tape recorder can be controlled from the sequencer as well.

INTEGRATION

Our diagram shows two items marked 'MIDI Merge' and 'MIDI Thru'. These aren't found on all sync boxes, but they're useful additions. If you have just one MIDI output from your ST, MIDI Thru enables you to link in the rest of your MIDI setup without having to reconnect everything each time you stripe a tape.

MIDI Merge is vital if you wish to play in further MIDI tracks while listening to the sounds on tape. Plug your master keyboard into the MIDI Merge socket as if it were your ST's MIDI input. The sync box will merge the MTC with your own MIDI input, enabling simultaneous sync playback and MIDI recording.



Tape sync really adds power to your MIDI studio. A good sync box enables you to use a setup like the one shown here. Use the MIDI Merge socket like your ST's MIDI In and the MIDI Thru like your ST's MIDI Out.

FINAL CUT

With your SMPTE code in place you have used just one track of your multitrack tape, leaving at least three for live work. Your sequences are still playing live, so you'll also have great sound quality, and any further adjustments can be made effortlessly. *stf*

SYNC BOX and SYNC BOX PRO

£149 and £249, System Solutions
☎ 0181 693 3355

Sound Pool has released two new MIDI synchronisation boxes, designed to meet your exacting sync requirements in full. Both units are housed in sturdy metal boxes and painted in Sound Pool's traditional green livery. DC power adaptors are supplied.

Don't assume the Sync Box is just a cut-down version of the Sync Box Pro, because it isn't. The Sync Box Pro is a fully featured MIDI-to-tape sync box, whereas the Sync Box is only able to send data in one direction, which greatly limits its usefulness. Confused? Read on.

Sync Box

The Sync Box is a very simple device which translates MIDI Time Code (MTC) into an audio SMPTE signal. The box features a MIDI Thru socket and a MIDI input, so the device chains seamlessly into your system.

This unit is only useful if you have a SMPTE-controllable device which you wish to control from a computer which outputs MTC. For example, the single-sheet manual suggests that you could control a *Notator*/Unitor setup on your ST from *Audio Tracker* on the Falcon. The audio output from Sync Box simply plugs into the Unitor cartridge, enabling you to synchronise *Notator* with your *Audio Tracker* hard disk recordings.

This device has very limited application. Most computer and hard disk recording setups can communicate directly via MTC, so make sure it is the Sync Box you need before you buy.

STF RATING: 73%

These two sync boxes look remarkably similar, but their functions are radically different. Check carefully to be sure which one offers the functions you need.

Sync-Box Pro

The Sync Box Pro is a much more complete synchronisation solution. Designed for users who wish to engage in the standard business of synchronising to tape, it's a full bidirectional unit which boasts a MIDI merge feature and MIDI Thru. This means you won't need to repatch your cables each time you use sync.

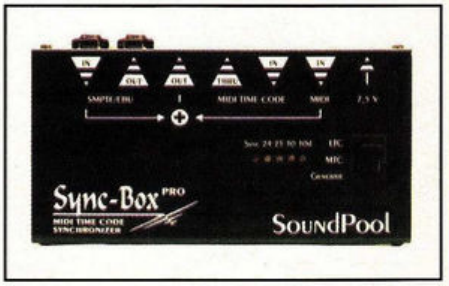
You can use two methods of striping. The first uses the Generate facility on the Sync Box Pro, which stripes your tape at 25 frames per second (fps). Alternatively, if you toggle the switch on the front panel to MTC, the unit 'listens' to the MTC generated by your sequencer and stripes the tape accordingly. This is the preferred method, because it guarantees that the striping is correct for your setup.

When you switch over to LTC mode, the Sync Box Pro converts the time code on the tape back to MTC for your sequencer. The upshot of this is that when you hit 'Play' on your tape machine, your sequencer will also start and therefore it plays back exactly in time with the tape machine.

The Sync Box Pro has a high level of tolerance for faulty time code and will compensate for errors caused by dropouts on your tape. With a little jiggling, it will also replace faulty time code with new, error-free, code on a different track.

This unit does its job very well. Whether you are synchronising to a four-track portastudio or a full blown multitrack tape recorder, it produces reliable results every time. The manual leaves a lot to be desired, but the information you need is there if you read the meagre text very carefully.

STF RATING: 88%



The Sync Box Pro is a serious professional tool at an attractive price. It has all the features you need for almost any synchronisation application.

ST FORMAT Reader offers

If you wish to order by credit card or have any queries, please ring the Hotline on ☎ 01225 822511

Customer Services is on ☎ 01225 822510

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR ATARI ST 2

FUTURE BOOKS

Written by *ST FORMAT*'s very own Clive Parker, this little volume is full of useful hints and tricks. Discover how your Atari works, improve its performance, and read about all the best ST software and hardware.

£12.99

Description: *Get the Most Out of Your Atari ST 2*
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BULLFROG

£10.99 SAVE £4

Set yourself up as a deity in the best god game ever programmed, then battle for religious supremacy by wiping out your opponent's worshippers with malicious acts of god. *Populous 2* has great graphics, crisp sound and 500 levels. It scored a massive 95% in issue 30.

1Mb required

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RRP: £14.99
***STF* price:** £10.99
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ST FORMAT BINDER

ST FORMAT

Keep your prized collection of the world's most exquisite, comprehensive ST magazine safe from spills, stains and the neighbours' children in these sturdy red binders.

TWO FOR £9.99

Description:
One binder
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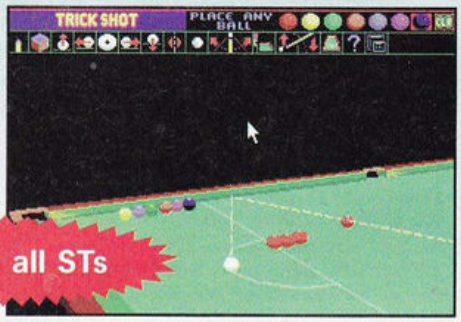
Description:
Two binders
***STF* price:** £9.99
Order no: ST1122

JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER

VIRGIN

More enthralling than a Steve Davis 147 break, weirder than Dennis Taylor's glasses and funnier than Ray Reardon's haircut – if you're looking for a snooker simulation with a difference, this is for you. Realistic sound, cute animation and the stunning real-world physics engine will keep you returning again and again. And with a trick shot editor and two-player option, this is a game that has all the angles covered.

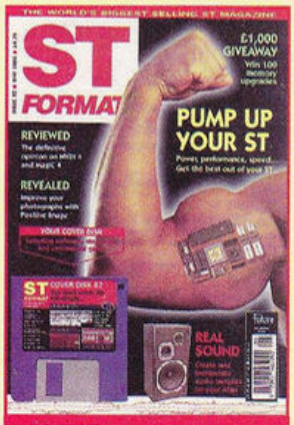


Runs on all STs

Description:
Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
***STF* price:** £9.99
Order no:
STFJWS02

BACK ISSUES

£3.65 each or £9.89 for three plus a free binder



ISSUE 82 – MAY 1995

Disk: *Zero-X* demo, *Snoball in Hell* **Inside:** Pump up your ST; Sound sampling **Reviewed:** *MagiC 4, NVDI 4 ExtenDOS Pro* **Tutorial:** *Positive Image*

ISSUE 81 – APR 1995

Disk: *CAB, Zaptastic, The Espers* **Inside:** The Internet; Desktops; Text adventures **Reviewed:** *Vision*, EZ Drive *PageStream 2.2 SE, Power Drive Rally*

ISSUE 80 – MAR 1995

Disk: *Positive Image* demo, *Deadland* **Inside:** Image processing; 3D **Reviewed:** *Strip Cartoon, Time Talk, Textstyle 1.1* **Tutorials:** HTML, *Breakthru*

ISSUE 79 – FEB 1996

Disk: *Breakthru demo, Trapped 2* **Inside:** MIDI masterclass; Atari interview; ProTOS **Reviewed:** *Ease 4, Linux, GAS* **Tutorials:** HTML, DSP

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Urgent! Has anyone got a manual for STOS 2.5? If so please tel: 01705 492087.

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MIKE PD, 3 Holsworthy Way, Chessington, Surrey KT9 2QP ☎ 0181 3911992
MUSIC DOMAIN, Beaufort, Glencople, Dumfries, DC1 4RD ☎ 01387 770429
PAJ SOFTWARE, PAJ House, Shaftesbury Ave, Cheadle Hulme, Stockport SK8 7DB
PROPHECY PUBLIC DOMAIN, 10 Beechwood, Church Hill, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 6SB
RIVERDENE PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG31 5AN ☎ 01734 452416
SDPD, Stephen Day, 59 Hillbourne Rd, Wyke Regis, Weymouth, Dorset DT6 5HF ☎ 01305 789504
STAMPC PDL, 1 Keats Close, Popley, Basingstoke, RG24 9BS ☎ 01256 814549,
STELLAR PD, Newholme, Aston Road, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, GL55 6HR ☎ 01386 840737
TUMBLEVANE PDL, 6 West Road, Emsworth, Hampshire, PO10 7JT ☎ 01243 370600

BUYING BY MAIL ORDER

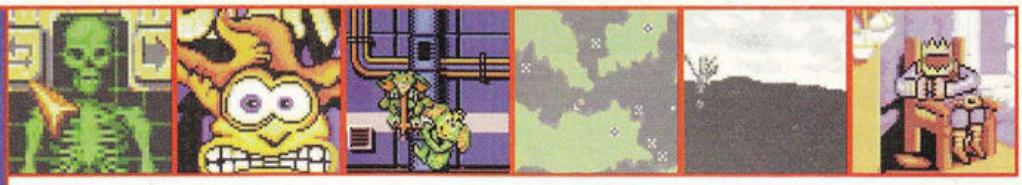
The number of bargains available through mail order has never been greater – just follow our guide.

1. Before you send any money, ring the supplier to make sure the item you require is in stock. Ask questions about the company's policy on delivery and returns of faulty equipment. Make sure there are no hidden costs such as postage and packaging. Find out when you can realistically expect to receive your goods.
2. Make sure you read the small print on ads.
3. Beware of companies that don't include their address on their adverts, or don't answer or return your calls.
4. By far the best method of payment is by credit card. If you're ordering goods that come to more than £100 in total value, you are legally entitled to claim compensation from some credit companies if the retailer goes bust. Check your credit card company's policy. You can also try to get extra insurance in advance.
5. If you're not paying by credit card, pay by cheque. Never send cash, and avoid postal orders.
6. Always keep a record of your order, and make sure you keep it somewhere safe. If you're buying by credit card keep a note of the time of the order and ask for an order number. When ordering anything over the telephone, double-check the price before you part with your money.
7. If you are sending a cheque keep a note of the cheque number, the date and the exact value. Make sure you know the name and some details of the mail order company.
8. When you receive your goods, check them carefully. If anything is missing or faulty, contact the supplier immediately.
9. Order from the most recent issue of *ST FORMAT*.
10. If a problem does arise, contact the supplier first. Calmly and politely tell them your problem. Most problems turn out to be minor hitches or misunderstandings, which can easily be resolved. If you think you have a genuine grievance, contact your local Trading Standards Officer. The number is in the phone book.

BUYER BEWARE

Inclusion in this list does not mean that *ST FORMAT* endorses or recommends libraries, user groups or companies in any way.

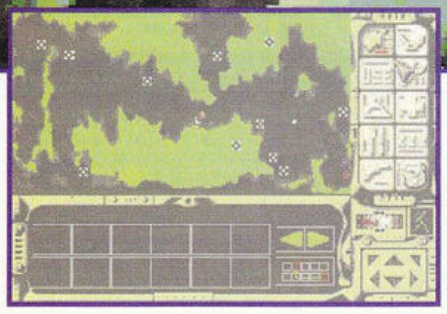
If you run a PD library, or a user group/club, and you'd like it to be included in the list, please send your details for inclusion (and your latest catalogue if it's a PD library) to: The Directory, *ST FORMAT*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.



So cheats definitely prosper, then. Nice houses, tax breaks and positions on executive boards... Simon Forrester enjoys the easy life.

Gamesbusters

Robinson's Requiem



Crashing spaceships was Herbert's speciality. This particular smash-up was his fifth in as many days.

No one had the heart to tell Graham that he was holding the map upside down. They never saw him again...

Had your fill of fish? If you don't know what I'm talking about, you obviously haven't read last month's issue, complete with part two of our *Robinson's Requiem* solution. The following advice won't make much sense to you, then...

Go back to the main clearing where you killed Pavlov 95. In the centre of the map is a small enclosed area where hopping deer-like creatures live. Lay some snares in the area and leave them. The only problem with snares is that you get the meat, but not the fur. BRANCH + WIRE = SNARE but save one wire for later.

Go south. Don't eat the red fruit, because it's very poisonous. Head up a slope to the east to a plateau, where you'll find an apple tree. Take some apples for food. Now head up a slope to the west and follow it round to the east. You'll be fired at by three centaurs (half-man, half-horse things). Stab them and retrieve an arrow from each one – you don't need the bows.

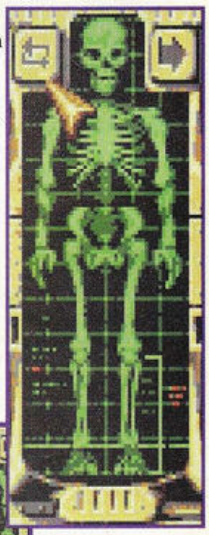
Head northeast across a bridge and get ready to do battle with more centaurs armed with hatchets. Take a hatchet as soon as possible, because they're excellent weapons. The head centaur has a computer – take it and return to the jungle via the cave.

Return to the crash site. In the far north there is a slope to climb. At the top, go south, then head east across the bridge. To the south there is a majurina plant. Take some leaves because they're useful if you're under stress or in pain (sewing up wounds without anesthetic is possible). However eating too many at once will kill you. To the north there is a patrolling tiger. Shoot it with the bow and arrows or with the laser and take its fur. Go further north to find a cave entrance and enter it with all your furs on, because it's -20°C in there *(Sounds bracing – Nick)*.

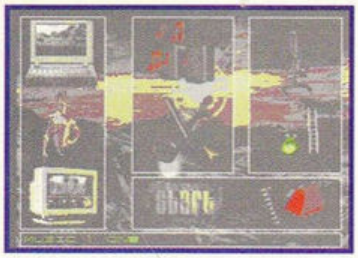
Follow the passage to a large cavern. A pterodactyl will attack – the same rules apply as with the eagle (see last month's installment). When it's dead, cross to the northeastern passage. Follow it into another cave where Diogenes 48 is waiting with a knife. Kill him and take a computer, a razor and a video game (it doesn't serve any purpose in the game, so dispose of it). The razor can be used for shaving your character's face (not strictly necessary, but definitely hygienic). Return to the previous cavern and take the northern passage to reach the exit to the canyon.

If you enter the canyon in daylight you should remove your clothes and put on the leaf hat, because it is very hot and sunny here. To the west there are four bison. Shoot the first two from a distance with the laser. Be careful here, because if they charge at you they can deafen you, break your limbs, or kill you.

Continue west and look for a passage to the north. Go through



The bleak landscape stretched away into infinity. Too late Frank realised he'd stepped into a cliched novel.



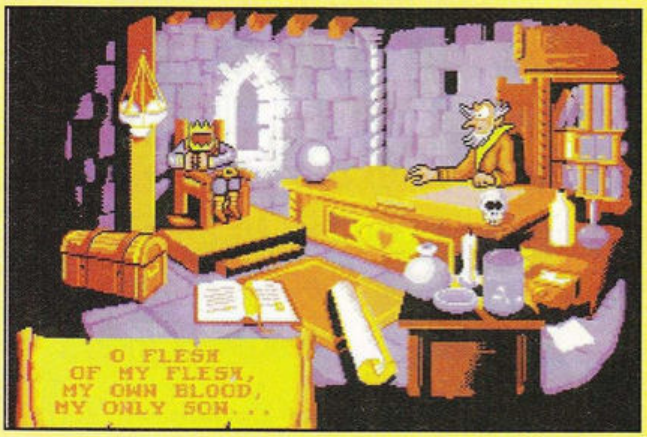
Nice intro screen, but don't feel safe or secure because of it.

and continue north to find Nietzsche 26. Next to him are three pumpkins which provide a great deal of water when eaten, but weigh 5kg each. Listen to what he says, then head east before starting up the slope which runs west.

Continue over the bridge and into a village. The locals won't like you, by the way – they zigzag towards you, then stab with their spears. Kill them with the hatchet and take some spears if you wish (they're good, but heavy, and must be retrieved after each throw). There are cacti which provide moist food, a field of potatoes to the north and a lake stuffed full of fish. To the west there is a 3-litre gourd hanging from a hut. Take it and fill it with water from the lake.

So here you are again, surviving on fish and water until the next installment.

VICTORIA CROSS



It's nice to see grown kings cry. The scene is set in *Gobliins 2*.

Occasionally, one individual stands out from the rest of the human race for their honour, bravery and altruism. If someone sends me a blow torch, I'll carve a chunk off the *ST FORMAT* cannon for Ted Appleby, who selflessly came to the aid of the floundering players in issue 81.

David Thatcher was sitting alone in a fox-hole in *Goblins 2*, when Ted strode across the battlefield, saying, "To get the metal for the blacksmith to forge, send Winkle to the guard's room to collect a sword then give it to the blacksmith." As the bullets bounced off Ted, the writer dropped the scenario in favour of straight prose.

David also wanted to know how to get the king's crown in *Cadaver*. First, go to the king's armoury and take the shield (with the king's device), the breastplate (Wulf 3), the helm (with the circle of gold) and the well-wrought sword. Go south, west and south to the treasury. Open the chest, take the coin and the meat, then go north to the ante-room. Push the button and you'll be transported to the inner treasury. Take the crown, charm and coins before pulling the lever to return to the ante-room. Now go east, east, north, east, east and south to the chapel.

Finally, J Pollard wanted to know how to get the hammer in the dragon's lair in *Shadowgate*. Take the shield with you. When you get inside, don't take everything because the shield soon becomes too hot to hold.

Well done, Ted – we'll send you £25 for your generosity.

The Espers

```
   Mankind has a common ground - there is a place that exists in the twilight
of conciousness and sleep. A place with no name, for it has many in the
languages we speak. One thing, though, is common to all man - it is the place
of the power of good.
   This power has grown to such an extent that it has become the attention of
the powers of darkness, who're descending upon the land in dark clouds of evil
souls. There is only one way to defeat this power - the esper Ultima.
   It is your task to find Ultima and bring it into contact with the evil
spirits.
   As your astrally speeding conciousness swoops down over the landscape, you
see four towers at the northeast, southeast, southwest and northwest corners
of the realm. It is your task to collect the magical esper at the top of each
tower.
   Only Ultima is needed to defeat the evil, but the others will give your
astral conciousness important powers it lacks. Use Pisci for the powers of the
fish, Arachni for those of a spider, and Amphi for those of a frog.
   Ribbit.

   You're looking down into a ravine to the south. You can follow its edge
from the northwest to the southeast, or explore the forest to the east.

EXAMINE RAVINE
```

The Hairy's adventure game promises to be the first of quite a few off-beat romps. You might want to avoid him after this. We do.

Two months ago, we ran an adventure game on the Cover Disk. Although a copy of the source was included, many non-programmers have written in for help. The following solution is so simple, we're even going to show you what to type *(Very generous – Nick)*. These commands are in long strings that can be entered on one line, hitting return once to carry them all out.

This solution takes the shortest route through the game, missing out a lot of locations and objects. You start your quest standing at the edge of the ravine. The first thing you'll need is the esper Amphi, in the north-west tower, so type:

e n w n w n n
take amphi

While you're in the neighbourhood, there are a few other things you'll need, the first being the ore to the east of the tower that you can now get to using Amphi:

s s e n ne e
take ore

You'll also require the matches hidden in the cave:

w sw s e n
take matches

Next, you need to make your way to the southeast corner of the map to get the next esper, Pisci, stopping off briefly to get the dynamite from the shed:

s w s e s e s se ne n
take dynamite
s sw e e se
take pisci

Once you have Pisci, you can jump off the nearby ledge and swim along the river to the southwest island to claim the third esper:

nw n se sw w w w nw nw nw s s s
take arachni

You'll need a torch, so head east to Rache and give her your matches:

e e
give matches to rache

And now you can escape the river, using the spring in the riverside cave:

nw w n n se se se n
use spring

However, you'll need to jump straight back into the river, this time climbing into the cave near the point where you jumped in:

w se e e n se n

You should now be standing in an underground tunnel complex, at the end of which is the esper Ultima:

n n nw w ne n e
take ultima

There's an easy way back out of the tunnels. You'd probably find it by accident anyway, if you wandered around enough:

w s sw se s s

Once again, you'll need to use the spring to get back into the forest, before heading over to the bridge where Colon's waiting for you:

se sw w w w n
use spring
w n w n e

You didn't work out what it was he wanted? Okay, so it wasn't much of a clue:

give ore to colon

Which means all you have to do now is dispose of the shack, and use the catapult:

e n w n
use dynamite
use catapult

And you've just finished *The Espers*. The next one won't be quite so simple... ***stf***

```
go east

   If forest paths could talk, this one would make some exclamation of
surprise as it hit a small cliff rising to the west. It can't, though, so it
doesn't.

examine cliff

   It looks almost as surprised as the path that hit it (but the path doesn't
have a description).

examine path

   Okay, so I lied.
```

Very droll, Hairy. Very droll.

Cyber Talk

Hip, groovy, on the telly, in the papers and coming to an ST near you... it's the Internet, of course. *ST FORMAT* has staked a claim.

You've seen the ads over the last few months, but you're still not sure what FutureNet is all about. Allow me to explain. FutureNet is Future Publishing's rapidly expanding World Wide Web site, packed to the hilt with features, news, reviews, bargains and even software for you to download.

We've recently given you all the software you need to access the World Wide Web (see Cover Disks 78 and 81), plus all the information you need to navigate the Net (see *STF 81*), so why not start your Internet travels with a trip to FutureNet?

What's on offer?

FutureNet provides features, news, essential contacts and links for all of Future's 30-plus magazines, including *.net*, *The .net Directory* and, of course, *ST FORMAT*.

You can order back issues, enter our competitions and even take advantage of special reader offers, all from the comfort of your ST keyboard. You needn't worry about evil hackers getting hold of your credit card details either, because FutureNet's server utilises encryption software to prevent Internet fraud.

Then, having stocked up on bargains, you can sit back and fill your noodle with the day's Computing News. Or, if you prefer, you can check out FutureNet's World News, which is also updated daily.

You can also download ST software from our FTP site. What more could you want? Just point your browser at **http://www.futurenet.co.uk** and bookmark the index page once you've registered your details using *CAB 1.0*. It really couldn't be easier!

Nicholas Peers

ST FORMAT FTP SITE

As well as the software mentioned in last month's Internet feature, our FTP site also includes all the PD and shareware programs from Cover Disks 71 and 72, plus an assortment of useful utilities.

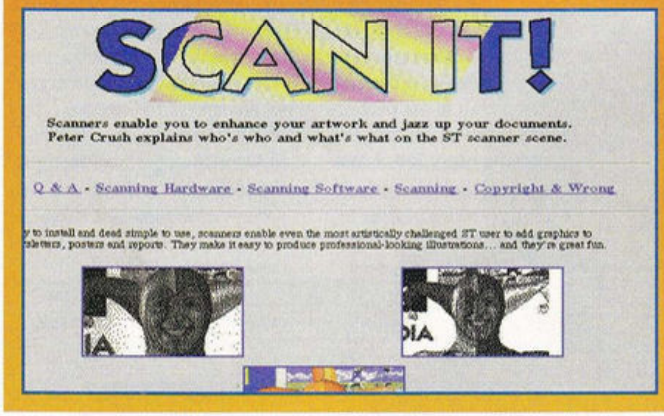
Programs include *Speed of Light*, *Egale 2.7*, *Disk Opus* and top demos of *SubStation*, *Alien Thing* and *Kev's World*.

To take a gander at the files, point your Web browser at ftp://ftp.futurenet.co.uk/incoming/futurenet. If you're using ftp software, type in: ftp.futurenet.co.uk and go to the directory /incoming/futurenet/. Use your e-mail address as a password.

ST FORMAT DIRECT

Okay, so you know what FutureNet offers generally, but what's available for hard-core Atari buffs?

- **Features**
  It's all here in our bite-sized features guide – everything from making music on your ST to the hardware and software behind the CD-ROM revolution.
- **ST Answers**
  Frank Charlton and the gang crowd into the cyber ward for insane STs... and their owners. Whether you're troubled by viruses, assembly code, comms or badly-behaved STs, this is the place for you.
- **Machines of the future**
  We take a closer look at the latest Atari clones, GeSoft's Eagle and C-Lab's Falcon Mk2, and ask whether they have what it takes to topple the TT and Falcon.
- **Hands on**
  Discover exactly how to take your ST or STE apart – and put it back together again – with our practical guide to fitting a composite video port. Or how about designing your own 3D game? We show you how.
- **E-mail the team**
  Now you can get in touch with the team that produces *ST FORMAT*. Whether you want to pose technical queries, suggest features or send us compliments, you're only a mouse-click away from our desktops.
- **Bargains**
  Connect to FutureNet and order a back issue or take advantage of our reader offers, all without ever leaving the comfort of your ST.



With over 100,000 hits every day, FutureNet is one of the most popular Web sites in the UK. Point your Web browser at http://www.futurenet.co.uk to find out why...

Feedback

The camera-shy Nick Peers pulls off the paper bag just long enough to read your letters.

Help wanted!

This is an open letter to any budding Atari artist. Last December a chap said he would put my coat of arms on disk for me, but to date I have not heard from him, so I am assuming he cannot do the job.

I can provide a full-size copy, but I would like the image to be shrunk so I can put it where I want. I can't do it myself because I'm a lousy artist and, because of arthritis, I don't have a steady hand. Long live the ST!

John A Sitton, Stevenage

stf: *One option is to scan in the image you sent us. The CY Services Imagesetting Bureau (☎ 0115 9605377) is one of three bureaux who can do the job (see issue 75 for more details), but it's unlikely you'll get the quality you're after, especially if you want to be able to resize the image. A far better option is for an artist to produce a vector graphic version. If anyone fancies the job, contact us at: Feedback, ST FORMAT, 30 Monmouth St, Future Publishing, Bath BA1 2BW. We'll pass your details on to John.*

Fancy turning John Sitton's coat of arms into a vector graphic? Send us you details, then.

Help with STOS

I am writing to say how much I enjoy your magazine *ST FORMAT*. I am only nine, but I like programming and when I am older I would like to be a programmer. I have a few questions:

1 Will there be any more *STOS* tutorials in *ST FORMAT*?

2 My dad tried to get me *Printing Press* but the PD library said it isn't available any more. Is this true, and if not, where can I get it from?

3 Can you translate a *STOS* game into a game on the Amiga version *AMOS*?

Matthew Drewery, Peterborough

STOSSER **diskzine is the perfect companion for *STOS* users. Contact your favourite PD library for a copy today.**

PS: If you have a spare copy of the *STOS* manual I would be eternally grateful if you could send it to me, because I would like to learn *STOS*.

stf: *Thank you very much for your kind comments, Matthew. I look forward to seeing your name in lights in the future!*

As for your queries, **1** *we aren't planning any more* STOS *tutorials at the moment. If you leaf through your dad's back issue collection you'll find Tony Greenwood's informative* STOS *series in issues 71 and 72, plus the many STOS Corner sections in ST Answers. Unfortunately we don't have any spare copies of the* STOS Basic *manual – if anyone can help, let us know. We'll pass your details on to Matthew.*

2 Printing Press *is available from Goodmans PDL (☎ 01782 335650), on disk number GD1347.* **3** *You can translate* STOS *code into* AMOS *code, but it is quite a fiddly operation and not 100 per cent effective.*

Currency crisis

On Cover Disk 81 there is a useful program launcher called *Easy Go 2*. The documentation says to register it in America, and the total fee comes to $24.95 including shipping (about £16.66). This is okay until one adds the bank charges for a dollar order, which double the registration cost!

Is there anywhere in the UK where I could register? Alternatively, is there a subtle way of dodging these over-the-top charges?

R Dewhurst, Bolton

stf: *I contacted Anthony Watson of Mountain Software and discussed your problem. The first piece of good news is that* Easy Go *now costs only $10 plus shipping to register. He'll also accept traveller's cheques as long as they are in US dollars. These are cheaper than a draft or money order – ask your local travel agent or bank for details.*

Much praise...

Whenever the new issue of *ST FORMAT* arrives on my doormat I experience a strange feeling: excitement at the thought of receiving two disks full of the latest software, and dread when I think this issue might well be my last.

I was a regular buyer of *Your Sinclair* when it was around, and cried when I discovered it was ending. I really enjoyed it that much. There was talk of carrying it on as a fanzine – does anyone have any information?

I look at the ST and see the same pattern being woven

SHORT AND SHARP

Hello Mr Bitter and Twisted, 1996! I enjoy your magazine and have done for four years but there is no ST market left. Your magazine is the best selling because there are no other ST mags around.
M Tolladay (via e-mail)

stf: If there was no ST market left I doubt we'd fill so much of ST FORMAT with reviews of new products each month. ST FORMAT earned the label 'best selling' when there were four magazines in the market, which is why it has outlasted all competitors. And I'm not bitter and twisted any more, just mildly psychotic. Ask my team...

I received my copy of issue 82, but I discovered my subscriber's Wonder Disk was missing. Please could you forward me a copy.
A Large Number of Subscribers, Anywheresville

stf: Our apologies for the mysterious non-appearance of some of this month's Wonder Disks. If you didn't receive the disk, the newsletter or (God forbid) the magazine itself, please contact our Subscriptions department on ☎ 01225 822511. If you're sending a letter, please label it 'Subscription Problem' so we can forward it to the correct department and resolve your problem as soon as possible.

NEXT MONTH

Mind Your Own Business!

Your ST can sort out your personal finances or help you run a business. Delve into the world of spreadsheets, databases and accounts packages with our complete guide to business-oriented software.

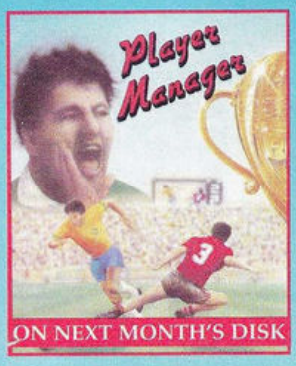
Game Design

Now you've designed your game, we show you how to turn your ideas into something more concrete and playable.

Jaguar CD

We've finally got our hands on the elusive Jaguar CD and will be taking an in-depth look at JTS Atari's undermarketed add-on.

Plus: All the latest news, reviews and the help you need to make the most of your Atari.



ST FORMAT **ST FORMAT 84 on sale Mon 10 June**

ON THE CARDS

If there's a feature you'd like to see in a coming issue of *ST FORMAT*, please write to: On the Cards, *ST FORMAT*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW and we'll do our best to fit it in.

- Animation techniques – step-by-step guides
- Input devices – keyboards, mice, light pens, graphics tablets...
- CPXs – what are CPXs, and how can they benefit you?
- CD-ROM drives – the ultimate beginner's guide
- Video digitising – capture and edit moving images

DON'T MISS OUT

MAG*SAVE

There's an easy way to guarantee your copy of *ST FORMAT*. Fill out the form below and take it to your newsagents, and they'll keep a copy for you each month. Go on, don't miss out, do it now.

Please reserve/deliver *ST FORMAT* each month, beginning with the July issue, which is on sale Monday 10 June.

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_____

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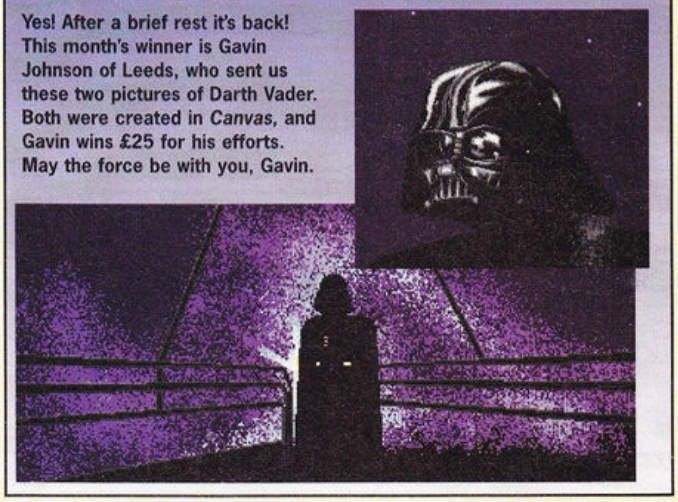
To the newsagent: *ST FORMAT* is published by Future Publishing ☎ 01225 442244 (Circulation)

RESERVE YOUR COPY NOW!

PIXEL PAINTING

Yes! After a brief rest it's back! This month's winner is Gavin Johnson of Leeds, who sent us these two pictures of Darth Vader. Both were created in *Canvas*, and Gavin wins £25 for his efforts. May the force be with you, Gavin.



again. Games not being converted, companies giving up, the buyout of the parent company and a reduction in the size of the magazine. It amazes me though that someone like you can have the courage to stand up for the ST. Well done, *ST FORMAT!*

Perhaps the ST's time has come, but then I think to myself – what is it that keeps the ST alive? *ST FORMAT!* Without you ST owners would have nowhere to go and the ST would end up like all the world's Spectrums, broken, unused, unloved. You can't let that happen. The fact Falcons are still being made gives me confidence, as do companies like Gasteiner and The Upgrade Shop.

I suppose I'm just begging you not to close. Well, that's all for now. Keep up the good work. We need you.

John Cheseldine, Leeds

stf: *Sniff. I don't know what to say. Thanks John, we all appreciate your comments and understanding immensely. Oh, and a little secret – we plan to be around for quite a while yet!*

Does anyone know of any Spectrum fanzines? Let me know and I'll pass the details to John.

Concerned...

I am writing this letter as a concerned subscriber. I have been told, via the newsletter of a PD library, that come December 1996 Future Publishing will cease to produce *ST FORMAT*.

I hope that this is not true, but I would be grateful if you could confirm or deny this. If it is true and the cost of continuing to produce *ST FORMAT* as a paper magazine is too high, you might want to turn it into a disk-based magazine, something *Stampede* tried a few years ago. Or will you go the same way as everybody else and just abandon the ST?

And another thing: if Atari produced cars and not computers, I seem to remember reading that it would be legally responsible for continuing to support its product.

Stephen Fairclough Barszczak, Bradford

stf: *Believe nothing unless it comes directly from us at* ST FORMAT. *Rumours like this have been flying around since the turn of the year, but so far none have proved correct. Future has a long history of remaining committed to markets long after other publishing houses have pulled out and* ST FORMAT *is proof, if proof is needed, that the company is continuing that fine tradition.*

Yes, the magazine has fewer pages, but reducing our costs ensures it will survive long after all its competition has gone. There aren't as many products to review, but we're still managing to cover a wide variety of material each month. If you support us, we'll support you. We can promise no more than that.

Send your letters to the editor, Nick Peers, at: Feedback, *ST FORMAT*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW or e-mail: npeers@futurenet.co.uk. You can also reach him via our Web site at: http://www.futurenet.co.uk. Note: letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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FIRST COMPUTER CENTRE

HOW TO ORDER

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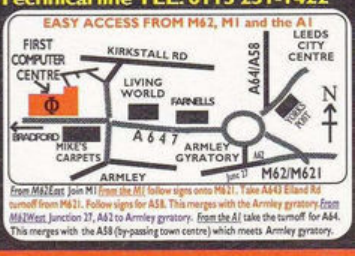

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Probably the best investment you'll ever make for your ST.

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Canon BJC70Colour Portable colour printer, 30 page ASF.	£235.95
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Canon BJC4100Colour High quality colour/fast mono printing 360 dpi.	£283.95
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Star

Star LC90 9 pin mono ASF built in, push tractor optional.	£105.95
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Star LC240C 24 pin Colour ASF built in, 4 LQ fonts.	£132.95
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CITIZEN

All Citizen printers have a 2 year warranty

ABC Colour printer Simple (as easy as ABC) to use 24 pin printer. Comes as standard with 50 sheet Auto sheet feeder. Tractor feed optional at £34.99	£135.99
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- New Micro Dry print technology
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Stylus Colour II 720 dpi, 4ppm Black, 2ppm Colour.	£314.95
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The First Computer Centre is a fully authorised Steinberg reseller, providing only full spec. UK Software/Hardware.

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Genlock for Atari/PC

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The Auto-Scan is a 14", .28dp, MPR II compliant monitor. STE/FM,Falcon, Amiga and PC compatible. Ideal for both business and games use.

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New low prices

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All our monitors are UK spec. All monitors come complete with connecting leads.

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HP550/560/660 col.cart.	£26.99
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Star LC10/20/100 colour	£7.99
Star LC240C mono	£8.49
Star LC240C colour	£13.99
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All disks are guaranteed. All branded disks come with labels

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*add £3.00 delivery if purchasing just one Posso or Banx box. Normal delivery when purchased with other product or when buying 2 or more.

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New version of this famous 400 DPI scanner. Includes Touch up, Merge-it and OCR software enabling you to alter and manipulate high resolution images. Needs 1 Mb of RAM and runs in mono only. HD required to use OCR software.

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Zy-Fi Pro 16 Watts	£57.99
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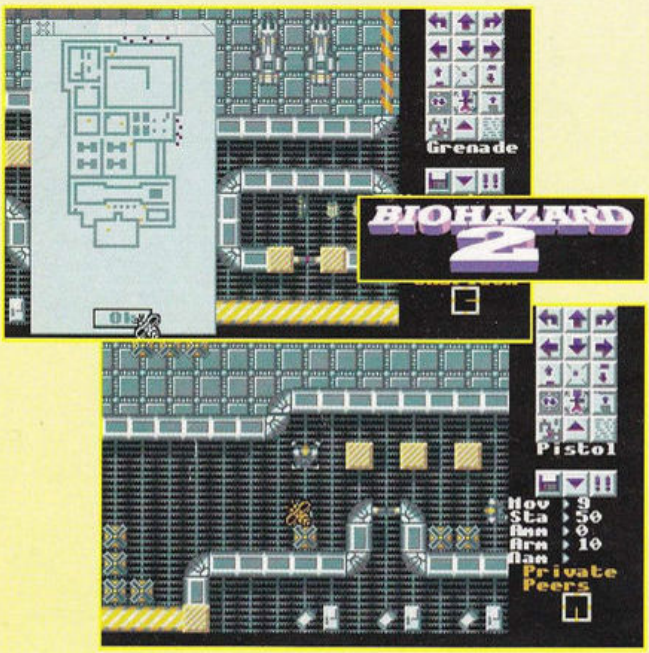
Saitek Megagrip II	£12.99

ST FORMAT

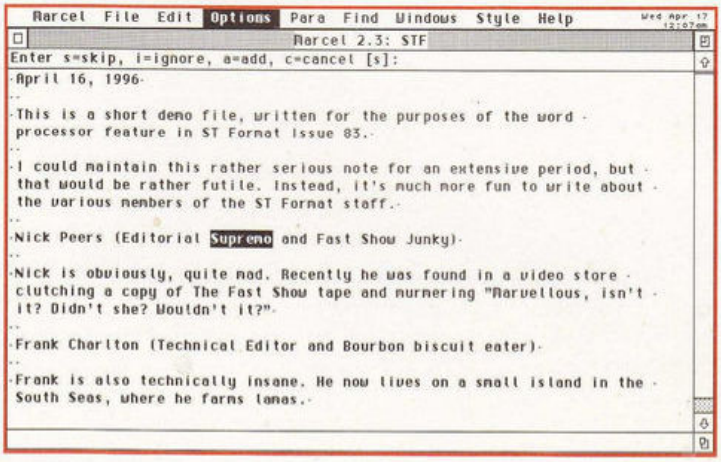
This month's COVER DISK

BIO HAZARD 2

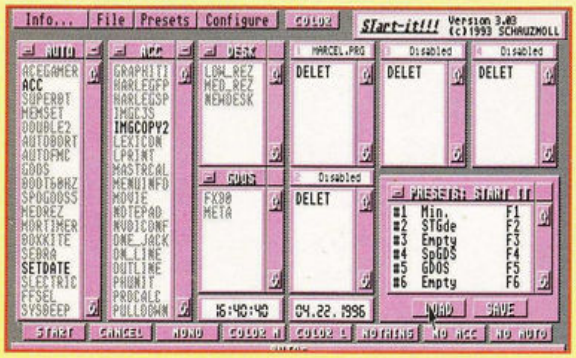
Exclusive demo of Village Software's new strategy hit. Can you rid the galaxy of alien infestation? *Bio Hazard 2* runs on all Ataris with 1Mb of memory.



MARCEL

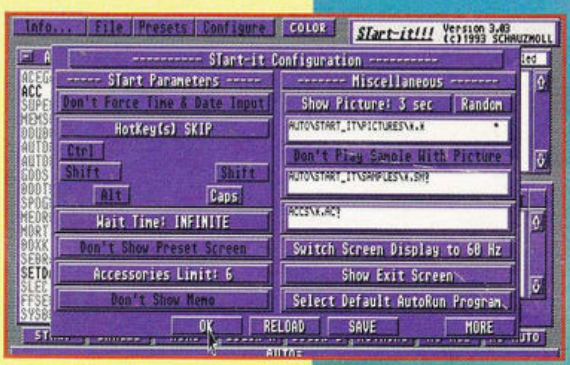


The greatest shareware word processor ever, *Marcel* boasts many high-end functions found only in expensive commercial packages. Includes British dictionary for the spelling checker. All Ataris (dictionary requires 1Mb).



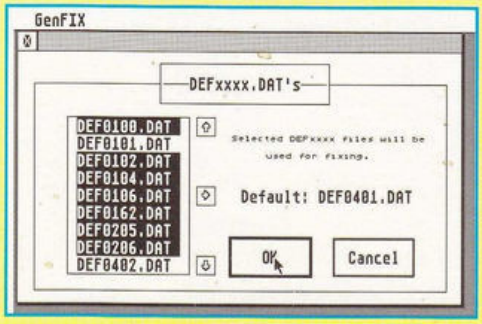
START-IT!

Keep your Auto programs and Accessories under control with this boot disk manager for all Ataris.



IPRN 0.46

Improve the speed of your printer by up to a factor of eight with this accelerator utility for all Ataris.

GENFIXER

Fix *STOS* programs to work properly on a variety of machines, including TOS 2.06 systems and the Falcon.