

SPECIAL SOLUTIONS NEWS

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Software to Stretch the Imagination

Hours of fascination, satisfaction and above all fun are in store for users of Craftshop 1 and Craftshop 2. These are two highly colourful and absorbing software packages designed to encourage and stretch artistic imagination, and are particularly rewarding for those users with physical disabilities. Their simplicity and attractiveness make them ideal for gaining the attention of users and enables anyone who can use a mouse to create stunning designs.

In the Craftshop 1 program a section called 'Patterns' allows the creation of exciting and complex designs using patterns produced by combining simple shapes - this exotic feathered owl for example, while another section called 'Stitching' allows 2D and 3D curve stitching designs to be created and rotated to give the appearance of mobiles.

In Craftshop 2, for those who cannot hold a needle, the 'Embroider' section allows intricately 'embroidered' designs to be created using patterns formed by combining stitches. The last section, 'Tiling', in combination with 'Acorn's Paint' allows small designs to be created and repeated across the screen achieving a marvellous textile design effect.

Produced by 4Mation, the innovative firm based in Barnstaple, Devon, Craftshop 1 and Craftshop 2 have been created specifically to take advantage of the speed and power of the Archimedes computers, and as a matter of company policy each program comes complete with a site licence for the purchaser.

Each package costs £29.00 plus VAT incl P&P. For further information contact 4Mation Educational Resources, Linden Lea, Rock Park, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 9AQ. Telephone 0271 45566



Acorn 

ANALOGUE JOYSTICK FACILITY FOR BBC A3000 COMPUTER

Morley Electronics, the North Shields based hardware specialists have just launched their Combined Analogue/User Port Expansion Card that fits internally in the BBC A3000 computer. This enables the connection of an analogue joystick which is of significant benefit to people with disabilities.

For those interested in the technical functions the analogue port is compatible with that on the BBC Model B or Master 128 computer and is accessible using in-built OS calls or the BASIC ADVAL function. The user port is a full specification 6522 VIA running at 2MHz. This is also accessed using the standard in-built OS calls. The IIC port included on the expansion card allows a large range of Philips peripheral devices to be easily connected to the computer. The software for driving the IIC port is included as a module as standard in RISC OS.

The provision of simple connection for aids such as analogue joysticks and Concept Keyboards to BBC A3000 systems has ensured rapid sales. The expansion card costs £69.00 plus VAT, for further information contact Ray Hope, Morley Electronics Limited, Morley House, West Chirton, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE29 7TY Telephone 091 257 6355

EVENTS CALENDAR

Acorn will be present at the following events:

- ANNUAL CONFERENCE COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS - 27, 28, 29 June, University of Bristol
- NAIDEX - 17, 18, 19 October, Alexandra Palace, London

BRIAN'S SELF-HELP PROGRAM

Computer programmer Brian Vallot-Lewis is a qualified electronics engineer and has been working with computer hardware since his days at Marconi in 1970.

At the age of 19 he discovered that he had Friedreichs Ataxia, a progressive disease of the nervous system. Brian still wanted to work, so he tried to find programs that were available for people with disabilities. He found many, but very little to allow them access to standard software. The only solution appeared to be to develop some software himself.

After many months of work with support from Birmingham Social Services Centre for Special Needs Technology and the backing of computer consultants for the disabled, Graham and Vanessa Lees of Le Computer, Chelmsford, two revolutionary programs were produced. SPEEDWRITER and ENCODER are designed to then facilitate use of a computer system for operators with either limited use of hands or no direct keyboard access. This makes available the same standard software as their able-bodied colleagues would use.

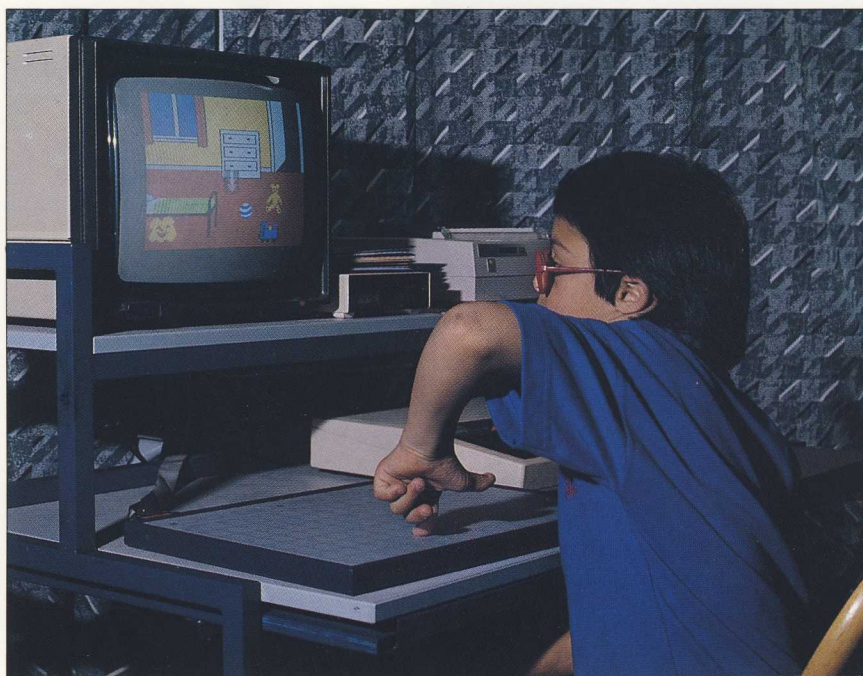
Both are currently available for use on Acorn's BBC Master series computers, and are being developed for use on the 32-bit machines soon. SPEEDWRITER is a predictive typing aid which offers a personal dictionary, that only requires minimal key access to create certain words and phrases in most situations. ENCODER gives users total access to standard software through the use of switches or sensors.

The systems are recommended by the Aids to Communication in Education Centre in Oxford for many of the clients assessed there. They are also being used by several educational authorities in their special schools. SPEEDWRITER can equally be used to great advantage by able-bodied people.

RRP for SPEEDWRITER is £49.95 and for ENCODER is £75.00 plus VAT. VAT exemption forms are available. For further information please contact Vanessa Lees, Le Computer, PO Box 29, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 1QS Telephone 0245 362225



Kathy Williams and Ray, the computer system from Le Computer that Kathy calls her little ray of sunshine.



John Hutchinson of Brookfield School, Reading, using BLOB software with the Concept Keyboard

BLOB - THE COMPUTER FRIEND

BLOB is a very friendly, colourful character who features strongly in two fun software packages designed specifically for the developmentally young. Developed by Widgit Software, both BLOB 1 and BLOB 2 can be operated from one or two switches, which makes them ideal for young people with disabilities.

Originally written for the BBC Model B, the programs were developed within Project Christopher in conjunction with the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children. Both are now available for use on the BBC A3000 and Archimedes computer systems, and can operate with a wide range of input devices including switches, joysticks, fire buttons, Concept Keyboard and the Micromike.

BLOB 1 is a first introduction to computers. The activities are simple, colourful and designed to gain the user's attention using direct cause and effect exercises. Although there are goals to achieve, children enjoy meeting and playing with BLOB, Teddy, Cat and Spiky, and users who can show little positive achievement are not discouraged.

BLOB 2 extends the tasks and levels of difficulty found in BLOB 1, and is concerned with selection procedures and on the making of decisions and choices. It aims to assist control, spatial awareness and directional skills, and provides the first stage in forward planning. Users who can happily manage all of the games at all levels are well on the way to using the computer as a powerful learning tool. 'Count with BLOB' has also recently been introduced and is also compatible with the Archimedes range.

RRP is £18.00 plus VAT per program. For more information contact Mike Detheridge, Widgit Software, 102 Radford Road, Leamington Spa, Warwick CV31 1LF. Telephone 0926 885303

ROCK - AN INNOVATION FROM NORWAY

Whilst the Concept Keyboard has significantly improved ease of access and use of computers among people with disabilities, the problem of adapting existing software programs to exploit these new benefits has now been removed by a product called ROCK.

Produced by the Rehab Centre, Nesoddangen, Norway, ROCK is a RISC OS Concept Keyboard definition program which can be used with the BBC A3000 and Archimedes computers for defining customised Concept Keyboard overlays.

The combined power of ROCK and Acorn's RISC OS operating system means that it is possible to load a special 'module' of software which intercepts Concept Keyboard commands and converts them into those which the existing program expects. Thus most programs can be run using a Concept Keyboard, and many more people can operate a whole variety of applications on computers as a result.

With ROCK up to ten overlays are provided at the same time, giving the user in effect a total of 1280 cells and 326,400 characters. ROCK works with most programs, any Concept Keyboard, and allows full mouse emulation.

ROCK costs £29.95 plus VAT and is distributed in the UK by Widgit Software, 102 Radford Road, Leamington Spa, Warwick CV31 1LF. Telephone 0926 885303



ACORN-BASED SOFTWARE FOR MATHEMATICS AND WORD PROCESSING

Two software packages ideal for people with special needs are **PenDown II** and **Numerator**, produced by Longman Logotron of Cambridge. Fully compatible with A4 and A3 Concept Keyboards they are suitable for children, students and teachers of all ages and abilities.

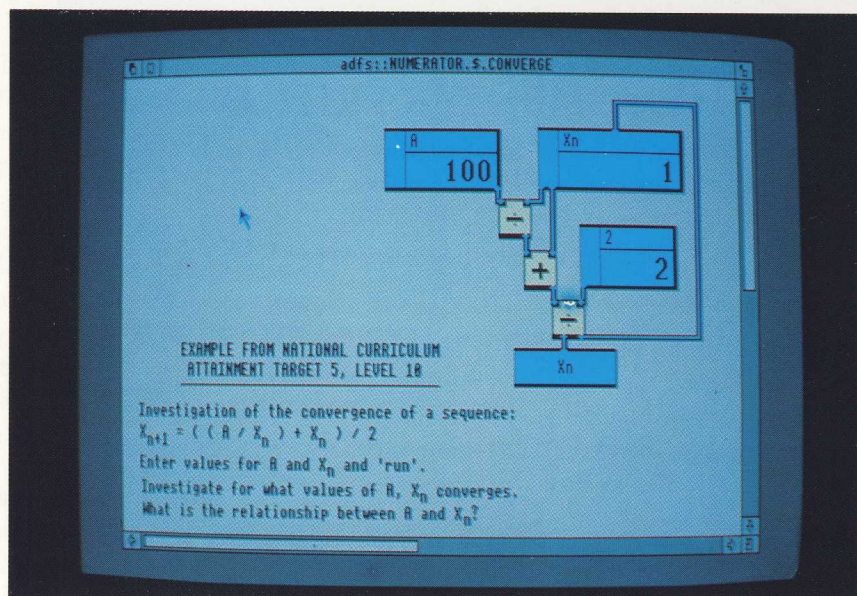
PenDown II - an important word processing package for people with disabilities - was designed by Peter Hunter who produced the highly successful PenDown for Acorn's BBC Model B almost five years ago. It takes full advantage of Acorn's multitasking operating system and the RISC architecture. If users can work with a mouse, PenDown II is even easier to use. Logotron's Publisher, Chris Roper feels that "PenDown II will satisfy most of the word processing needs of Archimedes users". The pre-release version of PenDown II is available from May 1990 at £39.00 plus VAT with a free upgrade to the final version, which will be shipped in September 1990.

Numerator, also developed by Peter Hunter, is a highly visual mathematical construction kit which can be used by users of all abilities from the age of six.

It is used to tackle a variety of the attainment targets in the National Curriculum for Mathematics. Numerator runs on all 8-bit micros through to the new 32-bit machines. The RISC OS version takes full advantage of the computer's speed, extra memory and modern user interface, making it a real mathematical powerhouse. Dave Fletcher of Educational Computing said, "Numerator makes numbers flow. I have never seen anything like it for representing visually the processes of mathematics".

RRP for 8-bit machines is £43.00 plus VAT; RRP for the 32-bit range is £76.00 plus VAT.

For further information contact Gerry Daish, Longman Logotron, Dales Brewery, Gwydir Street, Cambridge CB1 2LJ Telephone 0223 323656



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