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PCW TODAY

Issue 11 Nov 98-Jan 99
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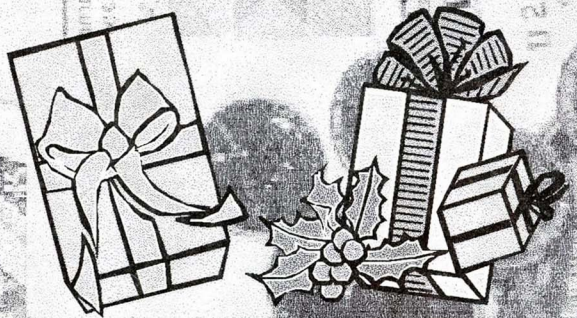

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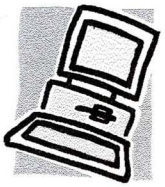

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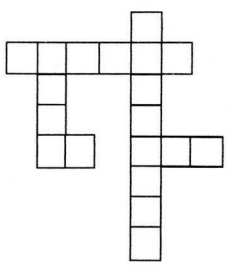

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The British Amstrad PCW Club
"Four Winds", 10 Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley,
Essex SS7 1RD Tele: 01702 551618

This Issue...

HI THERE! I hope you all have a fantastic Christmas, or if you're reading this *after* the festive season, I hope you had a great time.

To celebrate the holiday, we've put together another bumper edition for you to read around the roaring fire with the children. Or you could always curl up by the central heating, with the dog!

If you haven't bought the Christmas presents yet, there's always time to treat yourself or a loved one to a few little Amstrad goodies.

How about a couple of games, or that scanner you've always promised yourself. A quick browse through the adverts in *PCW Today* is certainly less stressful than a trudge around the shopping centre. And it's probably quite a bit cheaper too.

Whatever you do this Christmas, make sure you enjoy yourselves, and of course, have a great new year. Here's to a bug free run up to the millennium with the PCW!

Happy Christmas readers,

Adrian Braddy,
Editor.

4 **NEWS** The price of the PcW 16 is slashed again and plans for a new mouse are shelved.

6 **CLUB SCENE** Check out what's been happening at your local club.

8 **REVIEW** For a Christmas treat, we've got two recently re-released games on review.

10 **BAD FORMAT** A new series on looking after your floppy discs.

12 **COVER DISC** A beginners guide to the goodies available to cover disc subscribers.

14 **HELPFILE** Our regular pages of reader's questions and answers.

16 **QUEEN ANNE'S GATE** Our great new column with byte for all serious PcW 16 users.

18 **HISTORY** We take an affectionate look back at the eventful life of the PCW.

20 **MILLENNIUM BUG** Another look at the crisis soon to hit computers.

22 **COVER FEATURE** Why there's no need to break the bank and upgrade to a PC.

24 **MAILBAG** Our biggest ever selection of letters, with four pages of your words.

28 **ROD ON LOCOSCRIPT** Part seven of the series on getting organised.

30 **TRADER'S DIARY** Steve Denson remembers the late, great PCW mags we have known.

31 **JARGON BUSTER** More plain English with Kathleen Thorpe's series on computer lingo.

32 **MICRODESIGN** P.D Blake continues his beginners guide to DTP.

34 **THE PCW 16 PAGES** Thanks to popular demand, we've reprinted the famous 'hot keys'.

36 **PROGRAMMING** Amuse or bemuse yourself with another great listing.

38 **LANDERS** Ever wondered what shareware and public domain are? Wonder no more.

40 **CP/M** If you're bemused by the A: prompt or befuddled by DISCKIT - this is for you.

42 **PCW 16** Watch out - another 16 crash cautionary tale. Do take precautions

43 **SURVEY** Tell us about you and your PCW in our comprehensive questionnaire.

44 **PCW CONTACTS** Pick up a last minute present from our exciting small ads.

46 **LANGFORD** Britain's leading columnist is getting his accounts in order.

47 **DIRECTORY** The essential PCW company locator for all your products and services.

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news update...

Slashed!

High street PCW prices tumble to their lowest-ever level

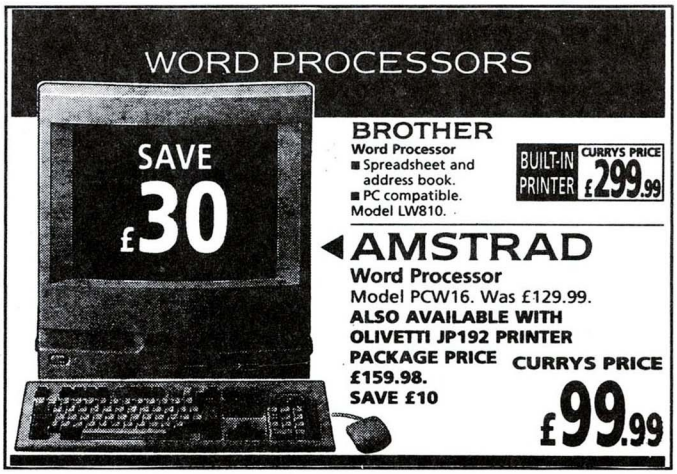
THREE giant High street chains have dramatically cut the price of the PCW to its lowest-ever level.

Dixons, Currys and PC World have all knocked a further £30 off the price of a new PcW 16, reducing it to £99.99 - the first time a PCW has been available on the High street for less than £100.

And Currys have backed-up the price cuts with a major advertising campaign in the national press. Every national daily tabloid has carried a picture of the '16 as part of a two page ad that is sure to boost the profile of the struggling word processor.

All three stores - part of the Dixons group - are also offering inkjet printer bundles for around £60 more.

A Dixons spokesman said: "The reductions come in time for Christmas, and we hope that the PcW will prove to be a popular gift."



■ **CRAZY:** The Currys advert as it appeared in the national press

When the PcW 16 was launched in 1996, it cost £368.96, or £498.20 with an inkjet printer. In just two years, that price has been cut FOUR times.

Amstrad have now sold their entire stock of PcW 16s to the Dixons group, but Amstrad's Cliff Lawson explained why he thinks the PcW has been reduced so much: "It's because of the falling PC prices - they have dropped dramatically since the '16 was launched, so Dixons have had to reduce its price accordingly."

No-one we contacted was able to say when the PcW 16 is expected to sell out, or whether a new batch is planned.

Sugar "as powerful as the Queen"

A SENSATIONAL new study has revealed that the inventor of the PCW is as powerful as the Queen and Prince Charles.

Millionaire, Alan Sugar, was rated the 100th most powerful person in Britain in the survey commissioned by The Sunday Times.

Psychologist, Dr Terry Kellard placed him equally with Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles and Prince William in the controversial assessment of the country's movers and shakers.

Sugar is chairman of Amstrad, holds a controlling share in the PC company Viglen, and is boss at Tottenham Hotspur football club.

As the brains behind the famous Amstrad PCW, Sugar is one of only two people from the computer industry listed in the top 120 of the power list.

The other is Bill Gates of Microsoft who was rated the second most powerful person in Britain, despite being an American.

Kellard took four main factors into account when compiling the survey: how relevant their vision was; how many people were influenced by it; how critical it was to the future of society; and how distinctive they were.

Sugar's latest move into the world of digital television looks set to shunt him even higher up the power charts.

SD MicroSystems scrap mouse plan

THE PCW specialist, SD MicroSystems, has scrapped plans to launch a new mouse.

The new hardware would have used the original KeyMouse interface with a new, cheaper mouse.

However, the company were not happy with the standard of the new mouse, which was described as "jerky" when tested with MicroDesign.

A more expensive mouse would have taken the total price of the package up to the same price as Creative's KeyMouse, so the project was scrapped.

Meanwhile, SD MicroSystems has gone on-line with a new Internet web site. The site includes a PCW catalogue and several links.

The site has proved hugely successful with almost 2000 hits in just a couple of months.

The company's boss, Stephen Denson, is planning further features for the site, including on-line articles about the PCW.

Storming new site for the Sixteen

THE PcW 16 has been given a serious on-line presence with a brand new web site.

PCW Today reader and budding young journalist, Mike Saunders, decided to create the site after reading about the new CP/M software under development for his computer.

Mike said: "The great '16 news in the last issue of *PCW Today* prompted me to create a web site dedicated to the machine."

He intends to include original PcW 16 programs for download on the site, once it is possible to write them. At present, the site - called '16 Storm - includes news, pictures and tutorials.

The web site is only the second ever to be dedicated to the PcW 16, the other being Creative Technology's on-line magazine, which no longer seems to be updated.

You can access '16 Storm at: www.bobbins.clara.net/pcw16.htm

PcW 16 CP/M 'coming soon'

JOHN Elliott is still working on a new version of CP/M for the PcW 16.

The acclaimed programmer says that some 'classic PCW' programs *will* run with '16 CP/M: "It depends on what they are. Mallard BASIC for example runs, though until I do keyboard redefinition it'll be a bit tricky to edit commands," he explained.

"As for other programs, it depends on whether they use CP/M 3 features or not. Graphical programs like MicroDesign will never run - full stop."

98 Software's Richard Hill believes it could be possible to produce a full version of CP/M - that will run everything but the kitchen sink - *including* MicroDesign. And he says he may well attempt to write it.

Meanwhile Amstrad has dismmissed the re-surfacing rumours that it is about to produce a second batch of PcW 16s for Dixons.

Amstrad programmer, Cliff Lawson, told *PCW Today*: "I think I can categorically deny that."

The remaining PcWs, held in stock by Dixons could be the last new PCWs ever sold in Britain.

Amstrad are now more concerned with completing a major contract for SkyDigital, producing set-top boxes for the new era of digital television.

Apology

WE would like to unreservedly apologise to Pinboard Computers, and its customers, for printing an incorrect advertisement in the last issue of *PCW Today*.

The advert we printed, carried offers and products no-longer available and was therefore misleading.

Once again, we'd like to say sorry to everyone involved.

Eye Spy

On the hunt of high-profile Amstrads

IN September, *The Guardian* printed a comment piece on buying a new PC. The writer had an ageing Amstrad, but finally decided he had to splash out on a PC...

"For some time, people had laughed at the old Amstrad, because if you asked it to do something it waited a few seconds, flashed a green light and made a 'berrr ber ber berrr' noise; which was the computer having a fag.

"But peer pressure eventually won out, and I became convinced by people who insisted it's essential to have a machine with loads of purple fish going backwards and forwards across it."

The piece goes on to say that a lot of the things you can do with your PC are useless to everyday users and claims that the new machine is actually slower than his ancient PCW...

"... it fails dismally as a time-saver. The Amstrad would take 500 berrr ber ber berrrs to lose as much time as one session screaming: 'What have you done with my article you poxy Micro-cybernetic Windows b*****d?'"

If you spot an 8256 on *The Antiques Roadshow*, or a '16 in *Cosmo*, we want to know about it. In fact, if you see any PCW in the media, drop us a line and you might even win a prize!

PCW Club Scene

Amstrad Computer Club Incorporated
Open to all Amstrad users in South Australia. Weekly meetings are held on Tuesdays at 2/24 Torreno Street, Mitcham, between 6.30pm and 9pm. Contact David Simpson, DAS@picknow.com.au

Berkshire PCW Users Group
Several members report that Ed cannot be contacted. Try him at: 121 Bullbroook Drive, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 2QR.

Birmingham and West Midlands PCW Club
To find out more about this midlands based club, get in touch with John Bell on: 0121 4343078

Brisbane PCW User Group
Mike Mackenzie runs this Australian club. To contact him from outside the country, telephone 617 32775701. Mike is also the LocoScript Software representative down under.

British Amstrad PCW Club
The group has finally got its club helpline off the ground, but they're still looking for volunteers. The latest edition of The Disc Drive has just come out and as usual it is full of great PCW features, including a lot of stuff that will interest PcW 16 users. In the meantime, the big news is a rise in subscription rates. For an ordinary member it's now £7.50 and for a postal member it costs £9.50 - a necessary rise that still represents great value for money. Details from: David Lalieu, 10 Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex SS7 1RD.

Capital Computer Club
No more corny New Zealand stereotypes I promise! The group cover PCWs along with other formats. For further information, write to: 13 Eagle Street, Karori, Wellington 6005, New Zealand.

Cornwall PCW Club
At the November meeting, the group made some major decisions. Firstly the group will continue, but will cease to have regular formal meetings. There will be informal meetings every two to three months in members' homes. The newsletter will continue on a quarterly basis, and PCs will now be covered as well. A decision on the club's future will be made in about a year. For more details, contact chairman, John Walker on 01752 706266.

Costa del Sol PCW Users Club
No longer affiliated to the U3A, the group has 15 active members. Full membership costs P3,000 per year. Meetings are fortnightly on Mondays from 11am at the Manilla Bar, Paseo Maritimo, Los Boliches. Contact Ken Tether on 95 293 2096 for more details.

Crawley PCW Club
The club are planning the biggest PCW event in years. The Crawley PCW Day will take place on Saturday 15th May next year. PCW users from across the country are invited and among the guests will be *PCW Today* editor - Adrian Braddy, John Elliott and Brian Watson. Watch out for more details in future editions. But put the date in your diaries. The Christmas competition is to design a logo and poster for the PCW Day. Contact John Fisher on: 01732 863062.

Devon PCW Club
Contact: Chairman, Peter Godderidge on 01626 330373, Treasurer, Christine Stone on 01392 252646, or Newsletter Editor, Andy Young on 01395 577972.

Hastings & Eastbourne PCW Club
On December 21st, there will be a fun evening - all ideas are welcomed. The latest newsletter is another packed issue, it includes the usual sprinkling of chatty features and fun. To join the group, contact: George Magee on: 01323 833969.

Heads of the Valleys Group
This Welsh group still continues to operate informally and the few remaining members still correspond on PCW matters. Contact: Anthony Hill on 01222 618012.

Hereford Computer Club
It costs £15 to join up and that includes subscription to the club magazine - Keyboard. Meetings are held from 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month at The Cellar, 41 Widemarsh Street, Hereford.

Javea Computer Club
Regular meetings are held at Pedro's Restaurant, Javea in Alicante. PCW users are welcome. Contact Tom Hughes on: 96 5583508.

Joyce Computer Club
The PCWs highly active presence in Holland has its own web site. Contact: Frank Van Empel, Leksmondhof 8, NL-1108 EM Amsterdam.

Kentish PCW Club
Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at the Chapel Hall in Bush Road, Cuxton. For further details, contact: Leslie Merchant, 14 Mill Road, Northfleet, Gravesend. Tel: 01474 335882.

Leeds Amstrad PCW Club
For more information on the club, contact Paul Newmark, 18 Claythorpe Road, Leeds LS16 5HW. Tel: 0113 2755576.

MicroDesign International User Group
Membership to this large club costs £8 and includes subscription to the excellent magazine - The Design Tree. Contact: Doug Cox, 132 Adelaide Grove, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO32 6DF. 01983 296366.

Morley Amstrad PCWers
This club meets in Morely Public Library at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of every month. Membership costs just £10. The group has a library of PCW software. Contact: Frank King on 01924 430319.

Perthshire PCW Club
For more information on this Scottish PCW group, contact David Paterson, 26 Moulin Crescent, Perth PH1 2EA. Tel: 01738 621346.

RADSTOCK.pcw
This relatively new arrival on the PCW club scene meets on the second Friday of each month at the Radstock Methodist Church from 7.30pm. For more information, contact Adrian Hooper, 40 Kilmersdon Road, Haydon, Radstock, Avon BA3 3QN. Tel: 01761 436276.

SCOTWEST.pcw
The latest issue of CHR$(7) - they're up to number 76 now! - contains a review of the latest club publications and the regular TRACK advertisement page. Apparently the cost of printing the newsletter has trebled. The venerable journal now costs £3 instead of £1 to print each month! Contact: David Williams, 32/34 Carfin Street, New Stevenson, Motherwell ML1 4JL. Tel: 01698 732403.

SIG - Amstrad PCW (USA)
Believe it or not, there is a PCW club in the States, with a regular newsletter. It's a branch of Mensa, and is run by Al Walsh. You can contact him at 6889 Crest Avenue, Riverside, California 12503.

Somerset PCW Club
The group are bothered by falling membership, so have decided to allow PC users into the meetings. They produce a quarterly newsletter. For details, contact: Elsa Turner on 01935 823618.

South Essex PCW Club
Now renamed The British Amstrad PCW Club because of a new national outlook. Contact: David Lalieu, 10 Sheridan Avenue, Thundersley, Essex SS7 1RD. Tel: 01702 551618. See details on facing page.

Teesside PCW Users Group
The North East's only PCW club holds informal meetings on a Monday at The Coronation pub on Acklam Road, Middlesbrough. For further details, contact Gladys Baker, 8 Knayton Grove, Stockton on Tees TS19 7RW. Tel: 01642 580018.

Thornton PCW Club
Meetings are held on every second Tuesday at the Cleveleys Community Centre, Blackpool. New members are very welcome to the group, formerly known as the Wyred Computer Club. For more information, contact Steve at 5 Carlisle Grove, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 4BY.

Widmore PCW Club
Members meet on the third Wednesday of the month at Bromley Adult Education College. At the October meeting a full house witnessed a talk on MicroDisplay and The Network. The Christmas edition of the excellent newsletter has a tutorial on label printing with LocoScript 4. We hopefully WILL have the promised pictures from their meeting in the next issue - sorry Dorothy!. For more details, contact Dorothy Featherstone on 01689 858105.

8 Bit Magazine
The promised "final" issue of 8 Bit has yet to materialise, but there is a good reason. Brian Watson has apparently lost all the copy which was stored on a PC hard drive. The PC crashed and took the copy with it. You have my sympathy Brian. Contact: Brian Watson, Harrowden, 39 High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, Ely CB6 2RA.

Club Scene will soon be undergoing major surgery. We'll be printing pictures of the newsletters we receive - just like PCW Plus used to. Soif you want free publicity, put us on your mailing list

PCW Today is now on-line. Why not join the 5,000+ people who have already visited our site at:
http:// members.tripod.com/~pcwtoday

John Craggs

Formerly of *John's Jottings* in PCW Plus

WRITER'S DESK

Introductory offer £5.75 inc.

PCW Today gave it "five out of five"!

A no-frills, no-nonsense disk, stuffed with tutorials, advice, and useful templates for PCW users. Based on my regular class 'Profit from Your Pen'. Abailable in Loco3 format or ASCII files on 3" or 3.5" discs (3" - send 2 blank discs with order).
Coming soon: A fully compatible 'hassle-free' PcW 16 version.

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Tel: 01703 364821
E-mail: jcraggs@hotmail.com

60 Belmont Road, Chandler's Ford
Eastleigh, HANTS, SO53 3FJ.

Game for a laugh

Get into the festive spirit with a couple of recently re-released games from evergreen SD MicroSystems

AS it's Christmas, you deserve a rest from that dreary word processor and that dull spreadsheet. Take your shoes off, lean back and indulge in some pure escapism.

SD MicroSystems - consistently one of the most active of the PCW companies, as our reviews pages bear testament - have just acquired the rights to two of the finest PCW games around.

Applejack and PCW Draughts were originally marketed by Advantage Software, who stopped supporting the PCW when *PCW Plus* went down.

Both games use graphics to their best effect, proving that the PCW is far from just a word processor.

For pure originality alone, Applejack is probably the best PCW game since the legendary Head Over Heels. It is certainly the best game of the decade (not that there's much competition!).

The whole concept of the game is loony and you really need to switch off the rational part of your brain for this one - but then all the best games are like that.

The hero - Applejack himself presumably - must make his way through a series of scenic zones, eating the ten apples that are lined up across the top of the screen.

To get the apples, Jack has to leap phenomenal heights, and make an almighty chomp at them. Delightfully, once eaten, the apples turn into apple cores.

Sounds easy enough, but of course that's only the start. To get to the apples, you must avoid the fizzing bombs, helpfully labelled with the letter B.

Should you accidentally hit one of these high explosives, you turn graphically into a skeleton!

Then of course there is the rolling log that moves across the bottom of the screen. If you're clever, you can ride the log, but if you slip and fall under, once again you lose a life.

Once you've eaten all the apples, and providing you're still alive, you proceed onto the next level.

There are ten levels in all, and three beautifully drawn backdrops to go with them. Oh, and of course each level is progressively harder. The number of bombs increases and after a while, the bombs start to bounce!

Now if all this sounds completely mad to you, it is, but who cares, it is fantastic fun, and you'll play this for hours, long into the night.

The second game requires a little more thought. PCW Draughts is not such an original idea as Applejack perhaps, but it is no less enjoyable.

Again the graphics are superb, and this game, surprisingly utilises some of the PCW's hidden sound capabilities - although it doesn't show of the full orchestra quite as well as the fantastic Trivia Quiz does.

Using the cursor keys, you select a piece with a tap of the old [ENTER] key. Then move the cursor to the square of your chosen destination and hit [ENTER] again to confirm it.

The piece then chugs its way over to the other square accompanied by the PCW's woodpecker impressions.

When you capture the opponent's piece, it fizzes away wonderfully. When you reach the end, you change to a king, in fact the piece is crowned!

When you win, the draughts board, so quiet up to that point, goes mad with delight, and displays an impressive animation as the pieces hop around the board in celebration.

INFO

APPLEJACK/PCW DRAUGHTS

Price: £5 + £1 p&p each
Company: SD MicroSystems
Contact: 07000 736427
Format: All PCWs except PcW 16s
Ease of use: ******
Features: ****
Value: ******
Overall: ******
Verdict: Two superb games, perfect for those cold winter evenings. These would make a couple of great stocking fillers!

It's all good, clean fun - so lacking in many of today's hi-tech blood, guts and gore PC action games.

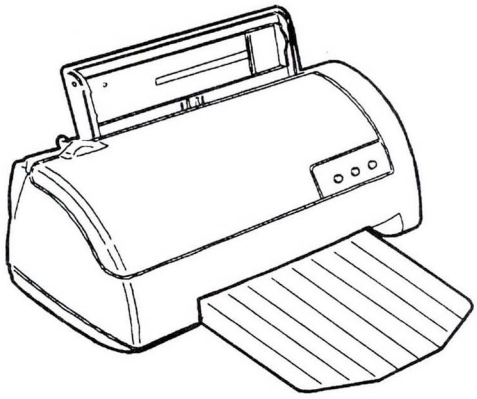
Sadly you can only play the computer, not a friend - still you could always use a board to do that! And the PCW makes a reasonable challenger, although seasoned pros will probably walk all over it.

There is no way to change the skill level, and you can only do single jumps - no multiple leaps here - but apart from that it is great fun, and a highly addictive implementation of the classic game.

If you prefer a slightly more sedate game that requires a bit of thought, go for PCW Draughts. Or if you're the kind of person who likes frenetic platform action, go for Applejack.

Either way you'll not be disappointed with these crackers.

Inkjet printer package for just £135 – or less!



Unhappy about your existing print quality? Then take advantage of our special offer – LocoScript 4, Printer Support Pack and the Olivetti JP170 monochrome inkjet printer. We'll throw in LocoSpell free of charge too.

This complete package costs just £135 including VAT and delivery. We also provide a cable to plug the printer into the PCW9512 or PcW10's external printer socket, but if you have a PCW8256/8512 or PcW9256 you may also need the Power Pack at an extra £50 (saving £9.95 on our standard price). And as we supply a Start-of-day disc ready set-up for the printer, it's easy to get going straight away.

or print in colour for just £195

If you want to print in colour, take advantage of the new low price of the Epson Stylus Color 400. Our complete Stylus Color 400 package costs just £195 – that's £30 less than our previous price. The package include the Stylus Color 400 printer, the cable, LocoScript 4, LocoSpell and the Printer Support Pack (but you will need the Power Pack if you have a PCW8256/8512 or PcW9256). And just like the Olivetti package, the Start-of-day disc we supply lets you get going straight away. *Note that the Stylus Color 400 cannot be used with CP/M programs.*

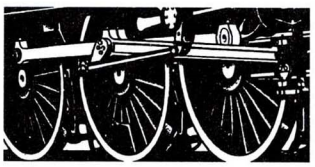
Great new printing facilities

LocoScript 4 and these printer packages give you great new printing features. You'll be able to include pictures in your documents, print newspaper style columns and print with a range of typefaces at different sizes – and print in colour with the Stylus Color 400 package. The printers include a cut sheet feeder, so you can load a sheaf of paper into the printer and simply leave it printing.

As these printers are inkjet printers you'll find them much quieter than the Amstrad's printer. Use the Olivetti's built-in fonts and you'll find printing is faster too.

Just £99 if you have LocoScript 4

If you currently have LocoScript 3 or LocoScript 4, it gets even better. Return your LocoScript 3 Master Disc with your order and we'll reduce the price by £10 to £125 for the Olivetti or £185 for the Stylus. Return your LocoScript 4 Master Disc and the complete Olivetti package will cost an incredible £99 or the Stylus package £159!



LOCOSCRIPT SOFTWARE
10 Vincent Works, Dorking RH4 3HJ
Phone: 01306 747757; Fax: 01306 885529

Note: The JP170 is colour upgradeable, but this option is not supported by LocoScript 4. The Power Pack normally costs £59.95 unless purchased together with a printer package.

Yes, I'd like to order a new printer package for my PCW:

☐ **Olivetti JP170**
- ☐ I have LocoScript 1/2 £135
- ☐ I have LocoScript 3 £125
- ☐ I have LocoScript 4 £99

☐ **Stylus Color 400**
- ☐ I have LocoScript 1/2 £195
- ☐ I have LocoScript 3 £185
- ☐ I have LocoScript 4 £159

☐ **Locomotive Power Pack** £50
(bought with a printer package)

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Address:

Postcode:

Phone No:

Delivery details if different from above

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Address:

Postcode:

Payment method:
☐ Cheque payable to LocoScript Software
☐ Access/Mastercard/Visa/Switch:

Valid from ☐☐ **to** ☐☐ **Switch issue no.** ☐

I confirm that I am the cardholder and that the card is registered to the above delivery address

Signature

Model of PCW (Please circle)
(8256) (8512) (9512) (9512+) (9256) (10)

PCW Disc drive (Please circle) (3") (3½")

Floppy disc information

Disc formatting is such a common thing to do that we rarely think about it. But do you actually know what it involves and why you need to do it? Adrian Braddy investigates in the first of his new series on discs

A DISC is a wonderful thing. Just think - all that information stored on a little spinning circle of plastic.

One disc can hold an entire novel, a sophisticated desktop publisher, your company finances, or a whole year's worth of correspondence.

But why are there so many types of disc? The PCW is rather unique in that different models use different types of disc. The 8256, 8512 and 9512 all use the 3" disc. This was the industry standard when Amstrad was market leader, but very few other computers used them. IBM PCs for instance, used the now obsolete 5.25" discs.

Then along came the big, bad, and technically inferior 3.5" disc. Of course, it won the battle, and PCs and Macs started using 3.5" double density (or DD) discs. So, when 3" discs started to become rarer than a flying Dodo, Amstrad took the sensible option and re-designed the PCW, fitting 3.5" drives to the 9256, 9512+ and the subsequent 10.

Then typically, as PCs and Macs became more powerful, they demanded higher capacity floppy discs. Obligingly, the disc manufacturers developed the 3.5" high density (HD) - which carried twice as much information.

So people stopped making the 3.5" DD discs, and when Amstrad produced the latest statement in the PCW range - the grand PcW 16 - they gave it a drive compatible with the newer high density discs.

So, us humble PCW users are left with a baffling array of discs - but that's not the end of the confusion. Discs not only come in a range of different sizes, you can also format them different ways, to hold varying amounts of data.

The amount of data held on 3" discs vary depending on which machine you use. The 8256 drive formats discs to hold 180k of information, but you can turn the disc over, like a cassette tape and use the other side - giving you a total of 360k. The 8512 A: drive does exactly the same thing.

The more advanced "double density" B: drive on the 8512 and the 9512 A: drive, formats discs to 720k. It does this by reading both sides of the disc at once. This means that you should never turn over and use the reverse side of the disc in these drives, do so and anything you had on that disc has been read the last rites.

When the 3.5" discs came in, they also used double headed drives, so they were designed so it was not possible to put the disc in the wrong way by mistake - one of the biggest problems with the 3".

Discs also must be "formatted" so that the computer they are being used with, recognises them.

All the "classic" PCWs use a CP/M format disc, this is why their files cannot be read on a PC, which recognises DOS format discs. You can reformat a PCW disc into DOS format, but that wipes it clean. The PcW 16 does use DOS format discs, but it puts a mark on it, so that the Rosanne operating system can read it.

Users of the '16 should beware. Although 3.5" HD discs which have "DOS formatted" on the box, do work on the '16, they should not be used without formatting - they do not have the extra Rosanne structure, and are therefore unreliable. However, a Rosanne formatted disc will work quite happily on a PC.

So what exactly is formatting? Picture an un-formatted disc as being like a building site. You cannot let the contractors build anywhere, the result would be chaos. You need plans and plots of land.

Essentially, that is what formatting does to a disc. Small magnetic blips are put onto the surface of the disc, marking out the plots where information can be slotted in. It also creates a "root directory", where details of what is held in which plot (or sector) are stored.

The disc can be reformatted, to work on the same or a different computer, but all the data is destroyed, just as houses have to be knocked down, before a new housing estate can be built.

As you may have noticed, you never actually get the exact amount of space on the disc you are promised. Some of that memory is taken up with the disc "A-Z", so on a 720k disc, for example, you only actually get about 706k of free space.

PcW 16 users have, as yet, only one option when formatting discs, but owners of the other PCWs have a whole array of options. The first is of course Diskkit, on the CP/M disc. This is fairly slow, but probably the most reliable. You can opt to verify the disc whilst formatting, and this will check for any faults on the disc.

LocoScript and MicroDesign both have in-built disc formatters - the latter is particularly fast. Then there are a variety of disc utility programs, and several in the public domain. Of these, FASTCOPY is probably the fastest. Mind you, a fast format is not necessarily the best - these programs are cutting corners, and there may be areas of the disc not properly dealt with.

HOT FORMATTING TIPS

1) A disc can be reformatted as many times as you want, and doing so will act as a cleanser, ridding you of corrupt files. However remember that with every format, all data is lost.

2) Formatting a faulty disc that is no longer working, may have the desired effect, but do not rely on that disc. It will probably fail again in the future.

3) When formatting a disc that has already been used on someone elses computer, you may get error messages. This is probably due to a slight difference in the alignment of the drive heads on the two computers. Keep hitting Retry and it should work.

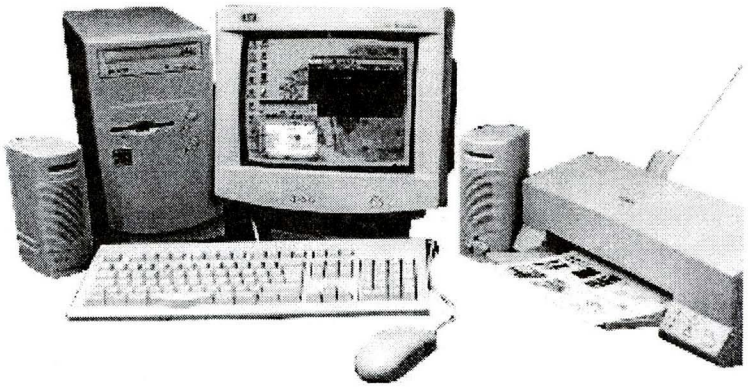
Problems with your PCW?

Don't worry, LocoScript to the rescue!

We can offer a choice of options to suit you and your budget.

Move up to a new Windows PC for just £799 fully inclusive

Allowing for inflation, a Windows PC today costs no more than your PCW did when new, but can do so much more. As we understand about you needs, we can make the move as painless as possible, and of course help you take across all your existing LocoScript documents to the new PC.



Our PC package includes a modern PC with colour monitor and black and white inkjet printer. We'll set the PC up in your home or office, and as it comes complete with LocoScript ready to go, you'll be using the new PC almost immediately. If anything does go wrong, our one year on-site maintenance contract means that it will be fixed in your own home, keeping the delay and cost to a minimum.

And as our Customer Support was voted number one by PCW Today readers, you know you're in safe hands!

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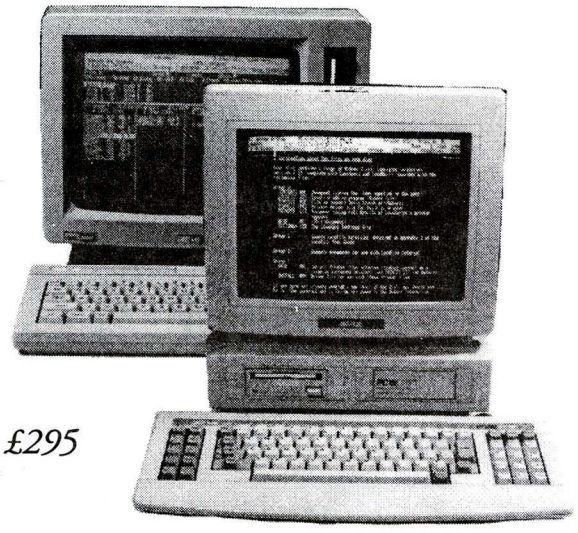
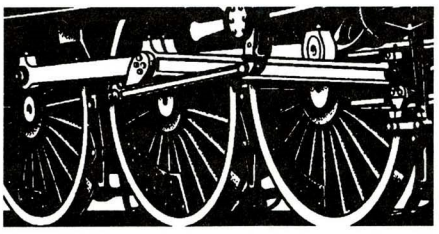
If you're unsure about the move to a PC, or feel that your needs don't justify the cost, then get one of our professionally refurbished PCWs.



We have a variety of models available, and each comes with a three month exchange warranty.

A standard model including the Amstrad printer costs just £135. And to take advantage of LocoScript 4's great printing features, for £235 we'll supply an upgraded model including LocoScript 4 and a monochrome inkjet printer (or £295 including a colour printer).



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Cover Disc

The essential guide to the third PCW Today cover disc. And it's a good 'un!

IT'S Christmas again, and what better excuse for another fun-packed cracker of a cover disc.

Highlights of our third disc include an exclusive new graphical PCW version of that classic card game, Patience.

There's another on-disc exclusive with a brand new, professional quality MicroDesign font from Mike Elliston. And we couldn't resist the festive Santa game, just to get you in the mood.

We've also got a top collection of utilities - including Designer, a great little tool that lets you draw graphics for your Basic programs, and another of those CP/M screen fonts. Plus there's yet another terrific selection of graphics for MicroDesign3 and LocoScript 4.

For basic information about the contents of the cover disc, type **PCWTODAY** at the A: prompt and press **[RETURN].** This accesses what we call the "cover disc server". It is heavy on graphics, so can be quite slow, and many people decide to skip it. It contains program notes and some late news. The former gives details of each individual program and explains what it does.

For instructions on each program, you should access the help file. Each help file has the same name as the program it refers to, only with a .DOC suffix. So, the program EXAMPLE.COM would have a help file called EXAMPLE.DOC.

To view one of these help files, put the cover disc in the drive, type **HELP**, then press **[RETURN].** You will be prompted to "Enter File". Simply do as it asks - choose the document you want to view (eg EXAMPLE.DOC) and type in the full name. Remember to include the .DOC suffix and to get the spelling correct. Next hit **[RETURN]** and the first page of the on-screen manual will appear. Press **[RETURN]** again to read the next page, and so on.

If you don't want to bother with the cumbersome "cover disc server", you can access the text files it includes, by using **HELP** instead. The two text files are called LNEWS.DOC and PNOTES.DOC.

If you prefer, the help files can be accessed from a word processor. They will load directly into Protext or MicroDesign, but they are not LocoScript documents - they are written in ASCII plain text format. LocoScript will read ASCII, but you should consult your manual to see how to do this.

It is advisable to read the help file before trying a program, especially with some of the utilities packages.. Some programs do not come with a help file, either because one was not written, or because the programs are self-explanatory. The latter is the case with most games.

Once you have read the program notes, late news and help files, you will want to try out some of the goodies on the disc. Firstly, from CP/M, type **DIR** and press **[RETURN]**, this will bring up an on-screen directory of all the files on disc.

The files on the disc come in a variety of different formats, and you can tell them apart by their suffix. Here are some of the most important.

.COM - These are the most common program files and will load from CP/M. Just type in the name of the file (forget about the suffix) and press **[RETURN].** For example, try typing **FASTCOPY** and then hitting **[RETURN].**

.BAS - These files are also programs, but they must be run from BASIC. To make things easy, copy BASIC from the CP/M disc onto your cover disc using LocoScript or some other file-copying utility. Once you have done that, type **BASIC** and press **[RETURN].** Once BASIC has loaded up, type in **RUN "FILENAME** and then press **[RETURN],** so for example you might try typing **RUN "DESIGNER** and pressing **[RETURN]** to load that program.

.MDA - These are graphics files and are in MicroDesign3 Area format. This means that they can be used with MD3 or with LocoScript 4. Each file name gives a description of the picture. Remember that to use graphics in LocoScript 4, they must be copied to either the M: drive, or onto the same disc as the document you wish to place them in. Check your manual if you're not sure.

.MDF - These are fonts for use with MicroDesign3. There is usually a number in the name, giving the point size.

.MDS - These files are shades for use with MicroDesign 3. You load them from the GRAPHICS screen.

.DOC - As already mentioned, these are text files, for use with the **HELP** command. They are in ASCII format and can be loaded into a word processor and printed out.

.TXT - These are MicroDesign text files and are loaded from the EDITOR screen of MD3.

There are other files on the disc with different suffixes to those described here. These are files read by other programs. You should not delete them as that may stop another program from working. PCWTODAY.001 for example is a vital part of the cover disc server and you will not be able to run the program without it.

We hope that you enjoy the disc and its many delights. One piece of advice, before using the cover disc, make a back-up copy of it. You don't want to accidentally delete all the files.

COVER DISC PROBLEMS

If you subscribe to the cover disc, you should find your copy inside the magazine, or affixed to the cover. If your disc is missing, please let us know. And if your disc is not working, return it to us and we'll fix the problem.

WE NEED YOUR SOFTWARE

We urgently need good quality software for our cover discs. Any public domain or shareware programs are greatly appreciated

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AMSTRAD PCW

If you are still using your PCW then we are still very involved and providing as full a service as we can, Repairs, Spares Consumables are all available.

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If you have upgraded or you need to swap files with someone with a PC; as well as providing you with the switchable 3.5" drives and the nvert from software to coCPM to DOS yourself , we can convert discs for you **from £3.50 per disc**

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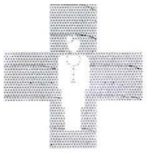


Ask the Doc

MICRODESIGN

I have recently obtained MicroDesign3 from Creative Technology. Can you help me with some difficulties?

The first is that I like to send short letters on A5 size. I completed my letter and changed to A5 landscape. It printed, but with am unsightly and uneccesarily wide margin at the beginning (with the A4 sheet in the printer in portrait). How can I reduce the margin width? It may also give the solution to fitting two 45 pages on an A4 sheet.

The second problem concerns fonts. I have been given and OLDENG66 font on a cover disc from *PCW Today*. To try and see this font in action, I tried to put it on my MD3 disc but I got the message 'No Room'. In Typeset I tried to put BLANK in all three places but I still got the message 'No room'. What can I do?
Joe Billington, Matlock

THE DOC: *Your first problem is caused by the printer, and is not a fault of MicroDesign. Unfortunately, very few printers can actually print on all areas of the paper, and they leave a border around the edges. This means that you cannot print two A5 pages side by side. A bit of creativity with a photocopier and a pair of scissors is your only real option.*

On your second problem, there is no need to copy the font from the cover disc - it will load straight from your cover disc. However, if there is no space in the memory, go to the OPTIONS screen. Here you will find an option to reallocate memory, giving you more space for fonts.

INTERNET

I have just finished reading Robert Nisbet's article in the Aug-Oct 98 issue of *PCW Today* and I was intrigued by the opening statement that "The PCW can access the Net". I have an Amstrad PCW 9512 and would dearly like to have a go at the Internet.

Could I access the Net? If so, what programs and kit would I need?
Major CHS Barter

THE DOC: *It is theoretically possible to acess the web with your PCW. Unfortunately, the last people to sell a kit were LocoScript Software, who have discontinued it due to a lack of demand.*

You need a serial interface - either the Amstrad CPS8256 or the Margolis Fax Link. You will then need a modem, running at around 14,400bps and with V32bis capability. You need some communications software. QTERM and ZMP are free, being in the public domain, or you could try COMM+, a commercial package.

However, very few people have successfully used the PCW to navigate the Web. It is quite fiddly, and even Ian MacDonald, the pioneer of the idea agrees that it is not very practical. The PCW is however, fine as an e-mail only machine.

FILE MANAGEMENT

I own a PcW 16 and I tried to duplicate specific files on one of my discs to another one, however, I subsequently discovered that I can only copy the entire contents of a disc onto another and delete the files I don't want. I can only copy single files from one folder to another folder on the same disc. Is it me or my machine?
Adam Pickering, Wakefield

THE DOC: *It's not you - just a quirk in the software I'm afraid.*

PRINTER FONTS

My system comprises of an Amstrad PcW 16 and Canon BJ-30 inkjet printer, which is ample for my needs. I do however have one query and I wonder if any readers can throw some light upon this subject.

The PcW 16 has its two standard in-built fonts but the printer has a good number of other fonts which I am unable to use. Is there any way that the printer fonts can be used?

I have tried taking the printer out of its native mode and also tried other printer emulations, but so far without luck.

It all seems such a good waste of good fonts, or is this another quirk of the PcW 16 insofar that it will only act on its own in-built system.
Colin Johnson, York

THE DOC: *A very good question, sadly I don't think there is any way of using the printer fonts.*

This is because the printer prints the whole page as an image, rather than raw text. However, if anyone can prove me wrong, I'd love to hear from you.

PSION FILE TRANSFER

I have a Psion 3a palmtop computer computer, which I use mostly when travelling, is there any means by which I could connect this to my PcW 16 to download files to the cabinet or floppy?

This is rather important as I tend to write a lot whilst travelling, or on holiday and it is rather time consuming having to re-type everything. I do not have access to a PC, or any other computer.
Frank Wellstead, Whitley Bay

THE DOC: *Sadly, no you can't. You can buy a cable to transfer files to a PC, but that won't work with the '16. The only possible way was if you had access to a PC or a Mac.*

PRINTER PROBLEMS

As you can see, I am having a problem with my printer, have you any suggestions for fixing it. I have a PCW 8512 with a powerpack and the printer is an Epson Stylus 800+. I have used the print head cycle and replaced the ink cartridge with no improvement.
TD Belshaw, Carrickfergus

THE DOC: *Try cleaning the print head, with a spot of white spirit and a clean cloth - but not if it invalidates the warranty. If the printer is still under warranty, contact the suppliers.*

Otherwise it looks like a trip to the computer repair shop. Usually these problems are fixed when the print cartridges are swapped.

HelpFile

Got any great PCW tips and hints? Send them to us at: HelpFile, PCW Today, 150 Oxford Road, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS5 5EL.

'16 DATA TRANSFER

Until the many CP/M programs available for classic PCWs become possible on the PcW 16, the only way of using them is to transfer '16 documents to LocoScript and use them on a classic PCW. This can be done with classic PCWs having single or ducal 3"/3.5" drives.

The '16 document is first exported to DOS, then a transfer program is used to switch it to CP/M, from where it is exported into LocoScript. It arrives on screen in plain text, but as a standard LocoScript document.

For users of dual 3"/3.5" drive PCWs, a useful transfer program is MS-DISC from SD MicroSystems at £5 plus £1 postage. Users of single drive 3.5" PCWs seem limited to the more comprehensive, but flexible, Moonstone 2 in 1 available from LocoScript Software at £39.95.

I found the procedure invaluable when suddenly needing Ansible Index to index a long '16 document. If any reader is interested, I will, on receipt of an SAE, happily forward step-by-step details of how the procedure works for me. Write to Ken Pope, 8 Yeomans Close, Bristol BS9 1DH
Ken Pople, Bristol

MICRODESIGN

I read with interest in this quarter's mag, a reader says he is experiencing difficulty with a printing error in MicroDesign3. I get this regularly, but I have never had to re-boot to get out of it.

All I do is press the [PTR] key to go into printer mode, then press the left cursor key to go direct to reset position, press the [+] key at the left hand side of the space bar to engage reset, then right cursor back to "on line" and press [EXIT]. This allows the printer to carry on.
CC Partlow, Doncaster

PRINTER RIBBONS

I have discovered that one can get ribbon cassettes re-loaded with new ribbon at about half the cot of new cassettes by Ribbon Technologies (UK), Unit 1, Speedwell Estate, Knowles Road, Clevedon BS21 7XS. Tel 01275 341998.

Readers might like to know of this facility. I have no interest in the firm, other than as a very satisfied user of their services.
FJ Langfield, Bristol

MICRODESIGN

Regarding Alan Petrie's Queue problem (HelpFile, issue 10, page 14), when I tried queue printing two area files, named as FRONT.MDA and BACK.MDA, respectively, and using the queue example shown in PCW Today, I too failed on my PcW 10 and Epson Stylus 820 Inkjet.

Once I'd removed the gaps between the A: and the file name, altering the queue file as shown below, it worked perfectly.

*A:FRONT.MDA
*GAP 100
*A:BACK.MDA
*FORMFEED

So Alan's problems could simply be gaps in the queue lines. Unfortunately, as I haven't a SCA 512 MiniRam and no longer use the dot matrix, I can't offer any further help.
Rod Shinkfield, Chorley

CP/M PIP

A corrupted disc sent me to "Mastering the Amstrad 8256/8512" by John M Hughes. While not finding the answer I sought, the following information - previously overlooked - caught my eye.

Quoting the example given, from CP/M, one could type PIP M:*.*[C V O]. "C" ensures that confirmation is sought before making the copy. "V" verifies the copy by comparing it with the original, and "O" makes certain that the whole file has been copied and that the end of the file is not found so soon.

The letters can be used in any combination or order, the only caveat being that a space must separate them from each other within the spare brackets.

Perhaps I am teaching my grandmother to suck eggs, but there may be one or two readers who are not aware of this useful facility. My copy of Mr Hughes' book is dated 1986 - I was fortunate to acquire it second hand - but if it's still available it is well worth buying.
Harold Simmons, Wallingford

PCW 16 SPREADSHEET

The PcW 16's spreadsheet can be used as an excellent alternative to a database, providing the field lengths are not very long - these can be changed with 'Change column width' from the menu. The only problem is that the database would have to manually be put into alphabetical order using 'cut' and 'paste' for each row. However, I have come up with a solution.

1) Make a back up copy of your address book (in System folder) and put it in a nice safe place.
2) Go to the Spreadsheet and load up your database.
3) Select 'Export' from the menu and write the file to a floppy in CSV format.
4) Go to the Address Book, choose 'Import' from the menu, and select your file on the disc.
5) Voila! Each row in the sheet corresponds to each entry in the address book, and now they will be in alphabetical order.
6) Choose 'Export' from the menu and select CSV format, write the file to disc.
7) Import it back into the Spreadsheet.

Now the data in each row of the first column will be arranged alphabetically. I use this to catalogue my games collection, by having the name in the first column, then the price and so on. So now at the top of the sheet is 'Alfred Chicken' and at the bottom is 'Zelda 3'.

The only time this won't work is if you have more (used) columns in your sheet than there are fields in the address book, but that should be unlikely.
Mike Saunders, Ulverston

Queen Anne's Gate

The PcW 16 column with byte

Selling the Sixteen

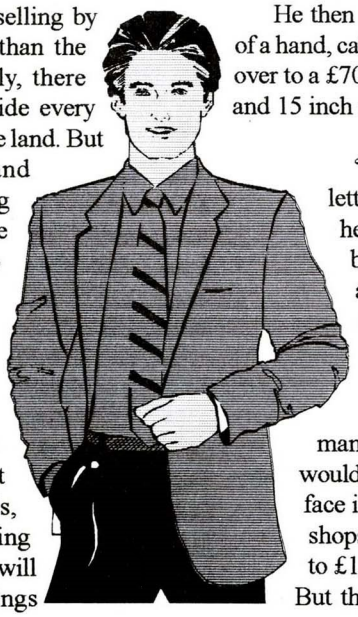
The newest of the PCW family seems to be stuggling, with the computer stores slashing its price. Is it just the competition from PCs, or are the salesmen to blame?

FOR the first time in the history of ugly square boxes in the corner of rooms, everybody can afford their own computer.

With Dixons giving away '16s for less than a hundred quid there are no excuses - no home should now be without a word processor. And what's more, our own Annie is faster, cheaper, more reliable and easier to use than any PC in the shops.

A flick through one of those catalogues the newsagents laughingly call computer magazines shows that to buy the PC software equivalent of what you get free with Annie would cost you more than £300. And in real terms, how much more can you do with a jet-propelled Pentium anyway?

For those of us who don't want to play Duke Nukem in super-real 3D, or produce glossy brochures in 25 billion colours, the infinite ram, rom, bytes and bits are useless. Annie, running at just 16 MHz, can churn out a letter just as fast as any 300 MHz power house PC.



So why aren't 16s selling by the thousand? At less than the price of a portable telly, there should be queues outside every Dixons and Currys in the land. But there are no queues and stores just keep slashing the price - watch the price drop another tenner or so in the January sales.

Despite knocking spots off the rest of the word processor competition, the PcW does not stand a chance up against PCs. And the sad fact is, many of the people being sold a PC for £1000 plus will only ever use it for things they could have done just as easily with Annie.

So why is the '16 not more successful? Well I went into one high street shop and asked the salesman about the Amstrad they had prominently displayed in the shop window - I had no intention of buying it, I just wanted to see what he would say.

Annie, running at just 16 MHz can churn out a letter just as fast as any 300 MHz power house PC

The very friendly and persuasive salesman gave me a brief run-down on the virtues of Annie, informing me much to my amusement that it ran LocoScript and an antiquated operating system called CMP - whatever that is!

He then discounted it with the sweep of a hand, called it: "outdated" and moved over to a £700 PC with 24 speed CD Rom and 15 inch monitor.

"But I just want to write a few letters," I protested. Despite this he still felt that the PC would be far better value. I walked away from the shop, having seen for myself what other people have described.

I don't blame the salesman - he was only doing what I would do in the same situation. Let's face it from that £100 price tag the shops will only pocket around £10 to £15 for every PcW 16 they sell. But the scenario shows why many are put off from purchasing the '16 and are pushed into spending an unnecessary few hundred pounds more.

Perhaps the salesmen should know a little more about their product. The *PCW Today* office took a call several months ago from a Lancashire branch of a major computer store. They wanted to know whether the '16 was compatible with a 24 pin dot matrix printer.

This raises a couple of questions - why didn't they know, and why did they ask a PCW magazine and not Amstrad?

In another case recently, I spent a stressful few hours looking for a new ink jet printer for my '16. The staff in the first shop I tried insisted that NONE of their printers would work with my computer - even though they sold all major models. Much to my confusion, in the second shop, the salesman claimed that ALL of their printers would be fine.

To his credit though, after I questioned this sweeping statement, he did manage to find a member of staff who was a big PCW fan.

The surprisingly young and enthusiastic lad who turned up looked at the Annie they had on display and said: "Oh, but that's not a proper PCW. I only know about the old ones that run LocoScript."

For the latest and greatest PcW to become the success it deserves to, the people selling it should get their act together.

During the early nineties, Alan Sugar withdrew all his products from the high street and took the decision to sell by mail-order only. Although this was never very successful, I can see why the big man did it. At least you can trust your own sales team to get the facts right, and sell your product.

Basic98 Version 2.0 Basic98 for the PCW Basic98

AN EXTENDED BASIC COMPILER For 8-Bit AMSTRAD PCWs

by R.P.Hill

Powerful...

Basic 98 is actually three languages in one:

1. As you would expect, it can compile programs written in your Mallard interpreter.
2. It has a full Z80 assembler, and you can access code in the runtime library directly to convert your high level source into lightning-fast, full-blown machine code with confidence and ease.
3. Basic98 adds 187 commands and functions to the language giving, in addition to indexed filing, the following features:

Command line parameters	Direct keyboard access	All 12 trigonometric functions
Optional line numbers and labels allowing formatted source text to increase understandability	Bitwise integer &string operators: AND/OR/XOR/IMP/EQV,etc.	Preset ARRAY/ITEM Array SORT/SEEK (optionally on sub-strings)
Multi-line statements	Raster text plotting	INSERT$/REMOVE$/CHOP$
REPEAT/UNTIL	AT/CLS/VPT/VIDEO/ULN	PLOT/LINE/ARC/CIRCLE
CASE/OF/ELSE/CEND	System DAY/DATE/TIME	BOX/PLANE/ORB
PROCEDURE/FUNCTION	Turtle graphics	POLYGON/FIGURE/SPRAY
LET/INC/DEC/READ as functions as well as commands	Store & display sorted directories with file sizes	Print, move, copy, swap, zoom or rotate screens or 16-256k image files
High precision maths up to 187 decimal places	Full support for CP/M Plus password and time-stamping	Print files in the background while your program executes

Easy to use...

Basic98 comes with an integrated editor that can create and read a compressed infobase, complete with hypertext links, of up to 4094 topics in up to 100 64k files. This has been used to create the online manual which can be viewed in the lower half of the screen as you are editing your program. The manual is automatically re-opened to explain any compilation or runtime error that occurs.

...Get control of your PCW!

Please state disk format required....	PCW8256 PCW8512	PCW8512 PCW9512	PcW9256 PcW9512+ PcW10	Send order/enquiry to: R.P.Hill, 84 Wincheap, Canterbury,KENT. CT1 3RS
Disk set:	4x3"	2x3"	2x3.5"	Please make P.Orders
Format size:	173k	706k	706k	or cheques payable to:
Set price:	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	Richard Hill

Still going strong!

Forget 1066, the most important date in history was 1985. Adrian Braddy finds out why

WHEN the stately PCW sails past the millennium, unconcerned by the millennium bug, it will have reached the remarkable age of 15. Yes, like it or not, everybody's favourite computer is getting on a bit.

We've all put up with the jibes about dinasours and the Stone Age, but the PCW really is becoming something of a museum piece. Some of the people reading this weren't even thought of when the PCW was first conceived.

Way back in the heady days of 1985, Amstrad decided that it wanted to emulate the massive success of its CPC computers. These were popular little 3" drive games computers, with an operating system written by a blossoming company known then as Locomotive Software.

Alan Sugar, the founder and chairman of Amstrad (which stands for Alan Michael Sugar Trading by the way), decided that the British public needed an affordable and simple alternative to the typewriter. There were word processors around, but they were very expensive and cumbersome to use. Sugar wanted a word processor for the masses, something everyone could afford and use.

So the concept of the PCW was born, but Alan Sugar could hardly have anticipated just how successful his baby was to become.

Amstrad approached Locomotive to write the word processor software. The company leapt at the chance, and had soon completed a program they called Word Write. The name had to be changed at the last minute, because it was discovered that another company owned the name. And so the fledgling word processor was re-Christened LocoScript.

On the advice of Locomotive, Amstrad used an 8 bit Z80 processor from American firm Zilog as the heart of the computer. This ran at 8 Mhz, but was obsolete by the time the PCW launched. The Pentium of its time, ran at 16 Mhz, but the Zilog chip was cheap and Amstrad paid just £1 each for them. A firm called MEJ Electronics, built the circuit board around the Z80 chip.

Locomotive and MEJ worked closely on production of the PCW so that the hardware and software could be put together at the same time. Locomotive asked for a 90 column screen and a RAM drive, and they got it, although the original plan was for the screen to be vertical, and the same size as an A4 piece of paper. Locomotive were also given a blank keyboard, and they chose which keys went where. So keys like EOL and WORD CHAR were Locomotive's ideas. The keyboard was kept very small to save money.

It was decided to stick with the 3" drives used on the CPC, as there was no real standard disc size at the time. Both 8" and 5.25" discs were popular too. The first PCW was to have 256k memory, and came with its own 9 pin dot matrix printer. Originally the printer was to have been moulded into the top of the monitor, but the prototype overheated and the idea was dropped. The eventual monitor used green text on a black background

Alan Sugar nicknamed the machine Joyce, after his secretary, but he soon settled on the more formal PCW or Personal Computer Word processor. Amstrad wanted the PCW to be more than just a word processor, so they bundled CP/M and Mallard BASIC with it.

When the PCW 8256 was eventually launched in '85, Amstrad ran a huge TV and newspaper ad campaign, urging users to trade in their typewriters for the new PCW. (What did Amstrad do with all those typewriters?) It was for this reason, that LocoScript 1 included a direct printing option, where the PCW could actually emulate a typewriter, printing as you typed. The feature was not popular, and was dropped by Locomotive in later versions - they'd never wanted it in the first place.

The launch price of £459 may sound expensive, but that was cheaper than the cost of a word processing program alone for other computers of the era. And within a year, the price had been slashed.

The 8256 was a smash hit, selling thousands in the first year, and Amstrad soon became a household name up and down the country. The computer was also launched in America and in Europe. The Germans and Dutch in particular, were big fans of the PCW, although it was called Joyce there.

Amstrad soon introduced a second PCW, called the 8512. This had two 3" drives instead of one, and twice the memory. Together with its predecessor, these machines were dubbed the 8000s, and were the biggest selling of the Amstrad range. They also spawned a huge selection of new software and hardware. The most important of the eighties being the LocoScript range. LocoScript 2 offered the possibility of using external printers and new fonts, it also brought with it LocoSpell, LocoFile and LocoMail.

Before long, Amstrad decided to completely re-design the PCW and the 9512 was born. It looked more modern than its counterparts, with the disc drive under the monitor, instead of down the side. The 9512 came with LocoScript 2 and helped rejuvenate a market that had gone slightly off the boil.

Amstrad also toyed with the idea of bringing out a colour PCW. Code-named "Ant", the machine was a very real possibility, but the Amiga and Atari appeared on the scene, and "Ant" would have cost more than these faster rivals.

Into the nineties, and Amstrad was still selling more than 50,000 units a year. But there was a new battle being waged. It was the fight between the PCW's 3" discs and the PC's 3.5" discs, and was uncannily similar to the Betamax/VHS video tape wars. The 3" discs were more sturdy, but held far less data than their rivals, and it became obvious that the 3" disc was going to lose.

Companies offering external 3.5" disc drives for the PCW sprung up left right and centre, with sombre warnings that 3" discs would soon go out of production, and be-

come impossible to find. (In fact, 3" discs are still manufactured in Italy).

Amstrad battled on, but in 1991, they succumbed and introduced another two machines - the 9256 and 9512+. These looked the same as the 9512, but came with the more compatible 3.5" drives. The screen was paper white instead of green, and the dot matrix printer on the small 9256 sat on the top of the monitor.

These computers were called the 9000 series, and were very popular, although rivals in the home computer market were starting to eat into the market share.

At its height, there were several newsstand magazines devoted to the PCW. There were actually seven titles in all, but several of these were relaunches. Magazines like Amstrad PCW, Computing With the Amstrad and Your Amstrad PCW were relatively successful, but did not last into the nineties.

The two leading PCW magazines were 8000 Plus and PCW User. They became PCW Plus and LocoScript User respectively, and published until the mid nineties, with sales falling down below the fateful 10,000 mark. PCW Plus was the last to go with a dramatic Titanic cover - the magazine had lasted more than 10 years - making it one of the longest running computer magazines in history.

As the computer technology became more and more advanced, the humble PCW fought hard to keep up. PC standard-desktop publishing came in the form of MicroDesign 3, and scalable fonts arrived in LocoScript with the third incarnation of the famous word processor.

Throughout the early nineties, the pioneers in PCW software were Creative Technology. As well as the incredible MicroDesign, the company brought out a sophisticated mouse and hand scanner.

On the software front, Tweak did things to images, most designers could only dream of in the past - sadly it was let down by the speed of the PCW processor. And The Network should have been Windows for the PC, but it came about a year too late, and already, PCW programmers were dropping like flies.

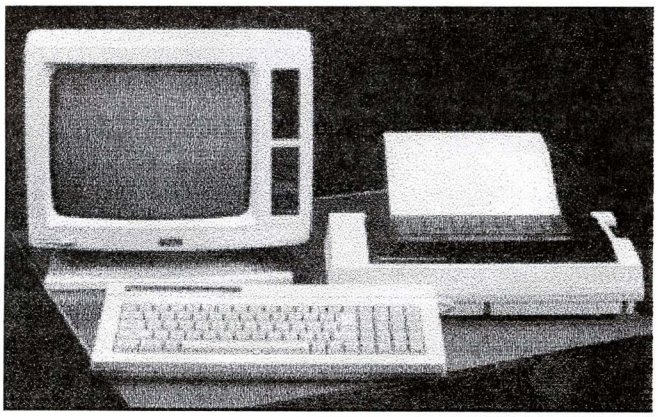
Cirtech were another of the leading lights, developing such products as the Flash Drive and Sprinter, which speeded up PCW operations.

In 1993, Amstrad brought out another PCW - the 10. This new machine came as a disappointment to many critics, who had been waiting for two years for the market to get a needed boot up the backside. Sadly, the 10 did not do brilliantly. Basically an upgraded 9256, the 10 was a moderate success, but not spectacular. Around 10,000 were sold in a year.

At around this time, there was a lot of corporate moving and shaking at the PCW giants Locomotive. Former Commercial Director, Howard Fisher left Locomotive and created a new company called Softco, which immediately bought the PCW side of Locomotive's business.

Fisher's new firm sold PCs under the Softco label and PCW software under the new LocoScript Software label.

It was now 1995 and Amstrad wanted to continue the PCW saga, but the original PCW parts were becoming scarce and outdated. Alan Sugar and a team of designers, decided it was time to build a PCW for the new millennium.



Working in complete secrecy as usual, Amstrad approached LocoScript Software and offered them the chance to develop a new version of LocoScript for the machine. They declined, and recommended Creative Technology.

Working with Amstrad programmers, Creative developed an entirely new operating system called Rosanne. This was largely based on MicroDesign and The Network. The machine it was to run on was completely different to previous machines, but once again used the Z80 chip, although this time a 16 MHz model was chosen. The programmers also wrote a brand new word processor, spreadsheet and additional programs.

In a break from the norm, Amstrad decided that the software should be instantly accessible from a flash drive, called the Cabinet, and the software should be both LocoScript and DOS compatible.

Controversially, no CP/M or DOS programs would work on the machine however. Entirely new packages would have to be written from scratch, but optimistic early claims were that 30 new packages were on the way including a CP/M emulator, so noone was too concerned.

For a variety of reasons, the '16 was delayed by around a year (Amstrad have since claimed that this is normal with a new product of such complexity). Around 40,000 PcW 16s were built, and sold through the Amstrad Direct catalogue for £368.95. Early sales were disappointing, largely because the '16 was not on sale in the shops. A welcome return to Dixons, saw sales leap, and a promising 10,000 were shifted within a year.

In fact, Dixons liked the '16 so much, they bought Amstrad's entire stock, and with them, customer support.

Amstrad had effectively washed its hands of the PCW. And all the signs from Sugar Towers are that the PcW 16 was the last statement in the PCW range.

And the promised software never arrived. To date, only two pieces of serious software have been written for the PcW 16. Until the CP/M emulator emerges, the cynics will continue to suggest that the PCW is dead.

But no doubt the PCW will survive well into the next century. Here's to the next 15 years!

Time bomb partly defused

With the growing concerns about the millennium bug, E. Claxton tested out SuperCalc2 and discovered it was, like most PCW programs, resistant to the bug

RECENTLY, this magazine has joined the rest of the media scrum in drawing attention to the problems that will be experienced on the dreaded 1st January 2000.

A lot has been written on this subject, and there have been many alarming reports about the possible effects on a large number of computers.

I think it is right that a lot of emphasis is placed on the necessity to make thorough preparations, and I wouldn't want to minimise these problems as being less significant than they really are.

Having said that, let us be careful not to find problems where they do not exist. On reading the article "Time Bomb" in the last issue of *PCW Today* carefully, I saw that among the programs mentioned of being incapable of coping with the 21st Century was SuperCalc2. Let me spring to its defence.

When I read this, my initial response was one of concern, but this passed very quickly because I recalled having read a piece in the manual, to the effect that the Date function could span many years.

On referring to the manual again, I found that it stated the range of dates to be 1 March 1900 (3, 1, 1900) to 28 February 2100), some 73049 days - but there were a few rules to be observed. However, the doubt having been created in my mind, I decided to carry out a few tests.

My first test was to try and enter a date in the 21st century. The date 4, 19, 2001 was accepted. Slight relief. Then to something a little more advanced - adding a number of days to this date. Again, no problems there. Even adding a number of days to a date entered late in the 20th century created no problems.

Then I did something a little silly - I entered Date(3, 1, 1900)+73049' expecting to get 2/28/2100. Instead I got 'Error' - whoops! (I will come back to that later).

Casting my mind back to the article, I recalled a mention of the fact that the year 2000 will be a leap year. I thought - what a difference a day makes. So I entered 'Date(2, 29, 2000). And it was accepted.

Back to my 'Error' - a few minutes with pencil and paper confirmed that there were 73049 days between 1 March 1900 and 28 Feb 2100, allowing for the fact that 2000 will be a leap year. So what had I done wrong? Simple, I had just not taken into account that to calculate between two dates, you had to reduce the days by 1. 'Date(3, 1, 1900)+73048 produced 2/28/2100. And so onto more extensive tests. I will not say they were exhaustive because someone will likely try something I did not test.

As an addendum, I would add that from the depths of my memory I could recall that at some time, there were two versions of SuperCalc advertised, one by Computer Associates and another by Amsoft. I don't know what, if any, differences there are between the two versions.

In using the DATE function you can key in the year as either a two digit or a four digit number. If the column width is set at its default of 10 the year will be displayed as two digits however it is entered, but if the width is changed to 12, the year will be displayed as four digits.

Which brings me back to the ground rules. Enter the year as two digits, and it is automatically accepted as being in the 20th century. The year must be entered as four digits.

Bug update

Millennium hysteria has begun in earnest, but the PCW will remain largely unaffected

OVER the past few months, countless newspaper columns, magazine articles and television programs have been dedicated to one little bug.

But this is no ordinary bug. This is a potentially catastrophic electronic bug that could seriously effect many home appliances. The millennium bug is only a year away, and already hysteria is starting to break out.

Amstrad has been inundated with telephone calls and e-mails from worried customers, afraid that their PCW will stop working when it hits the new century. The customer support people have been delighted to inform them that this will not happen.

The great news is that unlike hundreds of thousands of PCs, videos, central heating systems and other common household appliances, PCWs will almost completely ignore the millennium. With the exception of a couple of pieces of software, the PCW is safe, and will definitely not stop working due to the millennium bug.

The classic PCWs can't tell the time anyway, and the PcW 16, which can, was programmed without the bug.

Meanwhile, for the first time, Microsoft has admitted that some of its software "May have a time related problem."

And almost all PCs over a year old, will need a bug-fix. These are currently retailing at around £30-£40. A vastly inflated price for such a simple piece of software. We shouldn't gloat but it really is good to get our own back!

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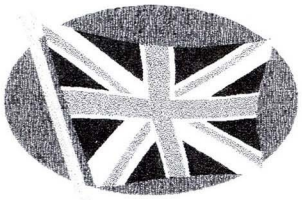


The Great British Word Processor

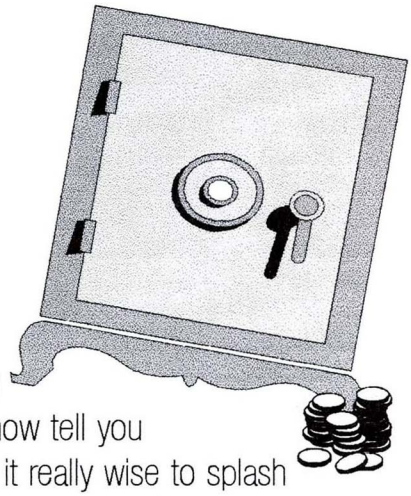
Protext in its CP/M version is the fastest and most complete word processor on the Amstrad PCW. On one disc, the program features include:

- Logical Keystrokes
- "Plain English" commands
- A free tutor file on disc
- Fast text handling
- Network, hard disc, MicroDesign and LocoScript compatability
- Mail-merging and spell-checking included *at no extra cost*
- Free printer support for *virtually any* printer. You can use your printer's built-in fonts or colour capability without any additional expense
- Free user support is included in the purchase price, and the Protext helpline operates (at normal 'phone rates during evenings and weekends
- Protext handles printing in columns with ease
- Simply configured for more advanced purposes
- Protext can easily produce ASCII files to let you transfer between computers, either by software or for e-mail purposes
- The Free Protext User's Club is available to all Protext users for the open exchange of tips, templates and information

Protext v2.23 has had 12 years of continuous development. Despite being highly developed, above all, it is very fast and the user friendly 'look and feel' of the program has been maintained throughout its development. Because of Protext's wide range of useful features, it is impossible to cover everything here, but further information is available if you send an A4 SAE to Brian Watson at Protext Software, *Harrowden*, 39 High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, ELY, Cambridgeshire CB6 2RA. Alternatively, you can phone 01353 777006 (from 7-9pm weekdays, or any time at weekends)

CP/M Protext, the one-disc word processing solution, costs just £25. It is available from the above address or from ComSoft, 10 McIntosh Court, Wellpark, Glasgow G31 2HW. Orders may be placed by phone on 0141 5544735, qoting your credit card details. Please state the computer model and your drive A: size when ordering.

Save your Cash



The PCW has become something of a joke in today's hi-tech world.The experts will now tell you that your computer is obsolete and that you should invest in a PC. But is it really wise to splash out £1000 or more on a new computer and do you actually need it? Adrian Braddy fights through the media hype in this special investigation.

WITH the enticing window displays and inviting television adverts on the run up to Christmas and into the New Year sales, you may be tempted by the offers on new PCs.

And if you venture into one of the "bargain" packed stores, a friendly salesperson will tell you that your PCW is useless, and that you really do need an expensive new speedy Pentium with bells on. But do you?

Before you make that big decision, sit down and think about it. Increasingly home computers are becoming a vital part of life, and before long they will be as common as the television set in the corner of your living room.

That's a fact, and it's not the issue here. You need to ask yourself "what do I want to use my computer for."

Let's face it, technically PCs are better than PCWs - by a mile. The fastest PCW runs at 16 MHz, whereas most modern PCs run at between 233 and 300 MHz. That's nearly 20 times faster.

Then, you can get PCWs with 2 mb of RAM, but the best PCs come with about 64 mb. That's a whopping 32 times more memory.

The PCW comes with two colours, black and either green or white.

A PC has a minimum of 256 colours and most can deal with around 24 million - that's photo-perfect.

A PC screen is bigger and clearer, you can use CD ROMs, ZIP drives, flatbed scanners, and stereo sound.

It all sounds very impressive, and these are the kind of facts and figures that any good salesperson will try and dazzle you with. In fact you may already be dazzled, just by reading this.

What I have just said makes sense, and you may already be itching to go out and buy one of these super duper machines. That's fair enough, but just think about it.

Then come the hidden extras - if you want to buy some decent software, you must be prepared to pay for it

A PC with a decent brand (you own an Amstrad, so brand names must mean something to you) will set you back around £700.

It may come with the Windows operating system, and some basic software, but you need a printer. A decent inkjet will set you back at least a further £150. We are talking big money here.

Then come the hidden extras - if you want to buy some decent software, you must be prepared to pay for it. The desktop publisher, this magazine is produced on, retails at about £600!

Let's look at some software you may have heard of. A glance through one of the many PC magazines tells its own story - I've taken these prices from Software Warehouse's Winter 98 catalogue - you'll find it in most of the door-stop-sized magazines.

Microsoft Word 97, the market-leading word processor is on sale for a mere £230.88. Microsoft Access 2, the popular database, will set you back £231.03.

And what about desktop publishing? Quark Express will cost you £699, whilst Adobe Pagemaker 6.5 is priced at £380.

Admittedly, you can get products that cost less than this, but they're often not much good. And if you fancy a decent game, almost every newly released shoot-em-up costs about £30 - not cheap.

You've heard of desktop publishers and word processors, but what about crash guards, virus checkers, disc defragmenters.

You will need all these things and more, just to keep your PC running. The PC is not a strong beast, it is vulnerable attack, and to be safe you must take out expensive precautions.

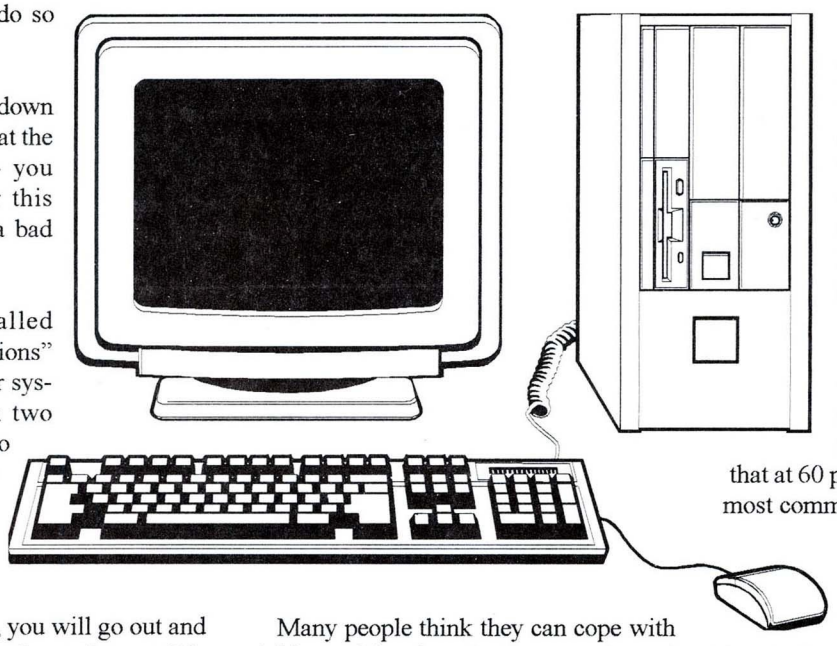
Your hard drive is at risk from vicious viruses. My own PC caught one, without me knowing, then one day everything stopped working (not actually a very rare occurrence) and Windows appeared to have left the hard drive. It cost me three weeks and a £50 repair bill to get it fixed.

At the last estimate there were about 12,000 known viruses floating around cyberspace, and dozens more are created everyday by sad people who have nothing better to do than wreck other people's computers.

Even if you never get a virus, your PC will regularly crash, and when it does, it will do so spectacularly.

When my PC goes down I get a horrible feeling at the pit of my stomach - you never know whether this crash is going to be a bad one or not.

Nasty things called "conflicts" and "violations" wreak havoc with your system. Basically, when two pieces of software try to use the same bit of program at the same time, your system will crash.



To avoid the stress, you will go out and stock up on protection software for your PC. Here are some quotes from actual adverts for these programs:

"Save and restore automatically backs up Windows Registry and critical system files for easy recovery when your system crashes."

"Protects against all types of *known* viruses. Automatically monitors all virus threats.

"Defend your desktop! Control and protect your workstations"

It soon becomes clear that just keeping your PC on the straight and narrow is quite an effort - and a costly business to boot. But un-surprisingly, the advertising literature for PCs neglects to mention this.

The trouble is that the more powerful, and sophisticated computers get, the number of things that can go wrong with them increases.

Fancy connecting to the Internet? Well do you realise that after you've spent another £100 on a modem and software, there's the monthly charge plus phone bills.

And the Internet is not fast. Use it after midday on even the fastest PC and it more or less grinds to a halt.

Don't forget that within a year, your PC will no longer be top of the range, and the newest software will no longer run on it.

Many people think they can cope with sticking with what they've got, but of course, once the companies produce new software and hardware, they stop supporting the old equipment, literally forcing you to upgrade.

A top-range PC of three years ago will not, for instance, run the new operating system - Windows 98. So, in order to keep up you more or less go through a new PC every two years.

Then of course there's the extra whack on the electricity bill. A big PC monitor, in particular, is a huge drain. And there's a whopping big fan at the back to keep the mega-chips cool, so the PC ain't exactly a quiet beast.

Oh and then there's space. A modern PC is heavy, takes up a vast amount of desk-space and needs an extremely sturdy computer table. The ugly brute is not exactly easy to blend into the decor.

Now I know I'm only highlighting the negative points, and some people (particularly those in the PC industry) would say I'm being far from objective, and I'm biased anyway, writing for a magazine about Amstrads.

But you so rarely hear anything but praise for the "wonderful" power-house PCs with their huge hard drives and massive memories.

I'm not saying there isn't a need for PCs. This magazine is, out of necessity, produced on a PC. Big companies and colleges need PCs to work. But do you?

What do you use your PCW for? Most PCW users want their computer to do basic things for them. It's there to write them a letter, keep their accounts, or design a simple newsletter. You don't need 300 Mhz and 64 mb to do that - no matter what anyone says.

In fact, most PC users are seriously under-using their pricey PC. A recent survey, printed in The Mirror, showed that at 60 per cent, word processing is the most common use of a home PC.

When you compare LocoScript to the "best" of the PC word processors, you realise that there is not much difference.

If anything, the software companies are struggling to think up new ideas. Why else do we have automatic grammar checkers that underline your mistakes with a green line, and bouncy animated paper clips that give you top tips through speech bubbles.

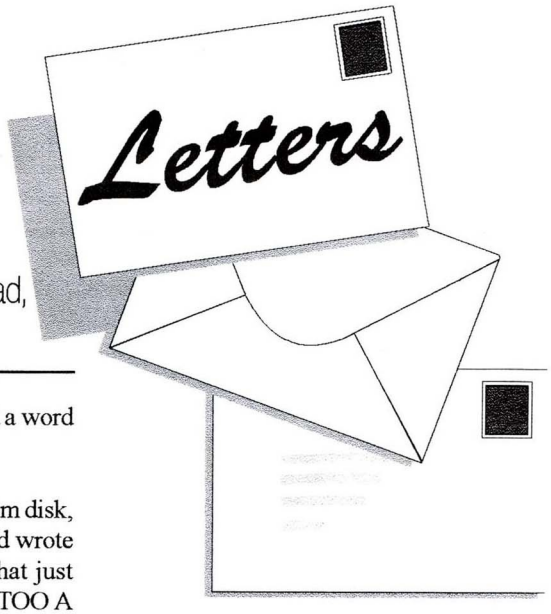
All the paraphernalia of squiggly lines and animation actually gets in the way a bit, and you'll find that LocoScript, or the PcW 16 word processor, will do exactly the same job, just as well, in less time. It's a shocking but true fact.

Until the American and Japanese whizz kids come up with something more reliable, compact and ten times cheaper, there's no reason at all, not to stick with your Amstrad.

If you really want millions of colours, Internet access and faster desktop publishing, then get a Mac or a PC. And If you want to play games, get a games console.

But if you have average needs, limited means and can put up with the stick, then why not hang on to your PCW, at least until something better comes along. You could save yourself a lot of cash!

the mailbag



Send your letters to me: The Editor, PCW Today, 150 Oxford Road, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS5 5EL and you could win a prize!

PRIZE POST

Wins a computer copy-holder

WHAT a pleasant memory. I owned an 8256 that I upgraded to an 8512. I used the machine extensively for maintaining financial records both at home and at at our mission church in the UK. It wrote the first resume and cover letter that got me the job I have today, ten years later.

I was in the USAF and was stationed in England at the time. The machine I bought had a US power supply in it. Sears *(a large US department store - Ed)* sold the PCW for a while. And they never advertised it as a computer. It was strictly a "Personal Word Processor."

I remember going into Sears and innocently asking if they had any other software for the machine. The snotty salesman remarked: "There is no other software, it is just a word processor."

At that comment, I ejected the program disk, flipped it over, booted into Basic and wrote a two or three line basic program that just started feeding up the screen: I AM TOO A COMPUTER!

With that, I walked out and left the salesman with his mouth flapping in the breeze.

I just sold my PCW 8256 in Sep 97 for $25 to a contract writer that just wanted to have something to write letters with. I look back with fondness at that machine and was always happy to know that after all it did for me, it found a home where it would still be used.

Doug Eyre, USA

PCW Today: *It's good to hear that some Americans have the same love for the PCW as we do over here. And the salsemen are just as ignorant!*

why oh why?

I RECENTLY purchased a PcW 16, which I am delighted with, and just as delighted on receiving my first issue of the excellent *PCW Today*.

However, as your letters page testifies, many '16 owners seem to be disheartened with the lack of software available. Although I believe the greatest difficulty facing the '16 and a major shortcoming is - *no CP/M.*

Why oh why did Amstrad not bundle CP/M with the '16 as they did with the previous PCWs. Surely the '16 could work as a CP/M PCW or with the Rosanne OS as the user requires, after all the both use the Z80 processor. Users upgrading from older machines would have had a gradual transition from CP/M to the superior Rosanne OS without the need to dump all their favourite software in favour of a PCW with *no software.*

With the likelihood of '16 software appearing en masse so low, I believe Amstrad could resolve the problem to some extent by belatedly implementing CP/M on the '16. This would solve the present dearth of programs for the '16 in one fell swoop and provide the impetus for owners of aging machines to upgrade. Amstrad would hopefully benefit from all those potential customers. What are they waiting for!

We have John Elliott's Joyce PC emulator, which runs all CP/M programs on a PC, yet here we have a PCW that can't run CP/M. A paradox or what! Emmmm .... John Elliott .... could this be the man to give us CP/M-16? Finally, I would like to reiterate Mike Saunders sentiments (prize letter, issue 9), to have a Pascal or C compiler implemented on the '16. Roll on Christmas!

Stuart Compton, Glasgow

PCW Today: *If we all keep shouting loudly enough, maybe somebody will listen!*

made in heaven

CONGRATULATIONS on your magazine! A lifesaver! I bought a PcW 16 in Dixons New Year sale at a ridiculous price as a supplement to my trusty 9512 with dual drives.

It was a returned model with no manual and no guarantee, and kept crashing, so I felt I had bought a disaster.

Then I noticed your advert in *Private Eye*, and from then on my relationship with my '16 has been one of bliss. Through your magazine I acquired Rescue Disc v1.11 which has not crashed in six months, then, through the courtesy of a reader, an address where I could buy a manual, and finally how to unload Cliff Lawson's memorandum from the Internet.

Ken Pople, Bristol

PCW Today: *We aim to please.*

debt of gratitude

CONGRATULATIONS on the splendid issue 10 of *PCW Today*.

The news of CP/M for the PcW 16 is rather like news of the cancellation of the national debt! No need for public domain - I'll happily pay.

Sqn Ldr Alan Birt, Bury St Edmunds

PCW Today: *Let's just hope that the new CP/M emulator does finally appear and that it will be as good as promised. The sooner we get software up and running for the PcW 16 - the better.*

more '16 trauma

I HAVE just received the latest copy of *PCW Today* and I feel I must put bubblejet to paper to comment not only upon what is an excellent and improving magazine - more pages and even more, if not very encouraging articles about the '16 - but also on various items in general.

Although I only came across *PCW Today* about six months ago, I quickly realised just how far behind the times my 8512 was, with its 3" disc drives, LocoScript 1 and a noisy old dot matrix printer. But what to do? Replacement 3.5" disc drives, LocoScript 4 and a new printer were going to cost more than a few bob but I didn't want to surf the Internet, nor did I want a 50watt sound system, Windows or a games console. No, all I wanted was a straightforward word processor and spreadsheet.

So against everyone else's better judgement, I went out and purchased a PcW 16 which then, at only £299.99 including a Canon BC250 printer, appeared to be by far the best value on the market - and within the last few weeks has been advertised at least once at an unbelievable £199.98.

And if only issue 9 had arrived one week earlier I could have saved the equivalent of at least one year's subscription by just having known that Dixons had taken up customer support for the '16 (page 4).

But no, in finding an apparent glitch in the spreadsheet (try to cut and paste a cell containing a formula/expression to another location) I set off on the following wild-goose chase (no, it's not another hidden program on the Rescue Disc!)

The first thing I found was that you can't easily tell Amstrad about a problem, because they don't publish their phone number in the user manual. So when you phone 01306 747707 (User Information Line) as given in the PcW 16 Magazine sent by Creative Technology in response to returning your registration card, you hear a recorded message telling you to ring 0891 515715 which turns out to be - wait for it - the LocoScript Support Line.

Now whilst they are very helpful and agree that there is a problem - recreating it on a v1.12 machine (and crashing a v1.11 model) - their only advice was that I should ring 01227 228888 (Amstrad) and tell them what has been found.

Unfortunately, Amstrad told me, very sniffily, that "they have no interest whatsoever in the PcW 16, it has been sold lock, stock and barrel to Dixons and you should ring their Mastercare Support Line on 0870 9013000." Here things get even more complicated because another recorded message appears to indicate that this is the 'hardware' group and you really need the 'software' group on 0839 5157515. But when you eventually get through their response was that I really did need the 'hardware' group after all, their number is - yes thank you, as everyone now knows, 0870 9013000.

Here, at last, someone takes a serious interest in what I am saying and promises to ring me back. In the meantime, I take the opportunity to contact Creative Technology (on 01889 567160 as given in the aforesaid magazine) for some moral support. Unfortunately, their response was no more helpful than that of Amstrad, as all they appear to be interested in is selling all that extra PcW 16 software which is (not yet) flooding the market.

Eventually, Dixons' Mastercare Hardware Support Line do indeed ring me back with the suggestion that the answer is simple - just key into the 'receiving' cell the identity of the 'sending' cell, CLICK and bingo! But what if the 'sending' cell containing the expression/formula is in a cluster of cells which you wish to cut or paste.....?

So after at least a fiver in 'phone calls for, as you point out, every one of these numbers has recorded introductions which spend nearly a minute each telling you that you are being, and will continue to be, charged at 50p per minute. I still don't know whether my spreadsheet problem is a fault or a default condition.

Meanwhile I am puzzled why nearly everyone I contacted told me that "there is loads of info on the Internet about the PcW 16". This is rather useless, as in no way can the '16 access the Net and if people have already got enough kit to surf the Net, why on earth are they interested in the PcW 16? Perhaps some enterprising '16 magazine should start publishing some of this information for the benefit of those who can't, or don't want to, surf.

I also remain uneasy about the fact that someone was willing to give me #85 for an 8512 with 3" disc drives, LocoScript 1 and an exhausted dot matrix printer which I bought for only £60 six years ago!

As for the '16 - well, as you say, it does what it says on the box, at the price on the box - isn't that what they mean by WYSIWYG??

Meanwhile, all strength and every success in your SOS campaign.
Don Moody, Southport

PCW Today: *If you ordered an SOS pack - they've been a little delayed, but we'll have them to you very soon - honest!*

big brother

A DISTURBING item appeared in a recent issue of one of my local newspapers, so small I almost missed it, but it ought to be brought to the attention of readers who use a PC alongside their PCW, for Internet access - especially if they visit on-line game sites.

Although ten years ago, the world wide computer network was virtually unheard of, except among specialists and real enthusiasts, there are currently around 112,000,000 Internet users. Latest estimates show this number is doubling every 18 months, and 250,000,000 will be connected by the first year of the new millennium.

Experts in the US have warned of practise they believe is widespread - although illegal - by unscrupulous on-line games companies. A device within the games program known as a 'trapdoor', allows outsiders to snoop on the contents of your PC while you're connected, and glean information you would normally wish to keep private.

Nothing is safe, they can study everything on your hard drive, from personal letters, to bank account details, while you are busy playing. So any Internet gamers out there - take heed! Thank goodness similar details on our dependable PCWs are kept safely hidden from prying eyes.
Kathleen Thorpe, Nottingham

PCW Today: *Thankfully the PCW can't catch viruses, or the millennium bug either!*

badly treated

AS A RECENT purchaser of an Amstrad PcW 16, I must say I am disappointed to find what a state the after-sales external program market is in.

It is true that when I purchased the said machine I was only really interested in its word processing function, which it does very well. But of course, as one gets more familiar with the system, one gets more adventurous. So imagine my delight in finding, on closer examination of the box it came in, a card proclaiming that if I sent it to the stated address all sorts of delightful external programs would be available. With my heart racing with excitement, I duly sent this wondrous card away.

I was hugely disappointed to find that the only software so far was a boring money manager and an equally boring insurance database. These will no doubt sell in small numbers convincing would-be programmers that the market for external software is even smaller than they think!

What we really want is a nice little graphics package, or a scanner facility, or a comms program, or the icing on the cake, a few intelligent games. The one thing that computers do very well is play games - even boring people like me that bought the '16 as a word processor would be ecstatic if it could also play games - for this I would happily pay.

I think that one of the reasons that the PCW range of computers has been so successful is that their users have become hooked on the computer bug, wanting them to do more and more interesting things. This I know to be true in my case as I have gone from being someone that said they would never own a computer (Luddite I hear you say) to currently owning two! And looking for a good PCW machine to attempt some programming of my own.

So I heartily applaud your SOS campaign, I just think its a shame that it's necessary.

Frustrated PcW 16 user.
Kevin Boniface, London

PCW Today: *Creative Technology had hoped that more software would be produced - two Basic packages and a graphics program were shelved due to a couple of sorry misfortunes.*

you're mistaken

AS the proud owner of an Amstrad PCW 8256, I always look forward to receiving my latest copy of *PCW Today* and almost always find it full of useful hints and tips.

However, on reading the latest edition, I noticed halfway down page 12, whilst reading about the cover disc enclosed with that edition, a piece wish clearly stated that you could not print out any of the info on the cover disc in plain ASCII using LocoScript.

Well I am afraid that as a regular user of LocoScript 3, having progressed from version 2, I beg to differ. I have, on a number of occasions, printed out files in ASCII having imported them into LocoScript, though it is somewhat cumbersome and time consuming. And unless I have completely misread the LocoScript 2 manual, it specifically tells you how to do exactly that, both in simple text, and page image files. I heave yet to do it with the cover discs, having just gone over to a 3.5" external disc drive. If however, I am wrong, then I stand corrected.
David Callender, London

PCW Today: *You're right, ASCII can be imported into LocoScript. But the cover disc guide is aimed at absolute beginners.*

it's a scandal

I HAVE used an Amstrad since as far back as I can remember. And I have tried everywhere to obtain additional software for my PcW 16 without success.

I think it is a scandal that the PcW 16 was sold to so many customers and they were not advised that there would be such a slow development of software.

I am surprised that a company as big as Amstrad are allowed to get away with it. I purchased my machine from Argos and I was told software would be available. This is why I bought it, because as it stands, it is very limited.

I think all PcW 16 users should form a group and literally force Amstrad into producing software. The manual actually states instructions on updating fonts and yet no extra fonts are available. Amstrad must have known this before retailing the machine and yet they allowed customers to be conned into believing that extra software would be available.
Peter Ioannou, Liverpool

PCW Today: *Sadly, no-one can force Amstrad to produce new software - after all they did the hard part, making the PCW. They never actually produced one bit of software for any of the other PCWs. It is the software producers we need to complain to - if they think there is enough demand, they'll produce the software like a shot!*

on yer bike

THOROUGHLY enjoyed Terry Donovan's letter on Bargain PCWs in the last issue. But who turns down a five quid PCW, just because he's on his motorbike?

I recently took a twin drive 8512 home in the basket of my Postie's pushbike, undamaged.

But for those without such luxurious transport I've found most boot sale vendors will deliver locally for a few extra quid - payable on delivery - and even if this doubles the asking price, you've still got a PCW for a tenner.

Mind you. I've taken 32k propane cylinders home on a BSA motorcycle with the aid of a bit of rope and common sense, so a 'mere' PCW should be no problem. Get a big rucksack Terry, and the bargains will come thick and fast.

The real bargains - and risks because you can't easily check them out - are the useful add-ons like Ram Paks, extra/spare drives etc.

Get hunting folks, and round up those lost and straying PCWs before they end up in the great skip in the sky.

Speaking of skip-dipping'... No, that's another story, for another time.
John Craggs, Eastleigh

PCW Today: *PCW bargains can be found everywhere you look. Try church fairs, jumble sales, computer shows, auctions, and of course the good old classifieds in your local paper. The great buys are there, so long as you keep your eyes peeled.*

gremlins return

WHAT has Rod Shinkfield done that you should treat him like this? On page 16 of the last issue he writes Export Duty under the 'LocoFile' byline. And what does the second paragraph of that article say? "...it may look like the two example records shown in figure one..."

On page 28, under 'Rod on LocoScript', he writes in the third column, fifth paragraph: "Delete the other numbers so the screen looks like figure four..."

Am I being more than usually dim? At the age of 75+, one does not always see the obvious - but where are these figures?

On the plus side, well done with the Cover Disc article on Page 35 - even if I don't know what a "cover disc server" is. I shall be going back to that first disc to see what I can rediscover.

On a purely personal note, I am incapable of missing a textual error, no matter what the document may be. Until June this year, I edited for over 10 years, a local magazine with a circulation of more than three thousand copies. My wife and I would always read the printer's proof copy independently before the print run was started. Inevitably we found errors - often she spotted mistakes which I had overlooked and vice-versa.

Before retirement, I used to proof read scientific documents. Usually I hadn't the faintest idea of the meaning of a "microenteric frabjous diapson", or whatever. But that was all to the good. Had I known what it was, I would probably have skated over the textual errors - as the authors were apt to do when reading their first drafts - but my ignorance made me look very hard at the overall flow of the words.

Curiously, and I have a beautiful book on railways to demonstrate it, the most likely cause of errors which pass the proof reader is picture caption. This is because they are usually prepared separately from the text and he/she doesn't necessarily see them.

That's quite enough for the present. But over your desk, as the editor of an invaluable journal, should be "MUST TRY HARDER" - if it isn't there already.
Harold Simmons, Wallingford

PCW Today: *Humble apologies to Harold and of course to Rod. Once again the curse of the gremlins returns. These nasty little creatures tormented our predecessor PCW Plus and we seem to have inherited them! Me, make excuses? Would I?!*

right to reply

I CANNOT refute the criticism expressed by Shirley Whitfield in last issue's Mailbag on errors in my LocoScript tutorial. Except maybe to say that as the tutorials were written sometime ago, I would nowadays use document setup, which as Shirely says is the best method.

All I can say in my defence is that not everyone uses LocoScript, or any other program, in the same way, nor to the same level.

Probably only 75 per cent or less of a program's true potential is ever likely to be used.

Also, let's face it, any information one needs to use LocoScript correctly can be found in the user guide. Most user guides and usually such excellent and comprehensive publications that one could say that tutorials published in magazines are uneccesary.

Pressing [+], [C], [E] dropped down a menu containing CEntre and CR extra only, yet pressing down all three keys gave (CEntre) right away, except when I tried again, then down dropped the main menu.

This interference from alternative methods to achieve a simple task like centring text makes it difficult to explain in simple terms without missing key points. Pressing [+], [C] and then [ENTER] seems to be the quickest method.

Pressing PARA does drop the cursor down on my letter template, as I haven't bothered setting up a 'CR extra'.

Even if done wrongly, if it works, why change it. I can only describe how I use my machine and software, and as I learn more, so my methods change over time.

The phrases Yours faithfully and Yours sincerely were on my LocoScript master disc, along with other phrases that I wiped off and replaced with my own choices.

Incidentally, I've recently added a (CEntre) code at the beginning of both phrases which centres them automatically.

Shirley shouldn't be sorry for being so negative as she made some very important points - which is what *PCW Today* is all about.
Rod Shinkfield, Chorley

PCW Today: *I'd just like to add that Rod on LocoScript is aimed at beginners..*

thanks for that

I MUST thank John Willams of Lincoln , writing in issue 8 for pointing out that there are upgrades available for the PcW 16.

I eventually obtained an upgrade from Amstrad (Many thanks to Cliff Lawson) by return of post. He does point out that Dixons do supply them. I did receive a later version about six months later.
Terry King, Crewe

more imagination

I'VE JUST received my second issue of *PCW Today* and it's packed full of good ideas, interesting reviews and - very importantly - useful adverts and contacts.

Like most active PCWers, the close of *PCW Plus* was a real body blow, but *PCW Today* fills the gap very well indeed and it's good to see some familiar names writing for you.

I cannot understand why Amstrad could not build on the enormous success of the PCW which is probably the best-selling single computer of all time.

A little more imagination, understanding of its customers and better marketing skills would surely have paid commercial dividends.

The PcW 16, though good in itself, is not what was needed as there is no sensible reason for existing PCW owners to "upgrade".
Michael Rose, Sheffield

File swapping

It's the penultimate part of Rod Shinkfield's organisation series - and he's left LocoScript for CP/M

THERE came a time when my letter disc 5:0 A to H only had 4k free on drive A: - it was near enough full.

The letters held on the full disc needed to be halved by moving four group's files onto a blank disc, thereby leaving space on the original disc. But how?

CP/M had the answer: One method would be to first put the back up disc safely to one side (in case things go wrong). Using DISCKIT, a copy of the full letter disc was made.

Of the two identical discs, one disc had all the files from groups EEE, FFF, GGG, HHH erased, while on the other disc only groups AAA, BBB, CCC, DDD were erased. The two letter discs were then labelled and marked as: LocoScript A-D 5:0 and LocoScript E-H 5:1.

A copy of TEMPLATE.STD found in group 0 (Group AAA of disc 5:0) was put in group 0 of the new disc 5:1 E-H. The completed discs were then copied on to two back up discs before taking their places in the disc boxes.

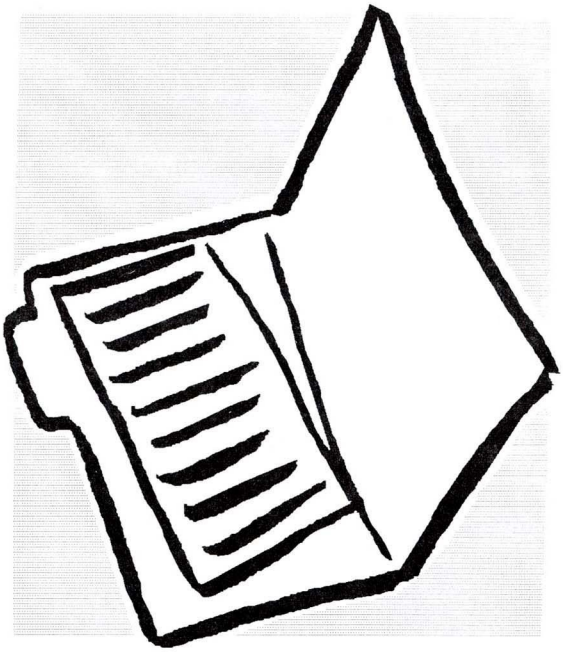
So how were the files erased from the various LocoScript groups? Booting up in to CP/M, at A> I typed ERA *.* [RETURN], and ERASE *.* (Y/N)? appeared on the screen. Pressing [Y] accepted the erasing of all the files from group 0 (the group named AAA).

Back at A> again, I next typed USER 1 and pressed [RETURN], which changed the A> to 1A>. CP/M was now able to work in LocoScript's group 1 (the group named BBB). ERA *.* was again typed in and [RETURN] pressed, and, as before, ERASE *.* (Y/N)? appeared. Pressing [Y] this time meant all the files held in group 1 were erased. So now both group 0 and group 1 were empty of files.

The same procedure of typing USER n [RETURN] and erasing each group's files in turn (except the groups to remain), meant that soon there was plenty of space on my 5:0 and 5:1 letter discs.

So that is one method of using CP/M to move (or, as in this case, erase) large batches of LocoScript files - here is another:

First format a blank LocoScript disc and, after colour labelling, naming and numbering, put it to one side for a moment. We are now going to copy all the files from groups 4, 5, 6 and 7 to the blank disc, and then erase the four groups to make space on the full letter disc:



At CP/M's A> type PIP [RETURN]. Put the full disc in to drive A: and type at PIP's * M:[G4]=A:*.*[G4] RETURN]. Pip will copy all the files found in group 4 on the LocoScript letter disc, and the * will re-appear when it's finished.

Press [PASTE] and M:[G4]=A:*.*[G4] will re-appear (saves typing in the last command again). Change the number 4 in each square bracket to a number 5, and press [RETURN] again. Pip will now copy all the files found in group 5 (FFF).

The * will appear to show when copying is complete. Copy groups 6 and 7, then take the full disc out of drive A: and put in the blank disc. Now type A:[G4]=M:*.*[G4] [RETURN] and watch pip copy the files on to the fresh disc and back into group 4 renaming it as EEE.

Once more press [PASTE] and A:[G4]=M:*.*[G4] should appear as that was the last command used. Change the [G4]s to [G5]s and press [RETURN]. Now the files copied from FFF will be put on to the new disc, too.

When all the copied files are safely on the new LocoScript letter disc, press [RETURN] to get back to the CP/M A>.

The unwanted files still taking up valuable space on the full letter disc now need erasing. Put the full letter disc into drive A: and type USER=4 [RETURN]. The A> becomes 4A>, CP/M is now able to work in LocoScript's group 4. Type ERA *.* [RETURN], and CP/M will ask the question ERASE *.* (Y/N)?. Press [Y] and all the EEE files will be erased. Returned to 4A> type USER=5 [RETURN] and 4A> then becomes 5A>.

Again, type ERA *.* [RETURN] and press [Y] when CP/M asks ERASE *.* (Y/N)? once more. This time all the FFF files are erased. Erase the remaining groups 6 and 7 in the same way.

So there you are, two methods of using CP/M to copy, move, and erase large batches of files, and two very good ways of creating space on what was once a very full LocoScript disc. Don't forget to put a copy of TEMPLATE.STD onto Group 0 of the new disc.

OFFICE LAND

Office supplies for your Amstrad PCW

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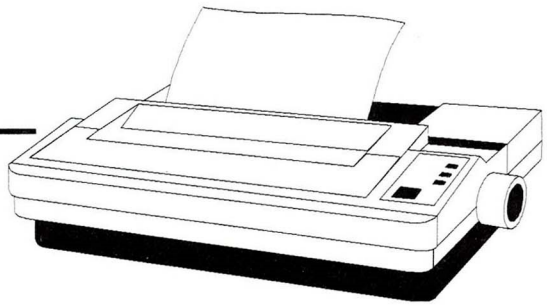

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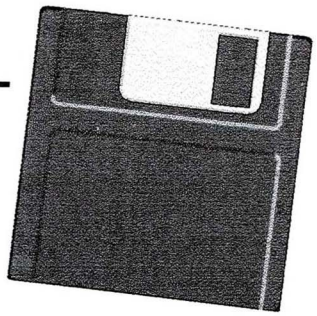

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PcW9256	PCW9512+
PCW9512 CP/M	

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On the Rack

The days of news-stand PCW magazines are long gone now, but Steve Denson is missing those old favourites PCW Plus and PCW User

YEARS ago, I well remember being told by the pundits that, following the advent of all the new Satellite and Cable channels we would all be spoilt for choice.

Well, that's true. Those who have signed-up to the global scheme do have lots of stations to select from, the trouble is they are all showing the same sort of LCD (lowest common denominator) programmes; Games shows, chat shows, quizzes, cookery programmes, American imports and sport of the variety that we used to get for "free" on BBC/ITV. That's supposed to be progress.

The same principle applies to computer magazines. The newsagent shelves are bulging with mostly Console and PC publications, the latter usually have CDs crammed with "free" software stuck to the front.

Some of these mammoth magazines contain several hundred pages so why do I find them so boring that I rarely buy them? Well, I'll tell you. The actual editorial content is of the usual 'you better upgrade or else you'll be left behind' variety and is squashed between page after page of glossy advertising. In fact, some of these adverts take the form of catalogues and take up 32 pages at a time! These mags must be a licence to print money for their owners but quite frankly they are dull because they have little in the way of humour or character.

What is missing from the newstands, of course, is the presence of an Amstrad title.

Just a few years back you could still find two such magazines in most high street stationers, PCW PLUS, of course and its long-time rival PCW USER.

I must admit that I miss them both dearly and not just from a commercial viewpoint. I feel certain that many former PCW owners who moved onto PCs must also pine for the cosy reassurance that these excellent publications gave their readers.

One felt that the editors and writers really did care about the machine and their readers and never tired of printing tutorials on Locoscript, the mysteries of CP/M and so on.

The subject of articles might often be old but it was always looked at from a fresh angle and no matter how expert a user there was always something new to learn. I still find that today when I browse through my collection of old "ammas" (Amstrad magazines).

With the second anniversary of the demise of PCW PLUS looming, I think this is a good point to look back at the PCW publications.

And I'll commence by saying that I think that both PCW USER and PLUS were allowed to die too soon! They might have been preserved by a better marketing and management strategy. Let's take each magazine in turn.

What is missing from the news-stands, of course, is the presence of an Amstrad title

PCW USER: Brilliantly edited by a very nice man, Rex Last and which in the end run out of road when it was acquired by a new publisher. They tried to rebrand the magazine by calling it Locoscript User which was quite a clever idea that didn't quite come off as it was only allowed to run for a few issues before they pulled the plug.

This was a shame because it was very good and, as an advertiser, we got a useful response even a year after it closed which showed it was hitting the right spot. Yet publishing is a very hard game and the title was not given the time to develop or grow. I can understand the reasoning behind the change of title.

The PCW user base was declining and many former users had moved on to a Dos-based Locoscript that was given little coverage by the mainstream PC magazines. This way, it was no doubt felt, the relaunched title could hold on to its old PCW owners whilst attracting Locoscript PC users.

The resulting mix of PC and PCW, DOS and CP/M was surprisingly entertaining and demonstrated what could be achieved. The one thing that User needed was more time to re-establish itself but it was not to be, although I can't understand why they spent so much time and money on a relaunch and then killed it so soon.

PCW PLUS: It could be argued that the opposite was true of PLUS - that it had been given too much time and was starting to lose money. After all, it was the longest-lasting and therefore the best of all the PCW magazines but had simply run its course. To their credit, Future allowed it to close with a special edition and PLUS never lost its distinctive style or quality of content although it invariably got thinner.

I can't help thinking, however, that its staff and supporters felt very let down at the end even though there was a sense of inevitability about it all. Suddenly only six-monthly subscription offers appeared and the writing was on the wall. Like a railway line facing closure, the excursions were cancelled, the services cut and there was a refusal to book annual season tickets.

Despite having an excellent editor in Andrew Chapman, Future did little to promote PCW Plus and requests for a flyer to send out with catalogues were met with indifference. A lot of Amstrad users, previously unaware that there was still a magazine for them, would have been delighted to subscribe.

Stephen Denson F.I.A.P. is boss of leading PCW firm, SD MicroSystems. You can contact them on 07000 736427.

Battle of the inkers

Kathleen Thorpe witnesses the competition between the Dots and Daisies and the Bubbles and Squirts...

NO, this is not an announcement for a forthcoming contest between rival children's TV programs. It is about the competition between the variety of printers available to use with your PCW.

We live in the digital age and information can travel across the world in a matter of seconds. Some would say, the Internet rules - why bother with printed material? The truth is, a computer with a printer still plays a vital role in today's society - especially in the home - whether it be for a letter to a loved one, or an attempt at a blockbuster novel.

When it was first introduced, one of the main reasons people bought the new PCW, was because it came as a complete system with keyboard, monitor and printer.

Even today, Dixons and Currys sell the PcW 16 bundled with a printer. If you look at today's adverts for PCs, most packages do not include a printer.

Over the years, the cost of buying a printer has dropped dramatically, and although your PCW may be getting on a bit, it will work with most new models.

If you have an 8000 series machine, or a 9256, you may need to purchase an add-on printer interface to enable you to use an extra printer.

The majority of the original PCW series came with a 9-pin dot matrix printer, which connects straight into the back of the computer and can only be used with the PCW.

The print head on this printer contains a grid of nine pins which are fired against the printer ribbon to form characters on the paper. You can usually recognise a 9-pin layout by its "dotty" appearance.

Although still available, the 9-pin has largely been superceded by the 24-pin printer, which gives increased resolution, and smooths out the jagged effect of the letters somewhat.

Put a print-out from the two printers together and you will instantly see the difference in quality. And while they work the same way, 24-pin printers are considerably quieter than their older 9-pin cousins.

If you bought a 9512, the word "graphics" wasn't in its vocabulary. This model was supplied with what is called a daisywheel printer. This uses a wheel with characters arranged round in a circle, like petals on a flower (hence the name daisywheel). Each petal is struck against the ribbon by a small hammer - the typewriter works a similar way.

The actual daisywheel can be changed so that different fonts and sizes can be used - although this is difficult within one document. The quality of the print is excellent, and pages are printed far quicker because only one action is needed to print a character. However, the daisywheel is big and cumbersome, and very noisy. These printers are now a dying trend, largely because of their lack of graphics capabilities.

Dot matrix and daisywheel printers have been overtaken by the newer inkjet technology pioneered by such companies as Canon and Hewlett Packard. This type of printer produces both speed and quality at and affordable price. The 9512+ not only came with the new 3.5" disc drive, you could also buy it with a Canon bubblejet instead of the daisywheel.

Rather than using ribbons, these printers have removable ink cartridges. Highly pressurised ink is squirted through tiny nozzles in the print head straight onto the paper.

The ink forms into minute blobs of ink that merge into each other, forming a character. All this takes a fraction of a second, and very quietly. These printers are fast, the better models can print out several pages per minute and the print is of "Near Letter Quality".

To reduce costs even further, both compatible cartridges and DIY refill kits are available for some models. On the down side, the ink used with most of these printers isn't waterproof.

Also many modern printers will not work with your PCW as they are "Windows only". Find out from the salesman if they are Deskjet 500 or Canon BJ30 compatible before buying, many still are.

LocoScript 4 with its graphics and colour capabilities has made purchasing a colour printer a viable option for PCW users. A good selection of dot matrix and inkjet printers will print in colour.

However, if you really want a top quality print out, the best printer to consider is a laser. Just a few years ago, this type of printer would have set you back around £1000, just for a mono version, but the prices have fallen quite sharply and you can now buy one for £300 or less.

These printers work on the same principle as a photocopier, and unlike the other printers which handle your page line by line, laser printers process an entire page in one fell swoop. Whatever is on your page is created as an electrical charge, to which the toner - powdered ink - is then attached and sealed by heat. This means that the page can be reproduced quickly and easily.

For word processing, if you still use LocoScript 1, the program does not allow you to access an alternative printer. LocoScript 2, 3 and 4 however, support a wide range of different printers, although you may need to purchase a printer support pack to make them work. These contain drivers for just about every printer currently available, and they are available from LocoScript Software.

Of course, if you have a PcW 16, a wide variety of printer drivers are already installed for the Canon, Hewlett Packard, OKI and Epson series printers.

So with the constant development of printer technology and continuing low prices, it has never been so easy to produce good quality printing on your PCW.

Putting on the style

At some stage many of us will have to produce a magazine or newsletter of some sort. You have the perfect tool in MicroDesign, but would you really know how to start? PD Blake has all the answers

IT may now be possible to use scalable fonts, full colour and columns in LocoScript, but MicroDesign still beats it hands down in page design.

LocoScript was never designed to be a desktop publisher, and although many club magazines are now produced on the word processor, much better effects can be achieved more easily with a professional publishing package like MicroDesign.

With MicroDesign, you have a wide selection of useful tools and functions, like text editing, graphics manipulation and image insertion.

Yet, unless you know how to put a decent page together, all this functionality is of little use.

A page should be simple and eye catching, but not offensive to the senses. There's nothing worse than a page that makes the reader's eyes stand out on stalks when they attempt to read it.

When placing text on a page, columns are a good idea, especially on A4 sized paper. Columns make it much easier to read the text on a page, shorter lines are easier on the eye.

A full page-width of text drags the reader's eyes right across the page, and can be hard to read, particularly with a small font size.

Imagine reading a newspaper or this magazine say, if they just had one column. Equally bad, is too many columns. More than five on a page begins to look a little heavy.

Three columns is usually about right for an A4 page, but experiment. However be careful not to vary the number of columns too much throughout your magazine or newsletter. It is usually best to stick to what is called a 'house style' in your publication, sticking with the same number of columns on every page.

You should also decide how to typeset the text - centred, right aligned, or justified. I prefer justification, as this makes each column nice and neat, with no jagged edges.

Once you have decided on the number of columns, you need to choose your fonts or typestyles. In this area there are a few dos and don'ts.

It is a good idea to mix fonts, using a variety of both styles and sizes, but it can be over done. You may use the same font in several different sizes, but never use more than three styles.

The bold and brash fonts that are avaliable for MicroDesign may look exciting, but are they easy to read?

Try putting the first paragraph into bold or italic, or using a larger font. You could also put the first word in capitals.

When choosing the font, again you can mix and match, but there is a great temptation to go over the top. Stick to a maximum of about four different fonts on a page, and it won't look too bad.

The bold and brash fonts that are a viable for MicroDesign may look exciting, but are they easy to read? Many script fonts, in particular, are notoriously hard to read, and should be avoided in most cases.

Try and use a traditional, easy to read font, like Stan, for the bulk of the text. Use bold, eye-catching fonts like Athos for the headline, but never swap. Try to avoid sans serif fonts in large areas of text, as they can be harder to read.

If you have trouble deciding on a font, Creative Technology still have an extensive library of professional fonts available for just over a tenner a disc, and new fonts can also be found on the cover disc that comes with this magazine.

Dozens of fonts can also be picked up very cheaply from the public domain libraries, although these vary in quality.

Once you have your text typeset and are happy with it, the next thing is to fill in any gaps on the page.

White space is not a bad thing - many modern newspapers and magazines use it - but the design has to be very good for you to successfully pull it off. So it is always best to find something to fill the bigger gaps.

You could slip in a key quote from the text in a bigger, bolder font, or you could drop in a piece of clip art that compliments the text.

Page design is an entirely individual thing. The MD3 manual has a few examples, and you can gather ideas from everything you read. Just keep your eyes open and practise.

Remember, the main rule is keep it simple. A simple, easily read page is far more attractive than a page full of different fonts and bright pictures, that nobody can actually translate.

Next time I'll take you through some more slightly more advanced page design tricks, such as the use of large capital letters at the beginning of a paragraph, word-wrapping and using your fonts to the maximum effect.

Until then, happy MicroDesigning. And don't forget that you can produce great Christmas cards in MicroDesign with some fancy fonts, a spot of festive clip art, and a little imagination.

REAL DESKTOP PUBLISHING AND GRAPHICS POWER FOR YOUR PCW!

MicroDesign3

"It'll knock your socks off!" *(PCW User Magazine)*

Use your PCW to design and print your own...

- ❑ *Personal Stationery*
- ❑ *Company Letterheads*
- ❑ *Magazines & Newsletters*
- ❑ *Teaching Material*
- ❑ *Essays & Reports*
- ❑ *Books & Manuals*
- ❑ *Leaflets & Brochures*
- ❑ *Menus & Price Lists*
- ❑ *Advertisements & Forms*
- ❑ *Posters & Flysheets*

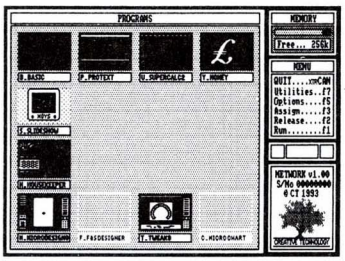
...and more - *the only limit is your imagination!*

Desktop Publishing means combining your word-processor text with pictures and diagrams to create spectacular pages like these - this advertisement was created and printed using *MicroDesign3* and a Bubblejet printer. *MicroDesign3* lets you lay out your text in columns, combine it with graphics, and even draw your own pictures and diagrams straight onto your PCW's screen.

MD3 is a powerful program, but it is also simple to learn: PCW Plus Magazine gave *MD3* five marks out of five for *"ease of use"* in their review. The *MD3* package comes complete with a comprehensive Beginner's Tutorial, and we also provide a Technical Support hotline free of charge between 4pm and 7pm every weekday.

THE NETWORK

"A PCW REVOLUTION" *(PCW Plus)*

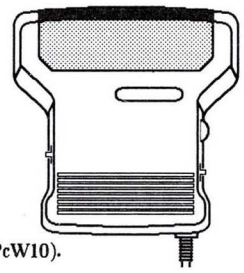


- ❑ *A modern Graphic User Interface for your PCW.*
- ❑ *Arrange up to 16 CP/M program icons on the "Desktop".*
- ❑ *Full menu-driven mouse and keyboard control.*
- ❑ *Stores active programs in memory for instant access.*
- ❑ *Links MD3 and Tweak3 together automatically.*

Please Note:
The Network is compatible with most CP/M programs and versions, but you are welcome to contact us with queries about compatibility.

MD3 Scanner

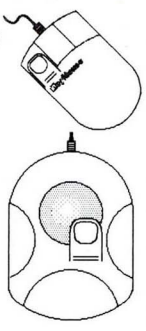
"CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY HAVE TRIUMPHED!" *(PCW Plus)*



- ❑ *Scan your own images and clip-art into MD3;*
- ❑ *Works directly on the MD3 Page - no extra software required;*
- ❑ *Scanned Image appears on the screen as you scan;*
- ❑ *Scanning resolutions of 200, 300 and 400 dots per inch;*
- ❑ *Uses "dither-patterns" to simulate colours & grey-shades;*
- ❑ *Superb results from line-art or photographs;*
- ❑ *Compatible with all PCWs* (note: extension cable required for 9256 & PcW10).

KeyMouse

"INDISPUTABLY TOP OF THE TREE." *(PCW Plus)*



- ❑ *KeyMouse is a high-quality 3-button mouse which connects to the PCW via the keyboard socket. It is now available with a new Track-Ball option.*
- ❑ *KeyMouse comes complete with its own smart mouse mat, and comprehensive user manual.*
- ❑ *In MicroDesign, the KeyMouse system can be locked to move only vertically or horizontally, making it much easier to draw straight lines.*
- ❑ *KeyMouse has special modes for LocoScript, Protext and CP/M. It is especially useful for CP/M programs which use the cursor (arrow) keys.*

PRICE LIST

PCW Software (3" or 3½")

MicroDesign3 (requires 512Kb memory)	£49.95
MD2-MD3 Upgrade (Registered Users)	£29.95
The Network (requires 512Kb memory) †	£25.00
Font & Shade Designer	£25.00
Tweak3 †	£25.00
Micro-Display	£25.00
MD3 Extra Fonts Discs (each)	£16.00
Program Upgrades & 3"/3½" disc change	£10.00
CP/M Upgrade to latest version	£12.50

†Not compatible with CP/M v1.4, v2.1 & v2.9

PCW Hardware

MD3 Scanner	£120.00
KeyMouse	£50.00
CT-RAM Memory Expansion	
512Kb	£59.95
1Mb	£79.95
1½Mb	£99.95
RamPort Memory + Centronics Expansion	
512Kb	£75.00
1Mb	£95.00
1½Mb	£115.00

PC-Compatible Products

ViewPoint PCW-PC Conversion Program	£35.00
PCW-PC Scanner Upgrade	£45.00
MicroDesign2-PC	£40.00

Prices include VAT & Postage
Credit Cards welcome

Creative Technology (MicroDesign) Ltd
10 Park St, Uttoxeter
Staffs ST14 7AG
Tel 01889 567160
Fax 01889 563548

CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Addressing databases

Jeff Anderson looks at the possibility of using the address book as a simple database

THE address book on the PcW 16 is in reality a data processing program which can be adapted for other purposes.

On the plus side, the program sorts and searches quickly, but on the down side, it can't search in more than one field at any one time, the data cannot be printed and there is no file management system.

It could be possible to get round the lack of file management by using a combination of Back-up/Restore and Import/Export. However that method is rather cumbersome and time wasting, and a simpler solution is to devise a "Folder" system.

Open the address book and click on New Entry. In Field 1, type "9 Address Book", press [RETURN] and in Field 2, type "9" and click on New Entry again. Because the address book sorts in alphabetical order and treats the numerical digits (1-9) as additional letters coming before "A", it will insert the entry you have just made as a heading at the beginning of your address book list.

Your normal list now becomes the default folder for the address book. Use the address book in the usual way and it will always put new addresses into this folder.

Click on New Entry again. I Field 1, type "1" and press [RETURN]. In Field "2" and click on New Entry again. The heading for Folder 1 will now appear above your address book heading. You have now created a separate folder for your data processing entries whilst maintaining your address book for normal use.

As you type data into the data bank, put the prefix "1" in front of each piece of data you wish to process, and the data will always be listed in Folder 1. The address book does this automatically because it continues to sort in alphabetical order with numbers first. You must type "1" into both fields 1, and 2, otherwise you will lose your headings when using the BOOK menu to change your sorting instruction.

The Find facility enables you to move quickly around the list which will be displayed at the right of the address book screen. Simply ask for "1" if you want the start of Folder 1 or "9 Address Book" if you want the start of the default folder which is your normal address book.

Now you have to decide how you will input your data. Presumably you've already decided what you want to process. Photographic slides perhaps, or maybe an index for your collection of pop magazines. Whatever the subject, you are likely to require at least two pieces of information to identify a particular item.

Look at the index in your PcW 16 manual, where the discs entry is shown, so how would you list your holiday snaps? Probably like this...

Niagra

Janet	A1
John	A2
Falls	A3
Bridge	A4

The pictures are already numbered when they come back from the processor and we put a sticky label on the packet which simply says "A".

Inputting Data

Open the address book and click on New Entry. Against Name 1, type "1 Niagra". The prefix "1" will ensure the entry goes into Folder 1 that you created earlier. Hit [RETURN], then against Name 2, type "1Janet". [RETURN] down to Post Code. Against Post Code, type "A1" and press [RETURN]. You can put any additional information you wish to record (say a date) in one of the non-sortable fields, so don't use Names 1 and 2, Post Code or Notes for the additional information. Click on New Entry, this entry is now complete and will appear in Folder 1.

Complete entries for the next three slides A2 to A4 in the same way, remembering to insert the prefix where indicated. If you forget to insert the prefix, the address book will sort the entry into the ordinary address book (the Default folder) rather than into Folder 1. Note that when you want to add addresses to your address book you do not need to put the prefix "9" in front of those entries, as the address book automatically sorts entries without a number prefix into the default folder.

The only reason you need the default folder numbered is so that you can have the address book heading as the first item in the default folder. If you typed "Address Book" without the number 9, it would still print "Address Book" towards the start of your address book listing. But if you then input a name and address for someone called, say, "Adams", it would sort that address before the heading "Address Book" - because Adams comes before Address.

Now concentrate because the exciting bit comes next.

Click on Book and when the drop-list appears, click on Alphabetic List. A dialogue box appears. Click on List by Name 2 and then OK. Click on Find an Entry, then type "Janet". Click on OK and all the Janet photos will be listed together with the highlight on the first entry.

Now scroll through these entries, examining the details on the left hand side of the screen until you find the picture you want. The Post Code field tells you what box and what number picture.

If you want the folder sorting by Name 1, then go back to the Book menu, and when the dialogue box appears, change to List by Name 1. Then, searching under Amsterdam or Niagra, or wherever the picture you are searching for was taken.

There is no facility to print the address book information, but you may want a print of the folder, in which case, use the [Print Screen] key to print the list - in several places if it is a long one.

Now you have catalogued all your pictures, why not do your negatives too. Create a new "Folder 2" and prefix all the data with "2" so that it is sorted within that folder.

Before leaving the address book program, always ensure that the address book is sorted in the manner in which you wish to use it for word processing. Use the BOOK menu to do this.

'16 Hot Keys

Due to massive demand, we've decided to reprint our famous guide to short cuts in the '16 word processor. The notorious PcW 16 manual mysteriously does not contain a table of all the time-saving keyboard quick-steps. The hot keys are littered throughout the manual, and some are incorrect, while others are missed out altogether. So here is our new and improved guide for you to cut out and keep.

TEXT LAYOUT

These layout changes affect marked text, or all text written after the hot-keys have been entered.

[F1]	...	*Left Aligned*
[F2]	...	*Centred*
[F3]	...	*Right Aligned*
[F4]	...	*Justified*

TYPE STYLE

These type style changes affect marked text, or all text written after the hot-keys have been entered.

[F5] / [CTRL][B]	...	*Bold*
[F6] / [CTRL][I]	...	*Italic*
[F7] / [CTRL][U]	...	*Underline*

SELECTING TEXT

Text that has been selected or marked is highlighted. Marking is used to change areas of text on the page.

[CTRL][M]	...	*Marks start*
[CTRL][D]	...	*Marks end*
[CTRL][W]	...	*Selects whole document*

SCRATCH PAD

The scratch pad is an invisible area, where pieces of text can be stored and used again later.

[CTRL][X]	...	*Cut selection to scratch pad*
[CTRL][C]	...	*Copy selection to scratch pad*
[CTRL][V]	...	*Paste selection from scratch pad*
[CTRL][DEL]	...	*Delete selection from scratch pad*

PHRASES

You can have up to eight 'phrases' stored behind the F numbers 1-8.

[CTRL][SHIFT][F1-8]		*Saves a phrase*
[CTRL][CAPS LOCK]		
[F1-8]	...	*Pastes a phrase onto the page*

SEARCHING FOR TEXT

This enables you to search for and/or replace a keyword in a document.

[CTRL][F]	...	*Find text*
[CTRL][R]	...	*Find and replace text*

PRINTING

[CTRL][P]	...	*Print the document*
[TASK][D] - [V]	...	*Print preview - shows how the page will look when printed out*
[PRNT SCRN]	...	*Prints a snap-shot of the screen and all its contents*

MOVING AROUND THE DOCUMENT

[PAGE DOWN]	...	*Moves down one screen*
[PAGE UP]	...	*Moves up one screen*
[CTRL][PAGE DOWN]		*Moves down one page*
[CTRL][PAGE UP]		*Moves up one page*
[HOME]	...	*Moves cursor to the start of the line*
[END]	...	*Moves cursor to the end of the line*
[CTRL][HOME]	...	*Moves cursor to start of document*
[CTRL][END]	...	*Moves cursor to end of document*

SAVING AND QUITTING

[F8]	...	*Save and continue editing document*
[BLUE] / [CTRL][S]		*Exit and start new document*
[YELLOW] / [CTRL][E]		*Exit and open existing document*
[RED]	...	*Exit to main menu without saving*

GENERAL

[INSERT]	...	*New text overwrites old as you type*
[CTRL][O]	...	*A temporary version of the above*
[TASK][RETURN]		*Inserts a page break*
[TASK][D] - [W]	...	*Word count*
[TASK][S] - [L]	...	*Increase size of font*
[TASK][S] - [S]	...	*Decrease size of font*

GSX for success

P.D Blake proves that there's more to BASIC than meets the eye

GSX is the graphics extension for CP/M, and GSX routines can be used to create a wide range of effects.

Your best bet for full details of GSX is Digital Research's GSX manual, though I will show you how to set up GSX and use the example programs supplied on your CP/M disc right here.

First you need to prepare GSX by installing it into BASIC. This done by first copying the following files from your CP/M masterdisc to a fresh disc: BASIC.COM, GENGRAF.COM, GSX.SYS, ASSIGN.SYS and all files with the extension .PRL.

The next step is to rename BASIC.COM to GSXBASIC.COM. Now just type the following command:

A> **GENGRAF GSXBASIC.COM**

You can now remove GENGRAF.COM from the disc.

To use GSX you must load the BASIC.COM which includes it, so instead of typing A>BASIC you must type A>**GSXBASIC**.

Once it is loaded you need to set the jump to GSX. You do this by running this short program:

```
10 GSX%=&H30
20 POKE GSX%+0, &H50 'LD D,B
30 POKE GSX%+1, &H59 'LD E,C
40 POKE GSX%+2, &HE  'LD C, 115
50 POKE GSX%+3, 115
60 POKE GSX%+4, %HC3 'JP
&H0005
70 POKE GSX%+5, &H5
80 POKE GSX%+6, &H0
```

The BASIC manual suggests that you save this under a name like GSXPREP.BAS but somthing like GSXJUMP.BAS will do.

You are now ready to run the programs on your CP/M masterdisc. Try running any BASIC file with GSX in it's name and see what happens. The effects of each program may vary between different PCWs as the .PRL files (screen drivers) will quite likely be different.

To see how to write your own GSX programs just LIST the ones on your CP/M disc, but remember that the following MUST be included in all GSX programs:

```
DIM contrl%(6),ptsin%(128),ptsout%
(12),intin%(128),intout%(45):gsx%=&H30
```

and this must be used to call the actual GSX routine:

```
CALL gsx%(gsx%,gsx%,contrl%(1),
intin%(1),ptsin%(1),intout%(1),ptsout%(1))
```

You may find GSX a little complicated at first -I still do - and may well get frustrated with all the code, and even find things that you don't understand (I plead guilty!).

But don't give up, the results are usually well worth the effort.

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There are two subscription options now available. With the basic subscription, you receive a year's supply of the magazine, but no discs. With the premium subscription, as well as the magazine, you also get a year's supply of 3.5" CP/M cover discs. Sadly, these discs are NOT available in PcW 16 or 3" format.

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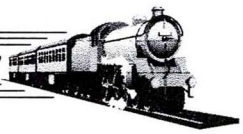

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Fun and Free?

Confused by Copyright? Puzzled by Public Domain? Or simply suspicious about Shareware? David Landers is here to guide you through the ins and outs of 'free' software

IT SEEMS curious that, at a time when most western countries have strong consumer legislation, computer software buying can be fraught with perils.

If a newly purchased printer poured ink everywhere, you'd be entitled to send it back and demand a refund.

But software is treated differently to hardware - you're merely buying a licence to use it and, once you've opened the pack, most of your rights seem to fly out of the window. If the product has faults (bugs), or simply doesn't do what you expected it to - it's tough. Most companies issue disclaimers that prevent any form of redress.

PCW owners are fortunate in this respect. I know from personal experience that the big two, Locoscript Software and Creative Technology, don't hide behind the small print when customers have a genuine grievance.

Nevertheless, some people think that buyers should be offered a chance to try a program before paying for it. And that's the basic concept behind shareware.

Because the terms 'shareware' and 'public domain' are so often confused, it's probably best to divide all such software into two camps: copyright and non-copyright.

COPYRIGHT SOFTWARE

This category covers all commercial products: big or small; cheap or expensive.

When you normally buy software, the money you pay covers the outright purchase of a single-user licence for that program - copying the master disc is prohibited, apart from a 'working copy' for the licence holder's own use. You mustn't make copies for others.

But with shareware, on the other hand, you don't initially buy anything - yet you're actively encouraged to pass on the program. There'll be a legal waiver to this effect in the copyright notice.

Shareware started in the early eighties, when certain programmers decided to circumvent the traditional marketing channels by giving away their products, free, for evaluation purposes.

These programs were initially distributed via bulletin-boards - if users liked a program, and decided to carry on using it, they were required to pay for it by sending off a registration fee.

The amount could be kept relatively small because there was no packaging, no advertising and no retail mark-up.

Interestingly, the first operation of this kind (in America, naturally enough) worked a bit like pyramid selling: a proportion of future income was shared amongst existing registered users - which is where the word 'shareware' comes from.

The promise of shared profits obviously encouraged users to spread the product around, and also provided a real incentive for registering. Administration proved to be a nightmare, though.

Shareware Today

Nowadays, shareware is a huge, international industry which boasts its own associations and regulatory bodies. Products are available for downloading from countless Internet sites; are offered on magazine cover discs (like our own *PCW Today*), and can be obtained from specialists such as PD Blake and SD MicroSystems. These firms will make a charge to cover the cost of copying/postage and the discs themselves - but the programs are effectively free at the time of distribution.

You only pay for a program if you find it useful and choose to keep it. It must always be remembered that shareware programs are copyrighted, commercial products - it's just that they're marketed differently.

And the continued survival of this 'try before you buy' sales technique is largely dependent upon the integrity of its clientele.

Generally speaking, a really nifty program will bring in its rightful rewards. Users feel obligated to pay for a good product, and they'll also be more likely to pay what they perceive to be a fair price... as with any software, quality and price can vary enormously.

Some shareware costs hundreds of pounds to register - whereas MaxiSweep, one of the most useful tools in a CP/M user's disc box, is just £ 5.00. (Anyone failing to register their copy of MaxiSweep must automatically qualify for the finals of 'scrooge-of-the-century'.)

From an author's point of view, the biggest problem is that the non-registered user-base is a complete unknown.

In case sheer honesty isn't enough, various methods are employed to encourage registration of regularly used programs.

With PC shareware, it's common for programs to be time-limited - they'll run for perhaps 60 days before they curl up and die.

That tactic won't work on CP/M computers, so PCW shareware often contains a 'nag screen', which reminds you to register each time you load the program.

This is meant to irritate, cajole and generally prick your conscience - quite apart from slowing down the loading process, the message stays on screen long enough for you to become heartily sick of it!

A special code, given to registered users, will modify the program and remove the message.

Benefits

In most cases, registration brings other benefits. The latest version of the program may be sent, containing additional features. You might get a printed manual.

Registration also entitles a user to support, and most shareware companies - whether they comprise a single author in a spare-room or a large outfit in a plush office-suite - are very good in this respect.

When I registered my copy of 22DISK (the PCW-PC transfer program), Sydex, the American owners, promptly sent me the latest version. This had been completely rewritten and was much faster - but I was surprised to find that the new version didn't access CP/M user-areas properly. Sydex were most apologetic, saying that I was the first person to report the matter. A corrected update arrived within a few days.

One possible problem with registering shareware - especially older programs from distant places - is that you can't always be sure if the address is still good. Rather than consigning the equivalent of ten or twenty pounds into a potential black hole, it's well worth writing or telephoning first, to confirm that the recipient can still be contacted.

When sending money abroad, an international money order is safer than cash but may be expensive for a small transaction. I must admit that I tend to take a chance, and buy the appropriate foreign currency which I then stuff into a strong envelope. It hasn't failed yet...

Non-profit Software

Not all shareware requires a registration fee to be paid. There's a sub-species, usually called 'freeware', which is just that - free. Although the program doesn't cost anything, it is still copyright: DISCTOOL, which was on the first *PCW Today* disc, is a good example.

It may seem paradoxical for someone to retain copyright on a product that's given away, but the author's creativity is thereby recognised and a degree of control can be maintained.

The wording of the copyright notice usually prohibits anyone from altering the program without the author's consent, and from charging anything more than a nominal copying fee when passing it on.

A rather charming variant is termed 'postcardware' - the author simply asks users to send him or her a picture postcard of their locality.

This tends to be more common amongst Apple-Mac enthusiasts for some reason. (Elderly hippies holding an overly romantic view of the world, perhaps?)

NON-COPYRIGHT SOFTWARE

Because the user doesn't have to pay for it, freeware is loosely described as public domain software - though that's technically incorrect.

Copyright is exercised in freeware. However, by releasing a program into the public domain, an author relinquishes all rights.

Public domain software - in the true sense of 'non-copyright software' - is actually fairly rare.

In effect, the programmer is saying, "Here you are, take this and do what you like with it." Anybody is entitled to hack into the program and alter/improve/spoil it. Indeed, there's little that can be done if a more commercially minded character splices the code into a different program which is then sold at a profit.

So, although placing a program in the public domain is a genuinely altruistic act, it's not necessarily a good idea.

Unfortunately, some authors have done this inadvertently by including a copyright message such as, 'Copyright J. Bloggs 1990, this program is hereby released into the public domain and may be freely copied.' But the phrase 'public domain' immediately cancels the copyright.

What they meant was, 'Copyright J. Bloggs 1990, this program may be freely copied' - which would waive just the specified part of the copyright entitlement.

Shareware, freeware, public domain software - is it any good? Are these programs worth sampling?

Well, on the PC platform certain shareware programs have become market leaders, because they're the best available at any price. PKZIP, for example, is the de facto standard in PC file compression. 'Greg's Buttons', an ingenious add-on for the Macintosh desktop, was a best-selling Apple-Mac program for several years.

On the PCW, meanwhile, there is no doubt whatsoever that the most innovative programs are currently in the realm of shareware.

And most of these are being written on a non-profit basis.

Nice policeman, nasty policeman

As far as I'm aware, all CP/M emulators (programs which make a PC think it's a PCW) have been shareware products. And they provide a fascinating insight into the different attitudes struck by shareware authors.

The first I ever tried was Z80MU, by Computerwise Consulting Services. I never managed to get it to work. If I had, the registration fee would have been a hefty $150 - and the CCS documentation adopted such an aggressive, threatening tone that I felt like a criminal before I'd even started.

Next was a Sydex product, 22NICE - an appropriate name as they're a nice firm to deal with. As 22NICE emulates CP/M v2.2 rather than CP/M Plus, the friendly lady at Sydex didn't think that it could cope with PCW programs. But why not give it a try? As she said, it won't cost anything if it doesn't do the job. I eventually got it to run BrainStorm, but then ran out of patience. Registration would have cost a more reasonable $40.

After that came MYZ80 from the notably talented Australian, Simeon Cran. A very clever program - success at last. Registration at $30(US) gives entitlement to user support - otherwise Mr Cran merely says, "Enjoy". As does John Elliott. JOYCE, his amazing PCW emulator, is free. Goodness knows how many hours he has put into this program - yet he stands to gain nothing from it other than our heart-felt thanks.

Take a new DIRection

Are you exploiting the full potential of CP/M, or is it sadly neglected in your disc box? Kathleen Thorpe shows that there's more to the simple DIR command than you might originally have thought!

WHEN you load CP/M, DIR.COM is one of the utilities copied over into the M:drive by your PROFILE.SUB. It is, of course, an abbreviation of DIRECTORY and its purpose is obvious too, it provides a list of ll the files on your disc.

To use DIR.COM in its simplest form, put a disc in the drive and at the A> prompt type:

DIR and then press [RETURN] (you can use upper or lower case, it doesn't matter)

You will then see the contents of user group 0 of the disc apear on screen. If it is a program disc, a message at the bottom of the list will say:

SYSTEM FILE(S) EXIST

So to see all the files including system files, type:

DIR[FULL] then press [RETURN]

If you just want to see the system files and no other, type:

DIR[SYS] then press [RETURN]

If you have files saved to several groups on your disc, and would like to see them all, the command is **DIR [USER=ALL]** but for lazy people like me, this can be shortened to **[US=AL]**.

To do this, DIR.COM should be on the disc containing your files, unless you have a two drive machine. With CP/M in drive A; and your files disc in drive B:, stay logged on to drive A: and type:

DIR B:[USER=ALL] then [RETURN]

You will now see a directory of all your user areas on your disc. This trick can also work on one drive machine. With CP/M in the drive, type:

DIR B:[US=AL] then [RETURN]

The PCW will bleep, and a message will appear at the bottom of your screen saying: "PLEASE PUT THE DISC FOR B: IN THE DRIVE AND PRESS ANY KEY." Take CP/M out of the drive and replace it with your files disc, press a key as requested, and a directory of all the groups on that disc will be displayed.

To print out your directory, type **DIR** (as usual) then hold down [ALT] and press [P], the PCW will beep but don't worry about it. You have just opened up the channel to the printer, so make sure you have paper already loaded. Now press [RETURN].

As the directory appears on screen, it will be printed on the paper. To close the printer channel when you have finished, press [ALT] and [P] again.

When printing out a directory using [US=AL], the list of files can be longer than one screenful, so at the bottom of the screen, the message "PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE" will appear. Unfortunately this also gets printed out. To avoid this, type:

SETDEF[NOPAGE] then [RETURN]

From now on, anything you print out, will be without this annoying message. To reverse the effect, type **SETDEF[PAGE]**

If you use SETDEF to view your directory on screen, it will scroll to the end too quickly for you to read it.

This can be counteracted by pressing [f5] to pause while you read, then [f3] to scroll to the next section. Do not use this with the printer toggle.

Just as you can access all user groups in DIR.COM, you can access all drives on a two drive machine by typing:

DIR[DRIVE=ALL] then [RETURN]

This will list all files in the current group on all drives including the M: drive.

You can also use DIR.COM to search for a file as long as you know its exact name, type:

DIR FILENAME.EXT then press [RETURN]

If the file is not on the disc you will get the message "NO FILE". Otherwise the file name will be repeated. This can be used in conjunction with [US=AL] and/or [DRIVE=ALL] like this:

DIR FILENAME.EXT[DRIVE=ALL][US=AL] then press [RETURN]

This will search all areas of all drives to find the requested file.

Wildcards can be used in DIR.COM operations such as the 'EXCLUDE' option which allows you to list all files that don't meet a particular file secification, for example:

DIR *.COM[EXCLUDE] then press [RETURN]

This will list all the files that don't have the extension .COM.

DIR[SIZE] will not only give you the filenmames, but will also tell you how much space each one takes up on the disc. **DIR[RW]** will list all read/write files while DIR[RO] lists read only files.

I think that just about covers all aspects of DIR.COM. But I'm sure that if I've missed anything out, someone will write to *PCW Today* and tell me.

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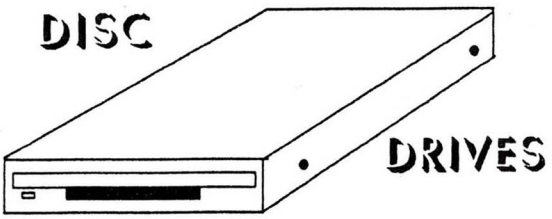

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The crash of '98

When Jeff Anderson's '16 crashed, he realised that it was about time he changed the way he worked with his computer. Here's his advice to anyone who wants to avoid the stress of a computer crash

THEY say your whole life flashes before you. I can't confirm that, but everything else certainly flashed, as the '16 crashed spectacularly.

Perhaps I shouldn't have opend the front of the printer after hitting "Print OK". All sorts of messages came and went, mostly before I had time to read them, but suddenly and silently, like a thief in the night, as they say, came the message "Fatal Checksum Error - Insert Rescue Disc"

I couldn't remember how long it had been since I did a full back up, or what had been left on the Cabinet in the meantime, but I knew I had lost the document I was printing at the time - that was in the Cabinet - nowhere else.

I inserted the rescue disc, as requested, and the '16 didn't even know who I was, or where I lived anymore. I loaded the most recent back-up disc, which was, in fact, four weeks old.

The *Daily Telegraph* of Thursday 5th November carried an article about a California company called DriveSavers which specialises in recovering lost data from computers. One of its principal employees is a lady called Nikki Strange, a psychology graduate, who works as a counsellor for people stressed out by loosing their data. She said: "Some people can be paralysed by fear, others are overwrought with guilt for not backing up." I know the feeling!

My address book, an own-design database and a set of templates, were all intact, so there wasn't much harm done this time, but imagine the amount of work involved in reconstructing all those files. I needed to rethink the whole way I work, as next time, the problems could be much greater.

Most of the time, I sit at a keyboard and write off the top of my head, without having made any notes. I need time to think what I am going to say and this provides natural breaks in the flow of work, which enables me to save as I go along. I also tend to use discs for most of my work, keeping a separate disc for each main subject or organisation.

I do sometimes use the folder system within a disc, to break up work into chunks which can be easily scanned if I am looking for something. The disc for an organisation will have accounts in one folder, correspondence in another, and reports in a third.

Inevitably there is an accumulation of oddments of letters, and so on, in the Cabinet, which have no natural home on any specific disc, so I have the occassional spring clean. Usually around half of these oddments will be deleted as "of no further use" (that ratio probably applies to most of the stuff we all keep).

If I have a hard copy on paper, it is unlikely that I will keep a copy on disc, but some things are so important that it is useful to have both. You want to put a conservatory on your house, so you can have an ongoing correspondence with your local planning department in your briefcase, if the need arises. And you may also want to be able to produce more copies of specific documents at short notice.

A fresh print, off the disc, rather than a photocopy from your local shop, may be a better alternative. In addition, if you need to amalgamate a number of documents, (say reports) into a single document and you have retained the source documents on disc, you can combine the various documents in one document. Use the INSERT menu, then EDIT the whole lot into a more acceptable form to produce a final report.

What about stuff in the Systems Folder? Templates are intended to save work, but, by their very nature, contain a lot of keyboard work, so you need them backed up. Anything in the Address Book or Diary needs to be backed up too. Any original work, such as a database should be backed up for the same reason - it is work intensive.

Finally, what about those oddments in the Cabinet which are waiting for a permanent home? I have just checked to se how long it would take to back up to disc what is presently in my ordinary Cabinet Folders.

There are 14 separate files, amounting to 32k in all, and it took 1 minute, 44 seconds to back these up to a pre-formatted disc. This is, of course, much quicker than backing up the whole system, so it looks like a good alternative to a full back up. Why not back up to disc, those files left in the Cabinet at the end of a work session, before closing down the '16, and support this with, say, a monthly back up of the whole system.

If you add anything to the Systems Folder, then back up the whole system immediately, unless what you have added is backed up elsewhere, say on a commercially produced disc.

So here are some simple rules:

1. Save frequently, as you go along.
2. Decide if a paper copy is sufficient back up.
3. If not, always back up to disc as you go along, or in an "end of day" routine as described above.
5. If you add anything to the Systems Folder (such as a new template), do a full back up immediately, no matter how close your monthly back up is. It's better to bring your full back up forward than delay it.

And lastly, where do you keep your back up discs? If you keep them on the desk beside your computer, you will lose them when the gear is stolen or consumed by fire.

Also, discs don't react well to the strong magnetic field around the PCW. keep them somewhere else, somewhere safe.

Reader Survey

Tell us about you, your PCW, and what you think about *PCW Today*, and you could win a superb prize. We have a fantastic PCW cleaning kit to give away, worth over £20!

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- ❑ Male
- ❑ Female

WHAT'S YOUR AGE GROUP?

- ❑ 10 and under
- ❑ 11-20
- ❑ 21-34
- ❑ 35-49
- ❑ 50-64
- ❑ 65 and over

WHERE DO YOU USE YOUR PCW?

- ❑ Home
- ❑ Work
- ❑ School
- ❑ College

WHAT MODEL(S) OF PCW DO YOU USE?

- ❑ 8256
- ❑ 8512
- ❑ 9512
- ❑ 9512+
- ❑ 9256
- ❑ 10
- ❑ 16

WHAT DO YOU USE YOUR PCW FOR?

- ❑ Word processing
- ❑ Desktop publishing
- ❑ Spreadsheet
- ❑ Accounts/Finance
- ❑ Games
- ❑ Database
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Business
- ❑ Route Planning

Other.....

HAVE YOU UPGRADED YOUR PCW?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Plan to in future

WHAT HARDWARE DO YOU HAVE?

- ❑ External disc drive
- ❑ Flash drive
- ❑ Hard drive
- ❑ Memory upgrade
- ❑ Sprinter
- ❑ Mouse

Other.....

WHICH SOFTWARE DO YOU USE MOST?

- ❑ LocoScript
- ❑ MicroDesign
- ❑ Protext
- ❑ LocoFile
- ❑ LocoMail
- ❑ The Network
- ❑ Tweak
- ❑ RoutePlanner
- ❑ Cracker
- ❑ CP/M
- ❑ SuperCalc
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- ❑ PcW 16 spreadsheet
- ❑ Finance Manager
- ❑ Inventory Master

Other.....

WHAT OTHER COMPUTERS DO YOU USE?

- ❑ Amstrad CPC
- ❑ Amstrad Notepad
- ❑ PC
- ❑ Apple Mac
- ❑ None

Other.....

WHAT IS YOUR PCW'S MAIN USE?

- ❑ Correspondence
- ❑ Finance
- ❑ Publishing (Newsletters/Posters etc)
- ❑ Journalism (Books, Articles etc)
- ❑ Entertainment
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Club
- ❑ Church
- ❑ Business
- ❑ School

Other.....

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE YOUR PCW?

- ❑ Daily
- ❑ Every couple of days
- ❑ Weekly
- ❑ Fortnightly
- ❑ Monthly
- ❑ Very rarely

Other.....

WHAT IS THE ATTRACTION OF THE PCW?

- ❑ Cheap
- ❑ Reliable
- ❑ Easy to use
- ❑ Always had one
- ❑ Has character
- ❑ Too scared to upgrade
- ❑ Range of software
- ❑ Friendly user groups/magazines
- ❑ Speed
- ❑ Fun to use
- ❑ British design

Other.....

WOULD YOU EVER TRADE IN YOUR PCW FOR A PC OR MAC?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Please fill in the form and return it to us at the usual address. We really want as many subscribers as possible to take part in the survey, so one lucky entrant, drawn from the hat will win a PCW cleaning kit. This survey is entirely confidential, and we will not print this information, store it on a computer, or pass it on to any outside bodies. The results will be added up and presented on our news pages in the next issue.

PCW Contacts

HELP! I need a manual or some fuller details for "Tank Attack" disk from CDS Software Ltd. Contact Hal Warren, 01787 372639.

PCW 8256 with 768k RAM, GEM 44mb hard drive with printer port, ready loaded with LocoScript v.4.06 & LocoSpell, software for fonts, LocoSpell, LocoScript 3 & 4, about a dozen formatted 3" disks, the original dot matrix printer and an Epson Stylus mono inkjet printer, all necessary cables, instruction books, etc. £180.00 o.no. Tel & Fax Brian Lewis, 01903 692049.

DUPLICATE Bridge scoring program for all PCWs, except the PcW16. I will also attempt to write programs to your specification, as long as you agree the copyright is mine. Nominal fee if I come up with the goods. Fred Manders, 4 Carral Close, Lincoln LN5 9BD. Tel: 01522 826092.

WANTED Sprinter, in good order, with full instructions. Contact John Harwood, West End Cottage, Town Head, Eyam, Hope Valley, S32 5RE.

BOOKS & Manuals - £5 each. The Amstrad Companion, The PCW Logo Manual, How to Beat your Chess Computer, Play the Game Ches, Program Your PCW, Z80 Assembly Language Programming for Students, PCW Machine Code, PCW Plus Step by Step CP/M Plus on the Amstrad. John Garwood 0115 9229842.

FOR SALE Amstrad PCW 8512 with printer - A variety of software including accounts and games - Plenty of blank formatted 3 inch discs. Phone 0115 9229842 for complete list.

CALL for help with LocoScript, CP/M or MicroDesign 2, or just call for a chat about PCWs in general. Mon-Sat, 2-8pm. Or write to Kathleen Thorpe, 22 Haddon Way, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 3EE. Tel 0115 9720114.

WANTED "Amstrad Word Processing" Author unknown, published around 1986. 0161 6880916.

FOR SALE LocoScript 3, LocoSpell, LocoFile demo, LocoFont LX Business and Decorative fonts for printer class D, Essential Guide to LocoScript 3 by Rex Last, User guides for LocoScript and LocoScript 3, ALl system discs and installation books. Offers please to: Mrs LR Atkins, 01932 253601.

AMSTRAD Software Wordstar Express word processing course. Manual Six five half inch discs PC and PPC Range IBM PC Compatibles. Complete set £10 plus postage. 01708 477017. Essex.

OFFERS Amstrad PCW (1 issue for Aug 1990) and PCW PLUS issues 45 to 71 and 74 to 124 (total 79 magazines). Phone 01670 353799.

MICRODESIGN 3 - 3.5" complete - Reference Manual, Tutorial Guide, and with Program, Library and Tutorial discs £25. Locomotive LPP512 Power Pack with Centronics interface £20. Tel: 01202 732311.

MAGAZINES for sale. Offers. Amstrad PCW August 1987-May 1992, PCW User June 1992-January 1995, LocoScript User February 1995-May 1995, Computing With the Amstrad May 1987-June 1988, Your Amstrad PCW October 1987-February 1989, 8000 Plus/PCW Plus (In Binders) all issues. John Garwood 0115 9229842.

AMSTRAD 8256 with 500k upgrade, keyboard and printer. 4 new Amstrad multistrike ribbons, M.A.S.S. Easy Labeller, 3" discs: 11 Amsoft, 5 Maxell, 29 supplied by Locomotive Software, Top 20 Games discs 1/2/3 - Pick of the Best Games. Offers please to Mrs LR Atkins, 01932 253601.

MICRODESIGN 3, clipart, approx 150 volumes on 50 discs containing several thousand pieces of clipart including birds, trees, fish, highway signs, plus much much more. Ideal for person requiring specialised clip art with picture book etc. For further details ring Gerry, tel 0161 4315386. No timewasters please.

FOR SALE Flipper 3 complete (8512) £7. Money Manager complete (3" disc) £6. PCW9256 with printer, keyboard, manual and discs £25. PCW8256 with printer, keyboard, manual and discs £25. 3" reformatted discs £8 for 10. All postage extra. Send a S.S.A.E for list of other items for sale. John King 26 Guysfield Drive, Rainham, Essex, RM13 7AJ.

PCW 8512 complete with 3.5" external drive. Good working order. £120.00 o.n.o. Contact D.W. Cornelissen on tel 01527 837098.

ADVENTURE games enthusiast wants PCW adventure games on 3" disk. Contacts with similar interests appreciated. Tel. John 0113 2671393.

3D CLOCK chess £5.00, Pools Winner £5.00. (3") Video Digitiser and Light Pen (The Electric Studio). Selling as one package £40.00. Contact Brian on any of the following numbers, 01737 221838, MOB 0468 850077, FAX 01737 225831.

SADLY having to break up two Amstrad 8000s, both working until faults on powerboards forced me to change system. Software and hardware for sale. Apart from powerboards the basic systems are complete, plus external disc drive, 3" discs and other bits and pieces. Cathie Gill, Aberdeenshire 01651 806252.

PCW PRINTERS I have five excellent working condition suitable for the PCW machines. Full details by phoning evenings 01708 477017. Essex. £10 each.

FOR SALE PCW 8256. No extras, but complete and fully working. Manuals available, and plenty of 3 inch discs. Aberdeen area. £25, buyer collects. Tel: 01224 790186, ask for Ian or Alex.

CREATIVE Technology KeyMouse, as new, hardly used £40. Naksha scanner for Amstrad 9512 £15. Brand new sealed 3" diskettes (Amsoft, Maxell) £10 for 3. 9512 print wheels also for sale. Call for details 01872 863879.

To advertise in PCW Contacts is absolutely free. You are permitted up to three adverts of 50 words or less. For commercial inserts we charge a fee of £3. The editor reserves the right to edit all adverts, or refuse them without prior notice. PCW Today cannot accept liability for any mistakes or errors. Nor can we vouch for the advertisers on this page. If you don't wish to have your contact details printed, free box numbers are available by arrangement.

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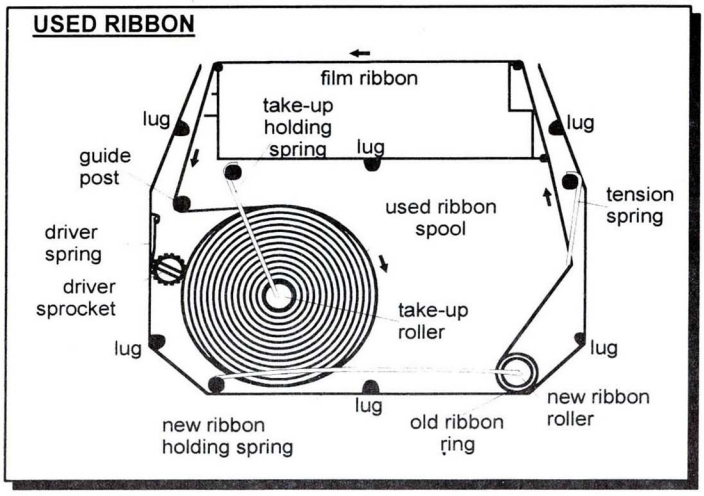
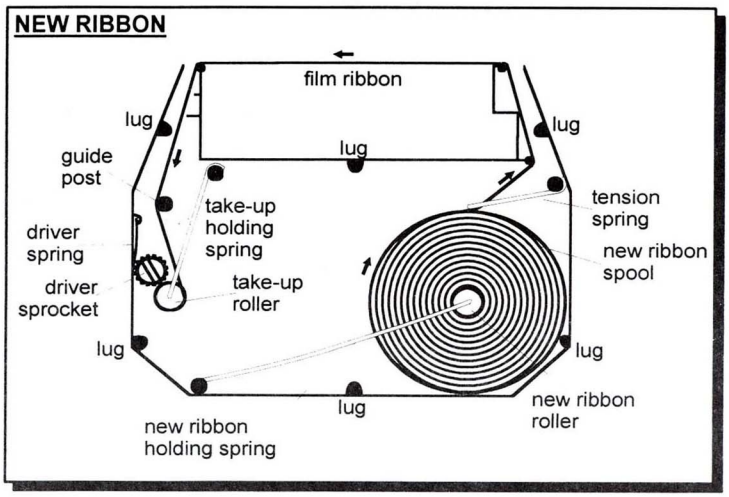
How to Replace the Film Ribbon in a Used PCW Daisywheel Cassette





Place the used cassette on a flat surface and use a pocket knife or similar instrument to prise off the top of the case, along the seam. I recommend working around the outside from one end of the cassette to the other, then tackling the inside (ie: the edge nearest the exposed strip of ribbon). Try not to break the lugs (one or two broken will not affect performance). What I do is gently rock on alternate sides of the lug to ease the lid off. This job will be easier the second time round.

Study the cassette in conjunction with the diagrams, to identify the parts and understand the simple mechanism.

Lift the two holding springs and the tension spring and pull them out of the way. Remove and discard the plastic ring on the empty ribbon roller (but keep the roller itself). Remove and discard the used spool of ribbon (but keep that roller too). Replace the roller loosely in the cassette, near the driver sprocket.

Place a spool of new ribbon in the right side of the cassette case, to unwind clockwise. Drop the new ribbon roller into the centre of the spool.

Thread the ribbon out of the cassette, across to the other arm, around the outside of the guide post. Use the self-adhesive tape at the end of the ribbon to fix it to the take-up roller, so that it will wind on clockwise.

Place the end of the new ribbon holding spring into the hole in the new ribbon roller, and flip the tension spring over the ribbon and into place.

Replace the end of the new ribbon holding spring into the centre of the take-up roller.

Now comes the only slightly tricky part of the operation. Shift the driver sprocket and winder into position to bring it in line with the aperture on the cassette lid. Press the flat of the knife on it with one hand, to hold it in place, and with the other hand replace the cassette lid. Once you have the winder poking through the aperture and the two adjacent lugs in place, slide the blade out. It is then a simple matter to work round the cassette pushing the other lugs home.

Use the winder to pull some ribbon through to make it taut. If you do not intend to use the cassette immediately then I strongly recommend that you replace the holding clip in the slot at the side (you may have to prise the cassette slightly apart to get it in, then push it closed). This will prevent the ribbon becoming unwound inside the cassette, and clogging up the works. If you've lost the clip you can use a strip of card instead.

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Money, Money, Money

Acclaimed freelance writer, David Langford, has just won yet another Hugo award for science fiction writing, but he's still not hit that promised gold mine...

ONE of the joys of being a humble freelance writer is that you escape certain kinds of financial worry. For example, you never fret or get stressed about losing huge sums of money, because you haven't got any in the first place to speak of....

But of course I do worry about small sums, and few are smaller than the royalties that come in from obscure American editions of my work. For example, there's a little chapbook of Langford sf/horror stories published by Necronomicon Press in Rhode Island, which every so often generates a royalty cheque for something like $2.48.

Once you're an established writer you always have this to fall back on - the comforting knowledge that, rain or shine, your regular $2.48 will keep on rolling in every half-year. Probably.

Of course the snag is that when you expose such a small dollar cheque (or check) to the vampire fangs of a British bank, the swingeing conversion fee which they charge on top of their cruel exchange rate means that it's literally not worth cashing the thing.

A ray of hope came when one of the Sunday newspapers recommended a banking scheme that let you accumulate dollars in a dollar account on Guernsey, with free sterling conversion. Only it turned out to be a fantastically opulent Rothschild offshore investment deal, requiring certified copies of your passport and other terrifying credentials. And the brochure was plastered with warnings that if by any chance you turned out to be a scumbag freelance who just wanted to convert little dollar cheques rather than invest the money forever, you would be hunted down by trained bloodhounds.

I finally solved the problem while visiting Minneapolis as the guest of a science fiction convention (writing this stuff does offer occasional perks). All you need do, once in the USA, is open a dollar bank account. Admittedly the cashier spent the first quarter-hour explaining that this was impossible because my British social security number was the wrong format for their accounts database - but it turned out that there was a way.

I am now the proud owner of a Norwest Banks free current account, which accepts deposits by mail and comes with an ATM card allowing me to suck out the money in sterling from British cash machines.

Meanwhile, the friend who was driving me around Minneapolis found a bank brochure offering rewards for introducing new customers: so she claimed $10 for introducing me, and I got the same for being introduced. Nice place, America.

Somehow, though, the bank must have deduced that I was a science fiction writer. Will I ever work up the courage to write cheques, or 'checks', which are embarrassingly decorated with coloured poster art from *Star Wars*? Anyway, opening a US account is now my recommended approach for writers and others who get occasional small payments in dollars. I can even flog Ansible Information PCW software to the Americans again.

The computer enters the equation by running a spreadsheet like Supercalc or Cracker to keep track of the dollar funds over which I now gloat daily. Sometimes I think I'd have a tougher time getting by without some kind of spreadsheet than I would without a word processor.

When recently stuck in hospital for a day with one arm strung up in a sort of left-handed Nazi salute (owing to a nasty hole in a wrist artery, inflicted by a milk bottle), I amazed myself by managing to write 17 pages of the current urgent-deadline work with my good hand. But the thought of doing the VAT accounts without spreadsheet software is too horrific to contemplate.

Spreadsheets were heavily involved in a rather sad task that occupied most of my spare time last year. My father, a retired accountant, had lost his powers of concentration through Alzheimer's disease and become unable to complete his own tax accounts for 1990 and 1991, on which he'd been stalled for years.

The tax office went through their traditional ritual of sending increasingly inflated assessments to frighten him into completing som tax returns, and - being both unable to cope with the figures and unwilling to admit this to anyone - he delayed each payment as long as he could and then paid up. I don't like to think how much the Inland Revenue must rake in from bewildered old people in similar circumstances.

So all that year I made regular hit-and-run raids on my parents' home in South Wales, shoving financial information (from bank statements, bills, tax vouchers, every bit of paper I could find) into vast spreadsheets on the cheapest available laptop computer.

By the time my father had gone into further decline, entering hospital and then the nursing home where he's now at least reasonably comfortable, I was ready with something like 40 spreadsheets representing eight years' financial data which translated into eight tax returns.

The end result was that all the hideous demands for more tax were withdrawn, and several thousand pounds refunded to my father and mother instead. I still can't imagine doing all this without my own computer.

Apologies for the somewhat gloomy tone of this instalment. The outside world has been rather overshadowing the dilettante joys of freelance life and PCW punditry, making it difficult to think up exciting new Alan Sugar libels or scandalous rumours about your editor. The usual abnormal service will be resumed....

Company Locator

Aladdink *Tel: 0131 2293122.*
Fabric and film ribbon recycling and re-inking. They also supply DIY re-inking packs.

Amstrad Brentwood House, 169 Kings Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4EF. *Tel: 01227 228888. PcW 16 Hotline Support: 0891 515715.*
Manufacturers of the PcW 16 and every other PCW on the planet.

Ansible Information 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU. *Tel/Fax: 01424 720457*
If you write a book with LocoScript, you'll need an index. That's where AnsibleIndex comes in.

Comsoft 10 McIntosh Court, Wellpark, Glasgow G31 2HW. *Tel: 0141 5544735.*
The home of Protext. They also sell the brilliant RoutePlanner and Inventory Master for the PcW 16.

Christian Computer Art 33 Bramley Way, Hardwick, Cambridge CB3 7XD. *Tel: 01954 210009.*
If you produce a church magazine, this company supplies a huge range of religious clip art for MicroDesign, sadly on 3.5" only.

Cirtech Monksford Stables, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0RU. *Tel: 01835 823898 Fax: 01835 822471.*
They are the PCW hardware kings. Cirtech sell the Flash Drive, GEM Hard Drives, Sprinter, and SpeedPrint.

Creative Technology 10 Park Street, Uttoxeter, Staffs ST14 7AG. *Tel: 01889 567160 Fax: 01889 563548.*
MicroDesign3 is by far the best DTP for the PCW. Also available are a mouse and a hand scanner. Creative also sell all the PcW 16 software.

Dave The Disc Doctor *Tel: 01892 835974 E-mail: daves@diskdoctor.co.uk.*
If you want a disc fixing, Dave Smith is your man. He can repair damaged discs and all of his fee goes to charity.

David Landers Brinkburn Gardens Cottage, Longframlington, Morpeth NE65 8AR. *Tel: 01665 570662.*
If you use LocoScript and LocoMail, Instant Recall 1 and 2 add a huge range of new features to the family.

Derrick Gaskin 119 London Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4NP.
The house of Quickmyth - a unique range of mythology discs for use with LocoFile.

Garrison Computers 191 Watling Street Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 4AE. *Tel: 01772 701248 Fax 01772 703131.*
Formerly known as MicroForm, this company have been selling PCW disc drives and spares for years.

LocoScript Software 10 Vincent Works, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3HJ. *Tel: 01306 747757 Fax: 01306 885529 Internet: www.locomotive.com.*
This company is by far the biggest supplier of PCW goods. They supply the full range including, of course, LocoScript 4. Ask for a catalogue.

Mapej Meadow View, Quinta Crescent, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 7RN. *Tel: 01691 778659 Fax: 01691 777638.*
They'll transfer data between PCWs and just about any other computer you'd care to think of.

Midas Charity Ink "Kynance", 5 Nelson Road, Brixham, South Devon TQ5 8BH. *Tel: Fax: 01803 853144.*
A printer ribbon re-inking service where the profits go to charity.

Office Land 10 Sterte Close, Poole, Dorset BH15 2AT. *Tel: 01202 666155 Fax: 01202 677958.*
Specialists in printer consumables, also some software and accessories.

Pinboard Computers Unit 9, Bondor Business Centre, London Road, Baldock, Herts SG7 6HP. *Tel: 01462 894410 Fax: 01462 894460.*
The best-known supplier of disc Drives, Pinboard also sell complete PCW systems.

PD Blake 99 Normandy Avenue, Beverley, E. Yorks HU17 8PR. *Tel: 01482 864230 (7-9pm).*
Now the leading supplier of PCW public domain software. Ask for a catalogue. Some commercial software also on sale.

Philosoft 57 Llwyn-Onn, Penderyn, Aberdare, Wales CF44 9XY. *Tel: 01685 813978.*
Writers of Insight - Optical Character Recognition software that enables the PCW to read scanned-in text.

RP Hill 84 Wincheap, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3RS.
Basic 98 - a major new programming add-on for the PCW.

Protext Software Harrowden, 39 High Street, Sutton-in-the-Isle, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2RA. *Tel: 01353 777006 Fax: 01353 777766.*
The second base of Protext and the home of Brian Watson's 8 Bit magazine.

SD MicroSystems PO Box 99, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1NA. *Tel/Fax: 07000 736427.*
A massive range of original software available. Also some hardware and the famous 3" drive reviver kit.

Solent PCW Services 20 Masefield Crescent, Waterlooville, Hants PO8 8JS. *Tel/Fax:01705 268780.*
A company specialising in PCW repairs, spares, upgrades and complete systems. Also a massive range of second hand software available.

Three Inch Software 14 Cartaret Close, Willen, Milton Keynes MK15 9LD. *Tel: 01908 690704.*
They sell the only thesaurus you can buy for LocoScript. Also the 9512 Rescue Kit and PCW Link.

WP Ford Sarsden, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5JU. *Tel: 01825 890688. Internet: www.sarsden.demon.co.uk*
Roots PCW 93 - a genealogy system for all PCWs (except the PcW 16).

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