Script

Issue 13

THE LOCOSCRIPT NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first issue of Volume 3 of *Script*. As you can see, not only have we changed the style to mark the beginning of the new year but we have also added 4 extra pages to make *Script* 20 pages long. This means we will have more room to make this volume of *Script* even better!

Continuing the series on Locofile and LocoMail, this issue we have an article on restructuring your LocoMail datafiles to meet your changing needs. It is not always possible to know in advance the best way of storing information so this article shows you how you can split up your datafile to get the layout you want.

For those of you interested in the administrative uses of LocoScript, the 'In Business' article will give you some tips on running a small business using LocoScript. As well as more general advice, this contains detailed instructions on setting up your own invoices which could save you time, trouble and money!

LocoScript 2 has always been popular with academics because of the wide range of characters it provides. To help those people who want to write a thesis on their PCW, Dr Niall Martin has provided some advice which will show you the best way to go about it.

In our last issue we told you about the new Epson GQ5000 laser printer that is capable of printing all LocoScript 2's characters. Laser printers are capable of giving really high quality output and in this issue we deal more fully with the way laser printers work with LocoScript, and how you can achieve the best results.

As many of you will be aware, we are due to release a version of LocoScript for the PC in March. However this does not mean that we will be abandoning the PCW! What we put in *Script* depends on what you want to read and we hope that you will continue to write to us with your suggestions and ideas about LocoScript for both the PC and the PCW.

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LocoScript PC

The new version of LocoScript that will run on any IBM PC compatible is now near to release. We received a lot of good feedback from prospective users of the new product at last year's PC Show and Computer Shopper Show which has helped us to make sure that LocoScript PC will match your needs.

There were two major comments that emerged strongly – you wanted an inexpensive and straightforward way of transferring documents from PCW to PC, and you don't want to have to buy an expensive PC. Our LocoLink cable and software will address the first of these points. We have also been putting in extra effort to increase the performance on floppy disc based PCs – it was always going to be good, now it's going to be better!

Unfortunately, our announced release date of February is not going to be met, so we have delayed the release of LocoScript PC to March 30th. Of course we regret the delay, but we would rather confirm a release date we will meet, than leave the date uncertain.

The promised further information leaflet about LocoScript PC has now been sent out, so if you have asked for one, but not yet received it, drop our sales office a line and we'll send one straightaway.

Competition Prizewinners

At the PC Show in September, we ran a free draw with the prize a trip to Paris by Locomotive (well, the Orient Express). We also gave *Script* readers the chance to enter the draw, and it was one of you who won! The winner was Mr Trevor Timson from Northampton.

At the Computer Shopper Show we ran another draw, but with a less exotic prize – an NEC P6 Plus printer. The winner was Mr Colin Wan from East London.

Transferring from a PCW to a PC

The cheapest and most straightforward way to transfer your documents from a PCW to LocoScript PC will be LocoLink. This is a special "cable" we are developing, together with programs to run on the PCW and PC.

The "cable" will also include some electronics – hence the quotation marks! One end of the cable will plug straight onto the back of any PCW – 8256, 8512 or 9512, and the other will plug into the printer port of any PC. No serial/parallel interface is required.

The programs for the PCW end of the transfer will be included in the LocoLink pack, while the program you'll need to run on your PC will be provided in the LocoScript PC pack.

When you transfer a LocoScript document from a PCW to a PC, all your original formatting will be preserved.

LocoLink will cost £19.95 plus VAT, but the LocoScript PC registration card will include a special offer – return the card and you can order LocoLink for £14.95 plus VAT.

To use LocoLink, you will need to place your PCW close to a PC. If this isn't possible, then there are other ways of transferring documents between a PCW's 3" discs and the 32" or 5q" discs of a PC.

One way is to fit a different disc drive to your PCW and use it to write discs which your PC can read, or fit a 3" drive to your PC and read your PCW's discs directly. For more information contact Timatic Systems at The Market, Fareham, Hants. PO16 0LB. Tel. 0329 239953.

Alternatively you can send your discs off to an organisation who will transfer the information for you. Prices vary, but a charitable organisation for children with special needs is offering this service for £6 per PCW disc. Contact Phil Wade, Hull University Computer Centre, Hull. HU6 7RX. Tel. 0482 465796.

It's Showtime!

March is going to be a busy time for Locomotive. As well as putting the finishing touches to LocoScrip PC, we'll be attending a two exhibitions – in Moscow and Hannover!

From 6th to 12th March we'll be at COMTEK '90 at the Finnish Pavilion in the Exhibition of Economic Achievements in Moscow. This is the first major computer show in the USSR and has a list of exhibitors of which any UK exhibition organiser would be proud! We will be demonstrating the Cyrillic capabilities of LocoScript, both on the PCW8512 and on any standard PC.

Later in March, from the 21st to 28th, we'll be at CeBIT 90 at the Hannover Fair. Here too, we'll be showing the full range of products, assisted by Wiedmann, our German distributor.

And then in April, we'll be at the Which Computer Show at the NEC in Birmingham – perhaps not quite as exotic as Moscow! More of this in the next issue of *Script*.

Whilst Moscow and Hannover are primarily trade shows, we'd be happy to discuss our products if you'd like to come along. We'll have all our PCW LocoScript products plus the new LocoScript PC

Increasing the memory of your PCW

We have been offering a memory upgrade kit for a PCW8256 for some time. This kit consists of the microchips you'll need, plus full instructions on how to fit them into your PCW. The current price of this upgrade is £40.

Recently it has become possible to extend the memory of PCWs beyond 512k. There are two companies who are currently advertising ways of increasing the memory by a further 512k: ie. from 256 to 768k or from 512 to 1024k.

One of these firms, Isenstein, advertise two different forms of memory expansion, an internal unit and and an external unit that plugs into the expansion port at the rear of the PCW. The other firm, SCA Systems offer a external unit called the RamPac. We have seen prototypes of both the Isenstein internal unit and the SCA RamPac, but we have not seen Isenstein's external model.

Installing the Isenstein unit is not as simple a task as fitting the 256k memory upgrade mentioned above. It is particularly difficult if you own a PCW9512. Consideration should be given to using Isenstein's fitting service rather than "doing it yourself". The SCA unit was a simple push fit into the back of the PCW and poses no difficulties at all.

We are not experts on hardware design. However, we have tested our software on the two prototypes we have seen and both appeared to work correctly.

The Isenstein and SCA units treat the extra available memory in quite different ways. The Isenstein unit would not run some programs in its region of memory. This does not cause any difficulty with LocoScript but it does cause difficulties if you use older copies of 'Flipper'. This problem does not occur with the SCA unit.

The prices of these memory upgrades can vary, so for more information either contact us or go direct to the companies concerned. Their addresses are:

SCA Ltd.	Isenstein Ltd.
Ferringham Lane	Glendale Business Centre
Ferringham	Deeside Industrial Estate
West Sussex	Welsh Road
Tel. 0903 700288	Clwyd CH5 2LR
	Tel. 0244 822768

We have no link with either company, but SCA did consult us about the specification of their RamPac and we have chosen to stock this unit. The current retail price is £119 plus VAT. However we've negotiated a special price for *Script* readers. Order now, using the enclosed form and get the SCA RamPac for just £99 plus VAT!

In Business

Having a word processor doesn't immediately make it easier to operate your business – you have to apply it in the right way too. In this article we look at the administrative needs of a typical small business and how LocoScript can help fulfill these. In particular we look at how invoices can be produced quickly and simply.

Much of the routine operation of a business revolves around sending and receiving many standard documents which differ only in detail.

For example a supplier of warehousing equipment will spend much of the day visiting prospective customers and will need to produce a quotation for the particular requirements of each prospect. Each accepted quotation will in turn produce a confirmation of order, an order on the equipment manufacturer(s), a delivery schedule and finally an invoice.

The secret in the efficient preparation of documentation is to identify which parts of the required documents change and which parts stay constant. You can then set up pro-forma documents which just need to be completed with each new set of details.

In fact you might already have identified these standard documents. You might, for example, have had special stationery printed for quotations, for invoices and so on – with everything from your terms of business printed on the back to a grid for the invoices with spaces for invoice number and date, columns for prices, a slot for VAT payable and so on.

How LocoScript can help

But printed forms are both expensive and inflexible. You may for example occasionally need to vary the terms of business – this is rather difficult with pre-printed terms of business. And as you identify more "standards" you won't want the cost of creating a new printed form for each one – it's hardly worth having a standard letter printed just saying that you don't have a suitable vacancy for a casual job applicant! LocoScript provides a better solution.

Use LocoScript to create a model document containing all the standard text (including all the "layout" information). Then, when you need one of these documents in your business, simply copy the model document and fill in the details. And when you want to vary the terms – just edit them. Furthermore, if you keep a copy of the final document on disc, it's easy to use one set of changes as the basis for another.

This approach has a number of advantages over using specially printed forms.

- You don't need to decide in advance how many of a particular document you will need to produce. With LocoScript you can produce as many or as few of a particular document as you require.

- It's easy to tailor the standard text to meet special requirements. You can even include hints to the person filling out the form, which can be deleted before the final form is printed out.

- There's no need to worry about putting the paper in exactly the right place in the printer. When printing onto blank or headed paper there's more room to manoeuvre!

You can even use other software from the LocoScript family and get the PCW to do yet more for you. With LocoMail it can prompt you to insert the details into the model documents automatically, and perform calculations too, if required. (In Issue 7 of *Script* we described how to get LocoMail to calculate VAT and totals for an invoice.) And with LocoFile you can set up all the details in a "database" and produce all the documents you need completely automatically.

But that is really beyond the scope of this article – although if there's a demand, we'll look at this in more detail in a future issue of *Script*.

Of course, you don't have to throw away all your pre-printed forms to use LocoScript – you

can use LocoScript to lay out a model document around one of your pre-printed forms. But, you'll probably find it takes some care to line up each sheet in the printer to get the text filled in in exactly the right place. So you will find it is easier to set up the complete form to use blank or headed paper.

Preparation

The easiest way to set up the model document is to create an example of the final document, including all the details you'll usually include and all the LocoScript word processing codes to lay out the text neatly. Then when the document prints out correctly, you can remove the specific details to leave just the skeleton form.

There are really just two sorts of items you will need to be careful to get right in the model document – items which are in a fixed position and items which are in a table.

Probably the most common business document is the invoice. It is also one of the more complicated documents you'll produce, so the techniques needed to set up the LocoScript version of an invoice bring out many points which will also apply to other documents.

Let's first look at a typical pre-printed invoice and use this to illustrate the two sorts of information.

Items at a fixed position

Typically, your documents will start with some standard details, your name and address, the recipient's name and address, date, reference number, and so on. And at the bottom you might place other items such as total amount of a quotation, business terms, company registration number etc.

Sometimes there are special requirements about the positions these items will occupy on the paper. You may need to clear any pre-printed letterhead, or want to position the address of the recipient so that it will appear in a window envelope correctly. You may even want to keep some details on a page to themselves – standard terms, for example.

All these are achieved by using LocoScript's standard facilities. In the last issue, for example, we discussed how to set up your documents to fit headed paper by changing the Document Setup and the Layout. If you are fitting the details onto a pre-printed form, you may have to put in a number of blank lines to get items such as the date or totals on a specific line on the paper.

In the example invoice, we need to position the invoice number, date and order number to follow on from the company's name and address, and then follow these by the name and address of the company being invoiced so that they will appear in the window of a window envelope.

If the invoice is being prepared for headed paper, the extra text "INVOICE NUMBER" etc. will have to be part of the model document, and the headings for the following table will need to be included too.

Tabular items

In documents such as Invoices or Quotations, much of the body of the document will be tabular information. In other places it might be necessary to place items at specific positions across the paper – lining up the totals at the bottom, say.

When preparing such documents it's important to resist the temptation to just use the space bar to move the cursor position to the right place on the screen. It might look right on the screen, but it won't always be right on paper! The correct way to position text is to use LocoScript's tab stops. You can split the document into sections with tabs

marking out the columns. Then use the tab character to skip to each column in turn. You can even choose to align the left, right, centre or decimal point of each column of text to get professional looking documents.

In the Ursula Owen invoice the main part of the text is a table in four columns. This requires an ordinary tab about 1" from the left edge and decimal tabs at about 6½" and 7½" in.

To get the titles to the table neatly aligned, you will probably want to set up another set of tabs – probably using centre tabs.

But this isn't the only place that you'll need to set up tabs in the standard invoice document. The numbers at the head of the invoice are also positioned at an exact distance across the paper – the text right aligned and the numbers left aligned. This too is set up with tabs – a right tab at about 6⅖ " and a left tab just a couple of characters further on.

Making the Model

When you have set up the sample of the kind of document you will be making, save it to disc and print it out on the actual paper you are going to be using. This will show up any problems – particularly if you will be using pre-printed stationery.

When you are completely happy with the sample invoice, save it to disc. The next action is to reduce the example document to the blank form which you will use as the model for all similar documents in the future. But first, make a backup copy – the next action could go wrong and having a backup would save the frustration of recreating it all from scratch!
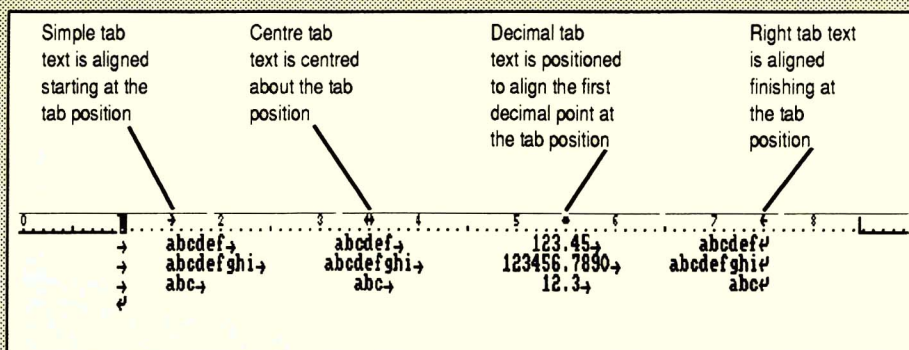
Once more, edit the document, but this time go through and erase all the details. If you have used many word processing codes in the

Setting up a table

Where you need to position text at a particular point across the page, the temptation is to use the space bar to insert spaces until the position looks right on the screen. This temptation should be resisted, as LocoScript provides a much better solution – tabs.

To use tabs effectively you must set them up correctly using LocoScript's Layouts. The tabs at any point in a document are set in the Layout governing that part of the text. LocoScript assumes a standard Layout at the start of each document, but you can change this by selecting Change layout in the Layouts menu. You can also change to a new layout at any point in the document by selecting New layout in the Layouts menu. By careful choice of Layouts, you can split any document into sections, each with an appropriate set of tabs.

To set the tabs for a section of text, move to the start of the section and press [f2] for the Layouts menu. If you want to simply amend the tab positions currently in force, select Change layout, otherwise select New layout. The set of menus available will change – the option you'll need is f3 Tabs. You'll also notice that the cursor in the body of the document disappears, leaving only the Ruler Cursor.

Simple tab text is aligned starting at the tab position	Centre tab text is centred about the tab position	Decimal tab text is positioned to align the first decimal point at the tab position	Right tab text is aligned finishing at the tab position

```
→    abcdef→          abcdef→         123.45→         abcdef↵
→    abcdefghi→       abcdefghi→      123456.7890→    abcdefghi↵
→    abc→             abc→            12.3→           abc↵
↵
```

When setting tabs the starting point is always the set of tabs current at that point in the document. You can remove any that are no longer required by moving the Ruler Cursor to that point and pressing [←], or remove all the current tabs by selecting Clear all tabs from the f3 Tabs menu.

To set a tab, first move the Ruler Cursor to the position you want. To determine this position, measure the number of characters across your paper to the required position. The size of a character is given by the "Scale Pitch" which is shown at the top right of the screen. For example, a Scale Pitch of 12 would mean each character shown on the Ruler Line occupies one twelfth of an inch, and so to set a tab at 4½" from

the left would mean moving to position 4½ x 12 = 54. If the Scale Pitch were 10, this would be 4½ x 10 = 45.

Then select the required sort of tab. This can be done in two ways: either press [f3] and in the menu that appears move to the required sort of tab and press [ENTER], or simply press the [■] key repeatedly until the symbol shown on the Ruler Line matches the type of tab you want.

When you have set all the tabs you require, press [EXIT] to return to the document. If you selected New Layout, LocoScript will insert a carriage return. This is required as the margins and tabs you set in a Layout do not take effect until the *next line*.

document, it is a good idea to use the f8 Options menu to display the codes and tab, carriage return etc. Make sure you don't erase any tab symbols or word processing codes, but if you do by accident, remember that the backup copy is there if you need to start again.

One area where the example invoice will differ from future invoices you may produce is that parts of the document may take up a different number of lines from customer to customer. For example, addresses can be a different number of lines, or the number of items invoiced may vary.

If you are using pre-printed stationery where certain items have to occur on certain lines, you will need to take care. It is straightforward to accommodate a variable number of lines of address – simply put in enough lines for the longest address you'll need (or that can be fitted into your window envelopes!) When you delete the address to make the model document, don't delete any carriage returns, and when you fill in addresses later just type the text "around" the carriage returns.

You can use the same technique to allow for a variable number of invoice lines – type in the maximum number of lines in your sample invoice and remove all the text, leaving the tabs and carriage returns to make it easy to fill in later.

Having set up the model document, when you want to create a document to the same arrangement, all you need to do is copy it and fill in new details. The tab characters and the Layouts mean that the text you type in is automatically positioned correctly across the page and lined up with any titles.

Making it automatic

In the last issue we discussed how to set up your discs so that each new document was automatically set up for your printed letterhead – or would produce your letterhead on blank paper. This involved setting up a master Template on your Start-of-day disc. By careful use of LocoScript's groups, you can use an extension of this idea to create all your standard documents automatically.

You could, for example, use a different disc for each different type of document. Then if you copied the model document to group 0 and named it TEMPLATE.STD, every document you create on that disc will automatically be a copy of the model – ready, not only to print on your

letterhead, but also already including all the standard text. You would just need to fill in the blanks – and maybe modify or delete some of the standard terms.

You can even go one step further. You could use the different groups on the disc for different customers or common variants of the standard document – leaving group 0 for the most general form. The LocoScript template in group 0 will mean that if you create a new template in one of the other groups it will be initialised to the "standard" – then you modify it as necessary.

But don't lose sight of the real purpose of the exercise – to operate efficiently. It could well be simpler to take one document, a quotation, say, and change it into a confirmation of order by hand, than to set up a special standard document for confirmation of orders.

Laser Printers

Laser printers have a reputation for producing high quality output and they usually offer a wide choice of fonts to work with. It is possible to add more fonts by using plug-in cartridges.

This article explains how to use a laser printer with LocoScript 2 and, in particular, how to make the most of the variety of fonts available.

Laser printers typically produce much better looking documents than other types of printer.

Like dot matrix printers, the characters printed by a laser printer are made up of patterns of dots, but these dots are very fine and close together – in fact, 300 dots per inch compared to 180 dots per inch on 24 pin matrix printers for example. This means the characters produced by a laser printer appear much darker and smoother than characters produced by dot matrix printers.

Laser printers also offer a wide variety of 'fonts'. Each font is a set of characters with a common design known as the 'typestyle'. A laser printer will come with a number of fonts built-in or 'resident', and you can add to these by using font cards. These cards are plugged into special slots in the laser printer.

LocoScript 2 and laser printers

Laser printers work perfectly well with LocoScript 2 and they are supported essentially the same way as dot matrix and daisywheel printers. All you have to do is install the appropriate Printer Driver files from the Printer Drivers Disc onto your Start-of-day disc, plus a Character Set for each font that you want to use. In some cases, the additional Character Set files you need will be provided on the Printer Drivers Disc. To use other fonts, those from a font cartridge for example, you may need to use the CHARKIT program supplied on the Printer Drivers Disc to generate the Character Set file for each font.

The CHARKIT program can also be used to create Character Set files that can select additional features which are not normally supported by LocoScript 2, for example some printers offer Double or Quad height characters. However using CHARKIT to do this is only recommended for those users who are familiar with the way that printers work. If

you are in any doubt, you should get the advice of a more experienced user before trying to define characters in this way.

Like many of the newer dot matrix printers, it is possible to select the facilities of a laser printer from a front panel on the printer. However you should not attempt to do this. The selection of features is best left to LocoScript.

Selection of fonts

The only real complication in using a laser printer with LocoScript 2 comes in selecting the font you want to use.

LocoScript works with one font per document and you choose this font by selecting the appropriate Character Set in the Printer menus. However, laser printers have their own rules about font selection which LocoScript can't override and this may cause some confusion.

The basic problem is that LocoScript thinks of each Character Set as providing characters and shapes which it can manipulate to produce the effect required. But laser printer fonts come as a complete package of character shapes, print effects and character pitch which cannot be altered (we describe the attributes of a font on the opposite page). The font the laser printer uses is chosen by matching the attributes you want with the laser fonts available. If the exact match cannot be found, the laser printer substitutes a font with what it considers to be the most important feature instead. Which attribute is considered the most important depends on the make of laser printer you are using.

For example the Hewlett Packard LaserJet printer selects fonts according to the pitch wanted. When LocoScript asks for a fixed pitch font, the printer will look for any available font in that pitch. If there is no font in that particular pitch, the next smaller font is

selected. If there isn't a smaller one, the next bigger one is selected instead. However the correct spacing for the pitch you want will still be used.

Turning the problem to your advantage

Once you are used to the way your laser printer works, the fact that it selects its own fonts can be turned into an advantage. With judicious use of character pitch etc. when using a laser printer, you can get a mixture of fonts in the same document, something that LocoScript will not normally let you do.

For example, the HP LaserJet comes with just two fonts 'built-in' – a Courier 10 pitch font, and a Line Printer 16.67 pitch font. If no other fonts were available (ie. no plug-in font cartridges), you would get Courier when you asked for a 10 pitch font. If you select 12, 15 or 17 pitch you would get Line Printer at the appropriate spacing.

By doing most of the work in 12 pitch but occasionally going to 10 pitch means that you would get two fonts in your document; Courier and Line Printer. With a font cartridge plugged in containing a 12 pitch Prestige font, the selection is different. This time, the printer will use the 12 pitch Prestige font when LocoScript asks for 12 pitch instead of the Line Printer font,

so it is now possible to get three fonts; Courier at 10 pitch, Prestige at 12 pitch and Line printer for 15 and 17 pitch.

If you just want to use one particular font in your document, then you must make sure that you only use the appropriate Character pitch in your document.

The Epson GQ5000

The new GQ5000 is a laser printer that can behave as a 24 pin printer as well. This means that it can now print all of LocoScript's characters, making it the only laser printer we know of capable of doing this. However you have to remember two things:

1. You will have to fit a Memory Chip Set (Product No #5900 – E) to give the printer the necessary 1 megabyte of memory. This costs approximately £150: you should contact a dealer for more details.

2. The 24 Pin Printer files won't give the same resolution as the printer's own fonts. The GQ 5000 measures character widths in $1/_{300}$" while 24 pin printer files work with character widths of $1/_{360}$" so special calculations have to be made to print the downloaded characters. The resulting quality is not as good.

More about Fonts

As well as the common design, a number of other details are also associated with each font. These are:

◆ **Character pitch**

This describes the size of the characters in terms of the numbers of characters that can be fitted into each inch across a page. For example, a 'Fixed' character pitch of 10 tells you that there will be 10 characters per inch, 17 means 17 characters per inch and so on. Characters can also be 'Proportionally spaced' where the spacing depends on the size of the character itself, ie. small characters like 'i' get less space than wide characters like 'm'. This can make your documents look more professional.

◆ **Point size**

The point size is another name for the height of the characters. It can either be the distance between the top of the tallest character to the bottom of the lowest character or it can include the spacing between the top of the tallest character and the bottom of the lowest character of the line above. Most laser printers use the former definition and spaces between the lines are controlled by use of 'leading', which is an extra specification. The point size is measured in $1/_{72}$" so a point size of 10 means the character is $10/_{72}$" high.

◆ **Print effect**

Bold and italic versions of the same typestyle appear as separate fonts on a laser printer. If the bold or italic version of a specified font is unavailable, then the normal font for the pitch you want is usually selected.

◆ **Orientation**

With laser printers the paper orientation is not handled through turning the paper round but by making fonts either landscape or portrait. This means that when you swap from portrait printing to landscape printing, you will need a different font. If the particular font you ask for isn't available, you will get the nearest available landscape font.

Restructuring Datafiles

It is not always possible to predict in advance how best to store pieces of information in your datafiles. For example, you might start by having addresses as single items, only to discover later that, in order to print address labels on 3-across labels stationery, you actually need each line of the address as a separate item.

This article looks at how you can restructure your datafile to split things like addresses into their constituent parts.

Having information divided up into items in the wrong way can be a problem both when the information is stored in a LocoMail datafile and when it is stored in a LocoFile datafile.

You might for example wish to print out labels across the page, or produce a report such as a list of members where each address has to be listed across the page, "lines" being separated by commas. These requirements mean that each line of the address is held as a separate item.

If you have set up your datafile to treat the address as a single item, a number of lines long, you will have to change all the records in the datafile to treat the address as a number of distinct items.

To achieve this, you could go through the datafile by hand, but this is only worth doing for a very small number of records. We'll see how LocoScript can help you restructure the datafile automatically.

What is perhaps surprising is that the methods you use to cure the problem are much the same for both LocoMail and LocoFile datafiles. This is so because in order to make any such overall change to a LocoFile datafile, you first have to extract all the data from your LocoFile datafile and put it in a LocoMail datafile. It is only when the data is in the LocoMail datafile that you can set about changing how the information is organised into items.

We'll see how to put all the data from a LocoFile datafile into a LocoMail datafile later, but to start with we concentrate on LocoMail

datafiles – because this explains the principles of actions you need to carry out.

The principle of restructuring

The key to restructuring datafiles lies in the structure of a LocoMail datafile.

Any datafile is a series of records, each containing a number of separate items of information which are arranged in the same order in every record. For example, each record may comprise a name, then an address and then a phone number.

The other thing that is the same in every record is the marker that is used to show where one item of information ends and the next begins.

The special feature of a LocoMail datafile is that it has an additional record known as the Record Pattern. (This record can be stored either at the start of the datafile or in a separate document.) What the Record Pattern does is 'make sense' of the actual data by telling LocoMail how to divide up each record into separate items of information.

For example, the Record Pattern:

    Initials;Surname ↵
    Address ↧

used with records like:

    A D;Smith ↵
    24 The Firs ↵
    Basingstoke ↵
    Hants ↧

tells LocoMail to take everything up to the first semicolon in a record as the Initials item; everything from there up to the next ↵ as the Surname item and the rest of the record as the Address item. What is actually meant by Initials doesn't matter as long as it doesn't contain a semicolon. Similarly, what is actually meant by Surname doesn't matter as long as it doesn't contain a carriage return character.

From what we have said so far, you might well have guessed what we have to do to restructure this datafile so that each line of an address is treated as a separate item. You're right: we have to change the Record Pattern. We might change it, for example, to:

    Initials;Surname ↵
    Street ↵
    Town ↵
    County ↧

Then LocoMail will take everything up to the first semicolon in a record as the Initials; everything from there up to the next ↵ as the Surname; everything up to the next ↵ as the Street; everything up to the next ↵ as the Town; and the rest of the record as the County.

In principle, at least, just changing the record pattern causes your datafile to be suitably restructured.

In practice, however...

Restructuring a datafile is actually a little more complex and you generally need to do some more work before your datafile takes on the structure you want – though fortunately much of this is done through careful structuring of the Record Pattern.

The first problem is that addresses (and other multi-line information that you want to divide up) aren't all arranged identically. As a result, the Record Pattern that suited A D Smith's record just doesn't work for people with longer addresses like:

    T; Wilson ↵
    Oakdene Cottage ↵
    Trembling Lane ↵
    Sevenoaks ↵
    Kent ↵
    TN13 8YT ↧

Also, there's no guarantee that the item you are trying to split up will have LocoMail separator characters at the appropriate places within the item. It was purely that we wanted to divide

addresses up into separate lines that gave us ready-made separators between Street, Town and County.

The fact that the Street and the Town don't always appear on the same line of the address isn't really much of a problem. All you need to do is change over from thinking of the lines of the address in terms of item-names like Street and Town to thinking of them as AddressLine1, AddressLine 2 etc.

For example, our Record Pattern could equally well be:

    Initials;Surname ↵

    AddressLine1 ↵

    AddressLine2 ↵

    AddressLine3 ↧

As long as it isn't vital to actually identify which AddressLine item is the Town, this approach will work well. For example, master documents such as the one given in *Script* Issue 0 for printing 3-across labels are easily edited to fit this form of datafile.

But if you wanted to select only those people living in, say, Dorking, you would need to select records with the Town item having the value Dorking. In this case you would have to ensure that a particular line was always the town, and so there's no alternative to going through the whole datafile by hand and inserting or removing carriage returns as necessary!

There is, however, one further problem left to tackle, but a problem you can tackle automatically. You still might have different numbers of lines in the item you want to split up. How do you construct a Record Pattern that will cater for this item containing three lines in one record but six lines in another?

Splitting the item

If the multi-line item is the last item in the each record, then this problem can be solved provided you have two things. The first is a Record Pattern that specifies more than enough new items to cover the maximum number of lines in the item you are splitting up. The second is either an end-of-page character or a (UniT) code at the end of every record to act as end-of-record markers. It doesn't work if carriage returns are used to mark the end of every record.

To understand how giving the datafile these two features solves the problem, we need to think how the data in each record is matched to the items in the Record Pattern.

For each record in the datafile, LocoMail establishes the text associated with each item by working through the data looking for each separator in turn. Once it has found the separator for every item specified in the Record Pattern, LocoMail recognises that as the end of the current record.

So, for example, when the datafile contains the record:

T; Wilson ↵
Oakdene Cottage ↵
Trembling Lane ↵
Sevenoaks ↵
Kent ↵
TN13 8YT↧

the Record Pattern:

Initials;Surname ↵
AddressLine1 ↵
AddressLine2 ↵
AddressLine3 ↧

will match T to Initials, Wilson to Surname, Oakdene Cottage to AddressLine1, TremblingLane to AddressLine2 and then AddressLine3 will match all the lines from Sevenoaks through to the postcode.

But if LocoMail is matching items in the datafile to the Record Pattern and it comes across an end-of-page character or a (UniT) code in the datafile *before matching all the items in the Pattern*, the record is terminated immediately. Any items that haven't been associated with any text are just taken to be blank.

So, using the Record Pattern:

Initials;Surname ↵
AddressLine1 ↵
AddressLine2 ↵
AddressLine3 ↵
AddressLine4 ↵
AddressLine5 ↵
AddressLine6 ↧

with the above example address will match T to Initials, Wilson to Surname, Oakdene Cottage to AddressLine1, TremblingLane to AddressLine2 as before and and then continue matching lines up to AddressLine5 holding the postcode. As there is nothing for AddressLine6 to match, it is left blank.

So provided we have more than enough items in the Record Pattern for the maximum number of lines in any record, the end-of-record markers at the end of each record ensure that the excess items are simply left blank.

But what if we don't know the maximum number? The answer is to make a good guess at the maximum, say 5, and add one more item to the Record Pattern – a Dummy item terminated by a new page. We might therefore use a Record Pattern such as:

...
AddressLine1 ↵
AddressLine2 ↵
AddressLine3 ↵
AddressLine4 ↵
AddressLine5 ↵
Dummy ↧

If you think about how LocoMail will match the data in the records to these items, you will see that this Dummy item soaks up the excess blank lines between the last line we want and the old separator.

Equally well, if there is some external limit to the number of lines that we can allow in an address – the number that fit on a label, for example – we can use a Dummy item to mop up the excess.

But we do need to check that no information has been lost – ie that no records actually contained a sufficiently long last item that the Dummy item matched any text. To do this you just need to add some special commands to the LocoMail application which check that the Dummy item is blank. Suitable commands would be:

```
#Dummy ≠ "" :<: Fail=?:Data lost
                :>:
```

which will stop and prompt with the message "Data lost" to show you that the Dummy item contains useful information which you might otherwise lose.

To avoid losing the information, you will need to watch LocoMail processing all the records, and note the records (if any) which fail. Then go back and edit the original datafile and restructure the failing (ie. too long) records by hand.

It's even possible to write the LocoMail application to recover from this situation automatically, but that is beyond the scope of this article.

Restructuring your LocoFile datafile

As we mentioned earlier, exactly the same techniques are used when you want to restructure a LocoFile datafile, but there are a number of extra steps:

1 Convert the LocoFile datafile to a LocoMail datafile
2 Create a suitable Record Pattern
3 Check that no information will be lost
4 Create a new LocoFile datafile to match the restructured datafile
5 Insert the data into the new LocoFile datafile

Converting the datafile

The procedure you use to convert the datafile is essentially that used in the first stage of splitting a datafile that we covered in the last issue. What you need is a Master document that copies each of the items in the LocoFile datafile into a document laid out in the form of a LocoMail datafile. The only difference between the Master document needed here and the one used in the last issue is that instead of selecting only some of the records, we now need select them all. You must make the item to be split the last item in the record so that the above procedure will work.

For example, a LocoFile datafile with cards like those above might be converted to a LocoMail datafile by the following Master document:

```
(+Mail)sep="§": endpage="↓
"
fetchrecord="
initials:sep:surname:sep:address:endpage:
$+
"
%fetchrecord@surname
(-Mail)
```

Add the Record Pattern

Simply edit the document produced and add a Record Pattern which describes the item to be split into lines as a number of single line items. As above, the last item in the Record Pattern should be a Dummy item.

Check that no data is lost

Prepare a Master document that will check whether the dummy items are empty and merge this with the LocoMail datafile. This will read through all the records and list the names of any people whose addresses were longer than the

```
┌─Record:1══════════════════Changed══┐
│                                    ■│
│  Initials A B.........   Surname Smith............│
│                                     │
│  Address 24 Mount St..............................│
│          Sevenoaks...............................│
│          Kent....................................│
│          DA12 5RR................................│
│          ........................................│
│          ........................................│
│          ........................................│
│          ........................................│
│          ........................................│
│                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

number allowed for.

The document can be as simple as:

```
(+Mail)null="": space=" ":ret="↵
"
fetchrecord="
   # Dummy ≠ null :<:
   initials: space: surname: ret:
   >:
: $+
"
%fetchrecord@surname
(-Mail)
```

You can then make whatever adjustments you need to the LocoMail datafile before you insert the data into your new LocoFile datafile.

Create the new datafile

You can then create a new LocoFile datafile with the same range of items as before, but with the item you are splitting replaced by a number of one line items with names matching the Record Pattern.

As you have checked that all the Dummy items are blank, there's no need to set up a Dummy item in the LocoFile datafile!

Insert the data

Use LocoFile's Insert data option to put all the records into the new datafile. You will get an alert message on the screen to tell you that there is no Dummy item in the LocoFile datafile. Don't worry about this because, as we said above, they are all blank.

You can even use the procedure if you need to split up more than one item in the LocoFile datafile. Simply repeat the above procedure with each time a different last item to be split up.

Writing a Thesis

In Issue 11, we published a letter from Simon Barker about writing a thesis with LocoScript 2. One person who responded was Dr Niall Martin who wrote his own thesis on a PCW. He had a number of ideas which may help others in the same situation. This article presents his ideas, starting with his advice on set-up.

"If you only have an 8256, the best advice is to upgrade to the 8512 double disc format and buy both LocoMail and LocoFile – LocoFile because it makes it easier for you to keep your records and your notes in order; LocoMail because it makes it easier to provide for automatic re-numbering when you add another note (along with the references in your text) and because it makes it easier to use your datafiles.

In addition, I have a program (my own adaptation of advice in *Script*) that pulls an alphabetical list of references out of my datafile for just those items wanted for the current paper, and a more advanced version could probably do the same in the order they come in the text (I have the basis of one) with automatic numbering and the opportunity to insert comments in the course of the merge.

Document size

Document length is a tricky business. The advice that you were given in *Script* to limit your documents to about 25 – 30k is more liberal than the absurdly restrictive 15K recommended by 8000 Plus. But I still find it too restrictive, and I sometimes go up to 65K. It does slow things down, and the risks are known, but with a change of practice and a bit of discipline you can avoid the worst.

1. Work in memory, first making sure you have enough space there for a document at least two times as big as the one you are editing (remember the space required for going back through your document, and the amount that your editing is likely to add to it).

2. Periodically Save and Continue. When you have done so, call up the Disc Manager from

Tips on Bibliography layout

You may need to lay out your bibliography in a special way like below;

RUTHERFORD Andrew N – 'The Poetry of William Wordsworth: A study of Man and Nature.' Published by Penguin, first issued 1986.

If the text runs to more than one line it is difficult to use tabs to achieve the space you want. The trick is to use two layouts, one for the first line of each note, ie. the layout you have used for the body text, and another layout with wider left margins for the remaining lines. You set up this new layout in the following way.

1. Start by editing the document.
2. Press [f1], select 'Document setup' and press [ENTER].
3. Press [f2] and select 'Change Stock Layouts'.
4. Move the cursor to Layout 2. Do not use Layout 1 because this is the layout automatically used for the main text of your document. Press [ENTER].
5. If you wish you may change the name of Layout 2 by using the f7 Name menu. It is a good idea to make the name descriptive, especially if you are using more than one Layout. However keep the number 2 as part of the name so you can use the short cut to change your layout described below.
6. Using the f1 Options menu move the left margin to the position you require.
7. Press [EXIT] to return to the 'Change Stock Layouts' menu
8. Press [EXIT] and [ENTER] to leave the 'Change Stock Layouts' menu and [EXIT] and [ENTER] to return to your document.
9. In the line before you want the new layout to come into effect press [+] and type LT2. The next line will then have the new layout.
10. Change back to your original layout by pressing [+] LT1 somewhere in the last line of the new layout.

the f1 actions menu and copy the saved document to disc immediately. This ensures that if anything goes wrong, you will have a recent version on disc.

3. Copy to Drive M then resave onto disc, so ensuring that your data disc has a backup (remember all the sage advice given by various authorities on this matter).

In the above I am assuming that you will be using Drive B discs for your documents, and Drive A discs for program and templates.

Refinements

There are further refinements like setting up templates in advance to provide suitable layouts for chapter heads, section heads, quotations and notes. I store the codes for my layout changes as phrases; PASTE M gets me my main layout and PASTE Q my quotations layout.

I also draft in Mini-PS giving me a narrow column and wider margin for notes and amendments, reformatting for Finesse (the font I use for academic writing) at the final stage. But whatever you do, do not attempt to do all your drafting on the screen: print everything out to look at it hard, and be prepared to do that several times to get it right. Nothing is ever right first time, and you will be lucky if it is right the fourth time.

All this means that you should not attempt to do it all with single sheet paper. A4 continuous is widely available and costs very little more than the formerly usual 11 inch continuous (actually American Letter Size) now increasingly replaced by A4 continuous: it only seems to be kept going by computer users who won't reprogram.

One of the many gains of LocoScript 2 was that it was so easy to set up for A4 continuous, and anyway A4 is the size your university will want. Buy 70gsm paper (the PCW printer likes this weight and may well jam with heavier paper), and print at most two copies – additional copies for binding can be had by photocopying. The adverts in 8000 Plus will give you a choice of suppliers. It will be easier to handle if you have your printer on legs and turn the frosted plate on the back of your printer upside down.

Presentation

Depending on the area of research, and the university you intend to submit to, the requirements for the presentation of a thesis vary. You will need to pay attention to the Regulations of your University and to the advice of your Supervisor. However, you will be expected to submit your work on A4 paper in double-space with wide margins, and you will normally be expected to indent (with yet wider margins) any quotations of any length.

Changing Layouts

The Bibliography layout described in the box on the opposite page could also be used in your main text for quotations. If you change your mind about the details in the Stock Layouts, you can update them simply by going into the Document Set-up and editing each layout using the above steps. Remember though that this doesn't update the old layouts in the document. To do this you need the 'Layout Replacement' option which lets you change the specifications of a layout throughout a document. For more details, see the article on 'Updating Layouts' which appeared in Issue 2 of Volume 1 of *Script*.

If you take a close look at accepted theses in your university library you should get a model to follow. You should also take a look at the conventions in a few of the main journals in your field.

Referencing your work

Beginners often get over-worried too early about the important matter of references: there's no point in them if the information and arguments in your text itself are not worth anything. However, if you do have a good thesis, and that always takes more time and effort and thought than you bargained for, you need to think about how you will document your claims.

Somebody will have mentioned to you the widely used Chicago Manual of Style. I have never actually consulted it, but I am told that the latest edition offers several different approaches to the task of references, but the thing to remember is that different scholars, in different fields, will have different preferences, and this is irrespective of whether there are going to be footnotes at the bottom of the page, at the end of the chapter (the system I used), or at the end of the book.

If you opt for the so-called Harvard System, the references in the body of your text will be in the author, date, page form, referring to a complete Bibliography at the end of your thesis. You should be using foot or end notes and giving full references to a work when you first cite it, any other references being supported by *op. cit*. The latter system gets over the problem of multiple editions of the same text, and of texts written at one date and published at another. For historical purposes it is less cumbersome in use. It can be supplemented by a good system of abbreviations given either in your Bibliography or elsewhere. **"**

Letters

Archive tags

Is it possible to mark LocoScript/Mail/File files with an archive tag so that only those which have been updated are copied between discs? I seem to be able to do this with CP/M files provided they are in group 0 but PIP doesn't seem to recognise Loco files in other groups. It would be very useful to be able to make backup copies of the day's work without copying everything else too or copying each file separately.

Mr DF, High Wycombe

Editing or altering LocoScript documents has always set the archive tag. So if you have a CP/M utility for copying files which takes notice of the archive tag then it is indeed possible to copy only those files which have been altered since the last copy. Earlier versions of LocoFile did not set the archive tag when the datafile was altered but the latest version does. If you want to upgrade your LocoFile to the latest version, you should return the master LocoFile disc to us along with £9.95 for the upgrade charge.

Using PIP to copy files from different groups is a separate problem. CP/M works with one group at a time – after loading it's ready to use group 0. To copy files from different groups you need to specify the group you want to copy the files from and to in the PIP command. We gave an example of how to do this in the Groups article in Issue 4 of *Script*. If you need further advice about PIP, you should contact Amstrad who offer technical support on CP/M and its utilities.

Drive not ready

While editing a document, I had gone out for a while; I had saved and continued and then for safety removed the disc. On returning I continued editing. In the course of this I pressed f1 meaning to insert text; in fact I selected document set up (by mistake). As the disc was not in the machine I got a drive not ready message.

As I had selected an option I did not want I pressed cancel. The screen went blank. I then re-inserted the disc. Pressing f7 produced the spellcheck menu; this did not help so I pressed cancel. Pressing Exit produced the usual exit menu; I selected save and continue and the machine went dead. As it was I had to switch off and reload, thereby losing the result of an hour or so's work. What did I do wrong?

Mr PWK, Stourbridge

Your problem was caused by continuing with the editing when the disc was not in the drive. Instead of pressing [CAN] you should have replaced the disc in the drive and used the 'Retry' option.

When you edit a document, the disc holding the document should always remain in the drive until you have selected the 'Finish edit' option and saved the document to disc. If you don't, such a mistake could cost you more than the loss of an hour's work – you could corrupt the document itself, making it difficult to edit again or retrieve easily.

Write protecting discs

I recently purchased LocoFile but have been unable to use it, due I think, to an error on my part. I tried to make a copy of the master disc but I became muddled about which disc was in the drive and now I am unable to use the disc at all. How can I stop this happening again?

Mr PL, Newcastle-under-Lyme

We suspect that when LocoScript prompted you for the destination disc you forgot to remove the master disc. This means that you have copied the disc back onto itself and it is now unusable.

You can avoid the problem by write protecting the disc you are copying from. This stops LocoScript copying any information onto it. To write protect a disc, move the shutter (either white or red depending on the make of disc) so that you can see through the hole in the top left hand corner of the disc.

To replace your unusable disc, simply return it to us along with £5 for the handling charge and we will send you a new master disc.

Letters

Adding a hard disc

What difference will it make to my use of LocoScript if I add a hard disc drive?

Mr BN, Solihull

Adding a hard disc will make little difference to your use of LocoScript 2 but it will change the way you use and organise your discs.

A hard disc gives you greater space for storing files and may give faster access to these files. Besides your own documents, the hard disc may be used to store support files which you would otherwise have kept on your Start-of-day disc. For example, LocoSpell dictionaries, Printer files and templates as well as LocoFile datafiles can all be copied into Drive M from the hard disc when you load the software.

The cost of adding a hard disc is substantial and a more popular alternative seems to be to upgrade from a PCW to a PC with a built-in hard disc. Although this is more expensive than a hard disc on its own, buying a PC has other advantages such as the speed of the machine and the variety of software available. From the end of March you'll be able to use LocoScript PC on an IBM compatible machine – see the News pages in Issue 12 of *Script* for further details.

Different version numbers

I recently bought an Upgrade disc and updated my Loco software using the Installation program. This gave me version 2.28 of LocoScript, LocoSpell and LocoMail but still left me with version 2.22 of LocoFile. Is this correct or will I run into problems using mismatched versions?

Mr FP, Blackpool

The Installation program upgrades LocoScript 2 to the latest version. It also upgrades LocoSpell and LocoMail if you already have them installed on your system. It doesn't upgrade LocoFile. There's no need to worry if LocoFile has a lower version number than LocoScript – earlier versions of LocoFile work just as well with the latest version of LocoScript.

Some minor improvements have been included on the latest version of LocoFile which you might find useful. For example, LocoFile now recognises a wider range of characters in LocoMail item names.

If you want to upgrade LocoFile, you can do so by returning your old master LocoFile disc along with the upgrade charge of £9.95. This will also upgrade LocoScript, LocoSpell and LocoMail to the latest version.

Using a French printwheel

I recently acquired a French Pica 10(F 032) daisywheel for my Amstrad PCW9512 using LocoScript 2 in the belief that as, stated on p.276 of the PCW9512 User Instructions, no additional files were required.

Finding that after following the instructions nothing but gibberish could be printed, I complained to Amstrad's customer services department and have been informed that in spite of the claims in the User Instructions, the Printwheels Disc is required in order to make the new daisywheel work. Is this correct?

Mr LD, Jersey

You do indeed need the Printwheels Disc to use your French Pica 10 printwheel. We think the confusion is caused by the fact that two different types of French printwheel are

available. One is the Swiss French printwheel (marked CF or with the number 041) and the other is the 'French' version of the wheel which is the one that you have.

The comments in the PCW9512 User Instructions refer to the Swiss French printwheel. A Character Set file for this printwheel is already provided on the UK PCW9512 master disc, so no additional software is required to use the printwheel.

For all other printwheels, you do need the Printwheels Disc which has Character Set files for all the known Amstrad printwheels. It even has a program which allows you to create a Character Set file of your own if you have a non-Amstrad printwheel which fits in the Amstrad printer.

Letters

Printing in colour

I have an Epson LQ 2500 24 pin printer and want to use the colour option available on this printer. I have established that I can control the printer from the PCW8512 but only via f6 Settings. In other words, different Character styles can be selected from the LocoScript Settings menu irrespective of the style of the "current setting" on the Epson printer. If I enter an Epson control code in a LocoScript document from the keyboard LocoScript simply prints the code and there is no control of the colour printed.

Obviously I am missing some important aspect of using the control codes and I would appreciate some guidance on solving my problem.

Mr KS, Stourbridge

LocoScript's printer files are designed to support all LocoScript's features within the limitations of each type of printer. This means that where the printers are capable of, say, printing in a Character pitch of 15, the appropriate Printer file makes use of this facility. What the Printer files don't do is attempt to use features of the printer which are not normally available in LocoScript.

For example, double height or quad height characters are not features of LocoScript so the Printer files don't include codes to select these features.

This doesn't mean you cannot access extra features or options such as the colour option. The answer to the problem is to use CHARKIT, a program supplied on the Printer Drivers Disc. This lets you create a Character Set – its most common use is to create Character Sets for extra fonts built into the printer. But you can also use it to create a Character Set where a particular character is defined with a code which tells the printer to use a particular feature of the printer. (The codes for the printer's features are in the printer's manual.)

For example, you can define a little used character so that it selects the colour option. Instead of printing this character, the colour option will be used at the point at which the character appears in your document. It's best to put the character on a line of its own in your document. If you don't, you'll find that justified text no longer has a straight right margin as the real length of the line does not match up with the length LocoScript has calculated.

Using CHARKIT is not a trivial task but the instructions are well documented in the booklet accompanying the product. We plan to have an article on using CHARKIT in a future issue of *Script*.

Controlling the printer

I have recently changed to using a Star LC24-15 dot matrix printer in addition to the PCW9512 daisywheel printer. Having trouble with the Star printer, I contacted you and was told to set the printer DIP switch 2-1 to 'off' to prevent 'rubbish' being printed. This has now resulted in some correct print outs (less than 50%), the remainder produces a series of exclamation marks and garbled text. I have always set up the printer to match the PCW as far as Draft/High Quality and Pitch are concerned. I hope you can offer help to correct this frustrating situation.

Rev GS, Orkney

Your problem sounds as if it is due to altering your printer settings to match the settings in LocoScript.

Many printers allow you to control facilities such as the Character pitch and the quality of printing from a front panel or from option switches but you should always resist the temptation to alter these settings.

As long as you leave control of the printer to LocoScript, your documents will print correctly. For example, you should select the Character pitch you want to work with in the document; the choice of print quality is made on the Print menu.

If you do print garbled text, there is a quick way to correct the problem. Simply resetting the printer (using the 'Reset printer' option on the f1 Actions menu) refreshes the settings on the printer and lets you continue printing without problem.

Letters

PCW9512 printer width

I have recently acquired a PCW9512 and have the latest 2.29 version of your software for it which is already proving very useful. However, I have run into one infuriating impasse, and would be most grateful if you could offer me a way out of it.

I have a form to be completed on a regular basis which is in landscape format but outsize in terms of your Paper Type Settings, being 14.4" by 8.2" ie the same 'width' as A4 but a good deal longer.

To print the document I have to create a new Paper Type longer than A4 and I have used the maximum length setting of 99, which ought to give 16½," but the columns beyond 11½," just don't print at all. I must be doing something wrong as it ought to be possible to use the full width of the built-in printer carriage. Please could you advise me?

Mr OT, Chesham

We suspect the problem is that you are already using the full width of the printer. The maximum width of the PCW9512 printer that you can use is in fact 11½," inches. This is a limitation of the hardware mechanism and the software has no control over it.

Empty groups

I would be grateful if you could solve my problem. I have a Start-of-day disc in Drive A and a new formatted CF2 disc in Drive B. The Disc Management Screen only shows a column for A drive and M. There is no column shown for Drive B. There is only the top information telling one of Drive B with 706k free.

How do I create a document on Drive B? Any help will be appreciated.

Mr RAH, Bristol

There are no columns shown for your Drive B disc because all the groups are empty at the moment, as you haven't created any documents yet.

When a group is empty, you can't use the File cursor to select a group in order to create a new document. Instead you have to use the Group cursor. You do this by holding down the [SHIFT] key when you use the Cursor keys. This moves the cursor in the three boxes at the top of the screen and allows you to pick out a group on any drive.

Swapping discs between a PCW8512 and a PCW9512

I am currently using a PCW8512 with LocoScript 2.20 and LocoFile to research and write a technical book. My co-author is now proposing that he also purchases an Amstrad. Obviously another PCW8512 would meet the requirements but the PCW9512 would seem a better choice for its additional facilities. Would you please advise if we can exchange discs between these two models and, since my colleague is new to the use of a computer, if it involves complicated procedures which might lead you to suggest that the choice of an 8512 as the second machine would be preferable.

MR NC, Egham

You can swap discs between the PCW9512 and Drive B of your PCW8512 without problem. The PCW9512 and Drive B of the PCW8512 use the same format disc – 720k – so it's simply a matter of putting your PCW9512 disc in the 8512's Drive B (or the other way around) and editing documents in the usual way.

What you can't do is swap discs between the PCW9512 and the PCW8512's Drive A. The latter formats discs to a different capacity – 180k. You can read a 180k disc in a PCW9512 but you can't save documents back onto the disc. The PCW8512 Drive A, on the other hand, can't read 720k discs at all. If you put a 720k disc in the top drive of a PCW8512 it may not be read at all or you may see a message such as 'Disc is unsuitable for drive'.

The PCW9512 has certain advantages such as the built-in parallel port and the higher capacity Drive A. On the other hand, the 8000 machines have a faster printer which lets you print the entire LocoScript Character Set in all the pitches and emphases available.

The machine you use depends on your needs and we cannot make the decision for you.

*Post*Script

We are always interested to hear about the unusual uses that people find for our software. One of the most interesting that we've come across is using LocoScript and LocoFile to organise a Japanese tour of Bizet's Carmen!

Having successfully orchestrated the Aida spectacle at Earls Court in 1988 and Carmen at the same venue last year, Classical Productions lead by George McLaren, decided to put the show on the road – or more accurately on airplanes, connecting coaches and Bullet trains.

No corner was cut in this monumental task of transferring the Earls Court production to the Yoyogi Stadium, home of the 1964 Olympics. In the total party of 425 there were 100 chorus, 50 children with chaperones, 70 dancers, 20 soloists, 20 members of the Paco Pena 'Fiesta Flamenca' Company and 72 musicians from the National Philharmonic Orchestra with instruments. A vital contingent of technicians, carpenters and stage managers went too and they all met up with a Japanese stage crew and the inevitable interpreters.

The company left on staggered departure dates, and convened for eight full performances, followed by a small concert party version (only 167 members!) which visited five Japanese cities, travelling by bullet train. They occupied two carriages and had exactly three minutes to disembark at their destination!

Classical Productions had to be responsible for processing the visas, booking the flights on three airlines, scheduling departures, booking the hotels, building the set, looking after the entire party throughout the stay, and a host of other incidental details – without forgetting anything! So throughout the tour they had access to two PCWs which ran on a special 240 volt power supply which they installed in their Japanese hotels.

All the details of the tour were stored on their specially set up LocoFile database, which included each person's name, address, travel details, passport number, particular dietary requirements and ongoing visa status. The party included a competition winner and his wife who was 8 months pregnant when they took off. Needless to say, a doctor travelled with the company!

Of course, organisation on this scale is bound to be fraught with minor problems: dancers and chorus members had to be reminded to return their visa forms via a half page advert in The Stage. One hapless member of the cast received his fully processed visa through the post, only to have it chewed up immediately by his blind 12 year old dog, Oscar!

George McLaren and his six colleagues were, on the surface, remarkably calm about the whole event, but they admitted to having nightmares – that is, if they had the chance to go to bed. It didn't help having to move offices when one of the word processors was stolen, and with it all the technical data.

Neither George McLaren nor any of the team would call themselves computer experts. Most of them had only recently discovered the word processor. But they still managed to use LocoFile to build the highly sophisticated database that they needed – with only a little bit of help from our customer support people.

When the curtain rose on this sell-out Carmen, 10,000 Japanese applauded the company and their own soloist, Yoko Watanabe. But they probably did not spare a thought for the behind-the-scenes preparation, including two PCWs and some British software. A surprising thought in a country which prides itself on its market presence in the world of high technology!