

Merry
Christmas
everyone!

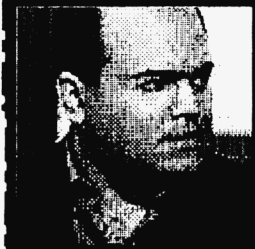


*New products on offer
in Bargain Basement -
see page 31 for details.*

CPG
USERS

Dec 98
Issue
72
RRP
£1.70

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Editorial bit

I would like to wish all our readers, contributors and Officers a very Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year. As you will

have noticed the design of CPC User has been changed dramatically, for the better I hope. I've always believed that a uniform look is important for a magazine.

Here are the dates when I will be having my traditional Xmas break: December 19th to January 4th 1999. So I won't be here for phone calls or for processing software orders until I am back.

So eat, drink and be merry
Till next time - Martyn.

Regular columns

- page 4: Cover discs and tapes info
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**UNITED AMSTRAD
USER GROUP**

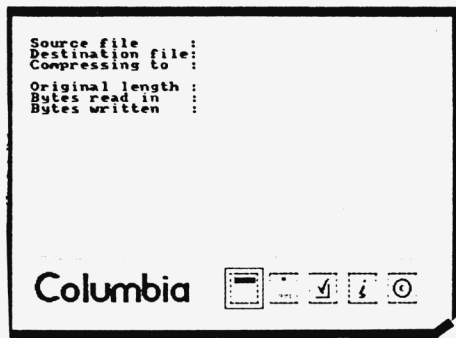
..Booting up...

SPECIAL FEATURE

As the year 2000 comes ever closer, we take a look at the steps being taken by the Government to combat the Millenium bug. Not only that, but will it affect the ordinary CPC enthusiast directly or indirectly?

UTILITY REVIEWS

A look at two of the best utilities on the CPC market. One is Turbo Monitor, & the other is Columbia.



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Club Benefits:

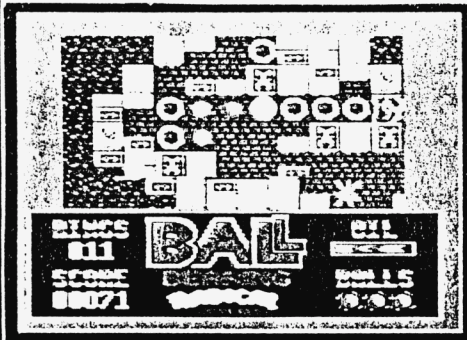
Club magazine offering excellent value for money with free cover disc or tape, filled with software from prism PD. Internet book search. Customer support. Bargain buys from club members or prism PD. Discounts from companies. Years of expert Amstrad knowledge. Regular Club competitions offering great prizes. Forget the rest and join the best!

Cover media

MONSTER HIT



smash certain blocks with a ball. In BALL BEARING, there are an extra nine levels, three lives and more puzzles. Its joystick controlled. COLUMBIA: This is a program for compressing tape files therefore saving tape space. Ideal if



you use custom tapes of the C20 variety. You even get a disc version too! All options are menu driven so its dead easy to use.

drivers which is great, because the Cannon printers were recently voted as the best on the market.

Disc users

SEARCH: This utility is an STD code finder. Now, admittedly this is about 5+ years old which means you will not be able to use the '01' method. Also some codes will be different for example Leicester used to be 0533 but is now 01162. Despite this, there are not many places that changed their STD codes completely. So ignore the second digit when inputting the code and you will still come up with the right areas. If anyone wants to update this program then please contact the editor.

Tape users

Amiga discs

BALL BEARING: A pd variant of Croco Magneto. The idea in Croco Magneto was to

PC discs

As you know, printer drivers are hard to come by for modern printers. This is because printer manufacturers foolishly believe we all use PC's. This disc contains all the latest Cannon printer

A little gem of a program this time. We have a simple but effective DOS text editor. This is ideal for checking and editing batch files, startup-sequences etc. It even comes with a spell checker! Also on the disc is another spell checker. Just follow the instructions on the label for installation.

Amstrad news



UAUG PRODUCT LIST

CPC PRODUCTS

compiled by tony baker

The following are brief descriptions of CPC products still available from companies contacted over the last few weeks. For more detailed information write to the Companies in question for their latest lists.

1. COMSOFT (formerly Campur soft), 10 McIntosh Court, Wellpark, Glasgow, G31 2HW. Phone: 0141 554 4735. Fax: 0141 778 9919.

Nirvana (ROM) £15.99. MicroDesign Plus £29.99. MicroDesign Extra £14.99. Page Printer £9.99. DES £14.99 ROMS (2) £24.99 2in1 £19.99. Parados £14.99. The Basic Idea (Tutorial) £14.99
Xexor £14.99. Soft-Lok v2.3 £14.99. Stardump £9.99. Maxam & Maxam 1.5 £14.99 ROM £21.00. Model Universe £11.99. Comsoft Rombox (8 sockets expandible to 15) £35.00 + £2 postage. Protex £15.99 ROM £22.00. Prospell £14.99 ROM £21.00. Promerge Plus £14.99 ROM £21.00. Proprint £14.99 ROM £21.00. Destext £9.99. Utopia ROM £14.99.

Send sae for more descriptive lists

2. DATEL ELECTRONICS LTD, Govan road, Fenton Industrial Estate, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2RS. Phone: 01782 744707. Fax: 01782 744292.

OCP Art Studio (disc) £17.99. OCP Advanced Art Studio (disc) £22.99

Latest news on the computer scene

Buyers guide...

. Lightpen(ROM version) £14.99. LC100 Colour Printer Package £199.99. Genius Mouse+ OCP Art Pack 464,6128, Tape or Disc £34.99. Colour Printer Driver £19.99. Adapter for Mouse to work with Plus machines £9.99. Postage 2 on all orders. Write for full lists which include a page of hardware.

Editors note: It is possible that Datel have moved address, so check with Directory Enquiries first before checking availability of these products. It is more than likely that Datel only provide PC and Console products these days.

3. O.J.SOFTWARE, 273, Mossy Lea Road, Wroughton, Nr Wigan, Lancs. WN6 9RN. Phone/Fax: 01257 421915.

Send for eight page catalogue free of charge (write or phone) which includes Arcade, Strategy, Simulation games, also many compilations. There are two pages of cassette based games software, an educational software page, also business and utility software (disc & tape). There are also sections for Accessories, printers, ribbons & refills, joysticks & control pads and a miscellaneous section. Prices range from £2.99 for disc and £1.99 for tape software. Serious software includes Protex, Tasword, Masterfile 3, screen design programs, desktop publishing and many utilities. There is even the original cassette version of Mini Office for £2.99. All in all a real treasure house of items far too numerous to list here. Send for your own copy of the catalogue, I am sure you will not be disappointed!

4. TASMAN SOFTWARE, Hilton Court, 2 North Hill Road, Leeds, LS6 2EN. Phone: 0113 243 8301. Fax: 0113 244 3440.

Tasword 464 £24.95. Tasword 464-D £29.95. Tasword 6128 £29.95. Tas-Diary 24.95. Tas-Spell £24.95. Tas-Sign £39.95. Tasprint £24.95. Note that Tascopy 464 is no longer available.

Send for fully descriptive brochure which is free of charge. For

...for the CPC

telephone orders phone 01532 438301.

5. TRADING POST, Victoria Road, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8AF. Phone/Fax: 01952 462135.

Send for current list which is free of charge. The following are among the items in the current list.

AMSTRAD 464/6128... Advanced OCP Art Studio (6128) £12.99. Ex. Software 3" discs (pack of 5) £10.00. Dust covers, Joysticks, Monitors, Phazer Guns, AA Cheat Mode Book, Printer leads, Light pens, Reconditioned 3" Disk drives, Cassette mechanisms etc. AMSTRAD 464+/6128+/G4000...Manuals £14.99. Keyboard membranes £12.99. Paddle controllers £5.00. Stereo Mono Monitors £30.00. Printer leads £9.99. LocoBasic/Burning Rubber Cartridge £15.00

GAMES CARTRIDGES FOR THE 6128+/464+/GC4000...All at £7.99. No Exit, Operation Thunderbolt, Switch Blade, Pro Tennis Tour, Navy Seals, Barbarian 2, Robocop 2, Klax, and Pang. All the above cartridges are unboxed without instructions.

6. SD MICROSYSTEMS, PO Box 24, Attleborough, Norfolk, NR17 1HL. Phone: 01953 483750.

Payroll Program £55.00. Stock/Accounts (6128) £40.00. General Ledger (6128) £30.00. Small Trader £30.00. Page Publisher £25.00. Picasso Art (664/6128) £15.00. Graph-Master £15.00. Home Accounts £15.00. Super Labeller £12.50. Disc-Base £12.50. Mailing List £12.50. Kwikfile £12.50. Picture Discs 1&2 (for Page Publisher/Stop Press (state which) £12.50. 400K Per Side £10.00. Disc 10 (Compendium of Utilities) £10.00. Budget Software from £5.00. 3" Drive Reviver Kit £10.00. Other supplies include Blank Discs, Lockable Boxes, Printer Cables and Ribbons, Labels, 24-pin Colour Printers plus a Disk Transfer Service CPC ↔ PCW ↔ PC.

Authorised Locomotive dealer and Tasman Software Range stockist.
Send sae for full list.

7. BONZO'S SCRAPYARD, 29 Chapter Road, Strood, Rochester,
Kent. ME2 3PX.

Tape to disc transfer information newsletter, published quarterly.
Send an A5 or A4 SSAE plus an additional first class stamp for the
latest copy. The following Bonzo related programs are available all
at £8.50 per 3" disc : Bonzo Super Meddler and Hackpack, Bonzo
Blitz, Bonzo's Flashpack, Bonzo's Big Batch, Maxidos & CPC
Procoppy. Also available on 3.5" disc is the MS800 big format
program.

8. RADICAL SOFTWARE, Brympton Cottage, Brunswick Road,
Worthing, West Sussex. BN11 3NQ. Phone/Fax: 01903 206739.

Radical now has a growing list of exclusive games, with more on the
way such as Lethal Moves and the improved Black Jack and
Cribbage. Now available are Who Said That, Smart Plus* and
Megablasters at £13.95; Star Driver and Masters of Space at £9.95;
Fluff* at £7.95; Routeplanner at £19.95; and Ball Bearing at £4.95. (*
For Plus computers only). All available on 3" or 3.5" discs. Phone or
sae for details.

Editor's note: since this article was typed some items may not be
available so ring the companies mentioned and check the items are
still in stock. Our thanks to Tony for providing these two articles.

SHOCK YR 2000 NEWS UPDATE

Your editor recently found out that there is the possibility that some
PC manufacturers are still selling PC's that are not compliant with
the year 2000. One 'small' brand name was mentioned. If this is the
case, then users will have major problems - at a time when their 1
year guarantee has just run out. If you buy a PC this Christmas - set
the clock to Dec 99 at 23.59 in the shop and see what happens.

The Workshop

5-key cursor keypad

Although it is common to find games players using the number or cursor keys on their CPC's - this only adds to the wear and tear of the membrane. Far better then to preserve your keyboard, and build a keypad for aiding your arcade games playing.

This project uses 6 keys - four of them to indicate direction, and two others which can be used as control keys. That in itself has many uses depending on the program being planned. In games software the extra keys could be used to fire a space gun, or to indicate 'no move'. The keypad could even be used in an art package where the direction keys move the cursor, and a fifth key for drawing by inverting the pixels. Another

use could be for those into robotics or controlling moving locomotives on a purpose built model railway.

You will need a normal tool set with items: screwdriver, pliers, hammer etc - and the cost of this project should be £10-20.

Construction:

The first step is to feed the ribbon cable through the heat shrinkable tubing leaving 1" visible at either end. Trick: tie a piece of cotton around the cable and pull it through. Next use a hair dryer or oven to heat the tubing and shrink it at a temperature of over 120deg. It is self-extinguishing but will still get very hot so be careful! Once shrunk, it should be allowed to cool.

Now bare the strands of wire and separate them and solder to a D-connector (see

cursor keypad

diagram below as viewed from behind). A following table shows you the pin and wire connections.

The next tricky part is assembling the cover to fit into the back of the computer (making sure the computer is not on of course!). This is not easy and you may find super glue or masking tape will assist you.

Now you will be ready to make up the box which can be acquired from a variety of sources. A hole in the side will be needed for the cable to pass through, holes in the top lid for the keys positioned to your own requirements and holes for the main body of the switch to fit into. Fix the switches in place with super glue so that they cannot fall out. Another slot must be made on the top for the slide switch and can also be

secured with super glue.

Wiring up:

Solder one black and one red wire to the legs of each key as shown. It doesn't matter which wire is soldered to which leg.

On the toggle switch there are three legs - whereby a black wire is soldered to the centre pin and red wires to the other two. Now take ALL the black wires and solder them together and wrap tape around the join. Take the terminal block and secure, by means of the screws, the wires from the ribbon cable into separate sockets as shown below.

Now take the red wires from the switches and attach them to the other side of the block. The wire from fire button 1 should

Diagrams >>>

be connected to socket 1, and this is repeated with other switches as shown below.

The process is the same for red wires from the toggle switch. Once completed secure the lid, and clamp the cable properly. for that finishing touch to make it look professional, you can use rub down lettering for the side of the box and key tops.

The following test program ensures your wires have been connected correctly. It prints out two columns of numbers which should change as keys are pressed. If it works with the switch in one position then try it in the other, and the other column should change. But if both changed check the connections on the slide switch. The numbers are:

Left 4, Right 6, up 1, Down 2, Fire1 32, Fire2 16.

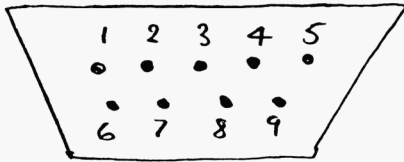
TEST PROGRAM

```
10 PRINT JOY(0),JOY(1)
20 GOTO 10
```

Parts List:

- D-Range 9 way socket
- D-hood 9 way
- Ribbon Cable 10 way
- Heat Shrink CP 64
- Keyboard Switch
- Keytop 1 Position
- Stick-on Feet Square
- Terminal block 5A
- ABS Box MB5 (or equivalent)
- SP Slide

Parts should be obtainable from Maplins on 01702 554161. Alternatively, visit your nearest electrical shop.



D-CONNECTOR
VIEWED FROM
BEHIND.

SOLDER THE COLOURED WIRES TO THE
PINS AS FOLLOWS :

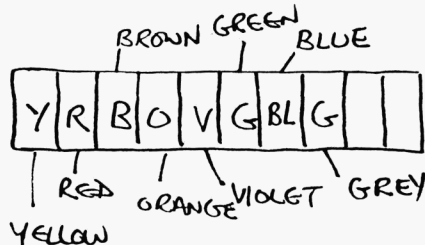
PIN	COLOUR	FUNCTION
1	BROWN	UP
2	ORANGE	DOWN
3	GREEN	LEFT
4	VIOLET	RIGHT
5	WHITE	SPARE (NOT NEEDED)
6	RED	FIRE 2
7	YELLOW	FIRE 1
8	BLUE	COMMON 1
9	GREY	COMMON 2



SOLDER THE BLACK AND RED
WIRES TO THE KEYPOTS. IT DOES

NOT MATTER HOW THEY
ARE WIRED UP.

SECURE THE
WIRES FROM THE
RIBBON CABLE
INTO THE
TERMINAL
BLOCK.



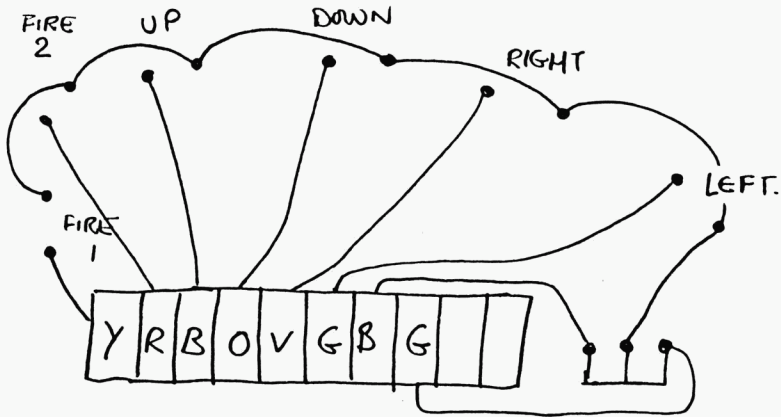
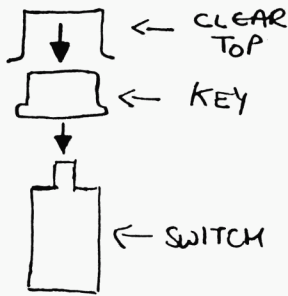
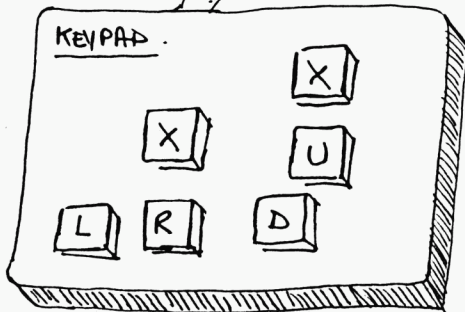


DIAGRAM SHOWING ALL SWITCH CONNECTIONS.

KEY TOP ASSEMBLY



ONE POSSIBLE DESIGN FOR A CURSOR KEYPAD.



UTILITY PAGE

Turbo Super Monitor by Antoine Pitrou 1994

This utility is the result of rivalry in the pd scene over in Europe. He was quoted as saying:

"Especially for programmer and demomakers, for whom Supermonitor 1.4+ (by Crown) wasn't adapted to their needs."

Supermonitor was given 90% in Amstrad Action, yet Antoine has added extra features. It is stored in video ram, english instructions, and help prompts. A downside is the display which is really small! So some might stick with Supermonitor - but you never know when you might need the ram to be free if you are dealing with long assembler code.

The scrolling routines in TSM are fast which does make up for the tiny display, but if your eye-sight is not brilliant then stay clear of this utility.

sandy nedemske



IMAGE PRINT by Robot PD 1994

This utility is essentially an interface for 9 pin dot matrix printers. Standard printout for these printers is shocking by modern standards. What Image Print does is to use its own printer font to give you a better quality output. It understands the Epson codes for Bold, Italics etc. It even comes with a font design utility so that you can create your own. The command `||P.ON` enables it, while `||P.OFF` disables it. It is compatible with all word processors.

Both utilities should be available from your nearest pd library superstore. If not, try and contact the authors directly or a Euro disc mag.

H A R D C O P Y

The magazine of the United PC User Group.

Now with 40 pages - A5 - hints/Tips - CD ROM Column - Desktop News - Computing For The Beginner - Reviews - Programming - Readers Letters - Special Features - newaletter every other month - Gold, Silver, Bronze subscription options.

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Assistance in any PC related problem from Amstrad 1512's right up to Windows 95 computers. For a sample magazine send £1 (or 5*20p stamps) payable to 'D Sherwood' at 13 Rodney Cl, Bilton, Rugby, Warwicks, CV22 7HJ. A cover disc is an extra 60p



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one of the offers listed opposite depending on your machine and preference. Fill in your details and

send this form to: The Editor, 13 Rodney Close, Bilton, Rugby CV22 7HJ. A photocopy is accepted.

1



Classic pd games for 464 users: "SPOTS" & "TOWER"

2



664/6128:Mac style Windows system and pd games:"Space

Name: _____ Price: £ _____

Address: _____

Membership number: _____

3

25 disc labels for 3 1/2 discs

GHOST IN THE MACHINE

One of the classic pieces of hardware for any 8 bit computer has been the digitizer. With the Rombo production, you can not only capture a picture from any video source: VCR or Camcorder, but also from other computers. Images can then be saved to disc or tape, and manipulated for special effects.

Pictures can be saved mode 2 (hi-res 2 shades), mode 1 (med res 4 shades) or a special 16 shade mode 0 synthesised picture. What makes all this possible is the built in CRT controller and 16k video RAM to enable animation of frames at 6 frames per second.

The digitizer is connected via a ribbon cable with dual expansion connectors allowing other peripherals to be connected. Suitable leads were supplied with the product - RCA (phono) and BNC (video). It will depend on the type of socket marked 'Video Out' on your VCR as to what lead is used.

The hardware is controlled by a user interface (menu's), or by BASIC extensions (RSX's).

Once everything is connected, you are ready to run the software. This can be done in two different ways.

On disc or ROM you can type RUN" DISC or |VIDI. With disc users, two options are presented for choosing between RSX or MENU control. Alternatively, just type RUN"VIDI for the menu control, or RUN"RSX for using RSX commands.



ROMBO

Most users will type in RUN"VIDI and you will see a menu system appear at the bottom of the screen. The manual will give full details on each option but a brief description follows. Remember that when an option is highlighted, use up/down arrows to change the values.

'BRGT-07': Brightness control. Change from 0-15 with 15 being the brightest.

'CONT': contrast control. Used in the same way for BRGT. The more contrast the more defined the picture becomes just like on a TV.

'ARROWS': This option is for moving the "canvas window" through which

we see the digitized picture.

'X': This is present on every menu or sub menu. Its functions is for clearing, selecting or exiting the program.

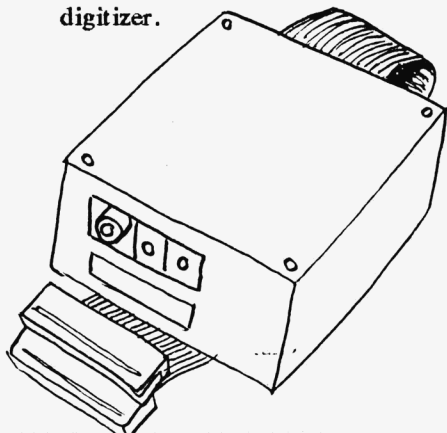
'GRAB': This is for choosing a picture. Save it, print it, or swap with the previous picture. A sub menu of this is the file menu where filenames can be typed in when saving. You can also load pictures, delete unwanted pictures on disc, catalogue discs, change the filetypes, or change between drive a: b:, or Tape. Another sub menu is for printing. Here, you can select the print direction, density, CR+LF, colours, screen update method and screen resolution.

One of the useful programs is a file to allow the AMX Pagemaker program to utilise the digitizer in the same way that Stop Press can. Just copy the file 'PAGEMAK.OVT' onto your AMX Pagemaker disc.

Next issue we will look at the RSX commands available with the digitizer,

VIDI DIGITIZER

look at technical details and how to set up the Pagemaker program to use the digitizer.



A digitized picture of Black Adder
©BBC productions

Special Feature

So you think the year 2000 problem won't affect you on your CPC? Think again, because it isn't just PC's that are in danger of crashing, but everything else as well.

Picture the scenario. It is approaching midnight on Friday 31st December 1999. The party is in full swing, the champagne corks are flying and Clive Anderson has his face beaming at you on the TV set. Then, Big Ben starts the countdown to the dawn of a new millenium..... 5.. 4.. 3.. 2.. 1.. MIDNIGHT! Suddenly - the video recorder flashes the message 'date incorrect', the microwave goes on the blink, the lights go out because the power has been cut and other items such as your fax, phone, heating system etc all fail to operate. Total shutdown. No power - means no CPC.

The world outside could be falling apart at the seams all thanks to the computer microchip! Welcome to the man made millenium plague:

- * Supermarkets do not receive supplies nor can they order them because computers don't work - just as they do not work in every office. Food packaging companies cannot open fridges, or start production lines.
- * Transport has ground to a halt because of the failure of traffic lights, closed circuit TV and street lights. Planes are grounded because of fears of navigation system failure.
- * Offices have been abandoned because the air-conditioning systems have stopped or even gone into overdrive.
- * Water treatment plants are spewing sewage out because instructions by operators are ignored.
- * You might think you can survive on your wits, but have some cash ready for transactions on the black market. There is a worldwide crash in the financial market because of non operational mainframes. Your savings are locked via an electronic world that has gone mad.

YEAR 2000

Special feature on the Yr 2000 nightmare

* The emergency services have their work cut out freeing people trapped behind security doors and lifts. This means troops are deployed throughout main cities to restore order. The troops are also needed to protect hospitals where the injured cannot be treated because no one can access medical records and vital equipment has gone on the blink.

* But if you thought this was as bad as it got, then your worse nightmare is about to happen. In a snow-strewn wilderness somewhere in the former USSR deep inside a missile silo, or badly maintained nuclear submarine penn, the Millenium bug is about to spark Armageddon as poorly trained operatives panic and misread their VDU displays.

All this nightmare scenario is a possibility - and all caused by something we can barely see - the microprocessor.

What's being done?

Businesses and the Government are confident they have done enough work to tackle this millenium bug. But on the internet there are pages of last-minute advice and prophecies of doom.

Microprocessors have made every aspect of our late 20th century lives more comfortable. The machines that they are fixed in have been taken for granted: the TV, VCR, microwaves, security locks, cameras, pocket devices and also high tech devices in industry.

Every piece of equipment has to be checked for yr2000 compliance - but a lot of companies have revealed that up to 10-20% of their equipment is still prone to year 2000 failure.

Its already started!

Hundreds of firms have already started experiencing problems including: Shell, Tesco, TSB and Rover Group.

Action 2000

Special feature on the yr 2000 nightmare

One computer wouldn't send out warranties for vehicles built after 1999. Another refused to send out goods to a supplier because it interpreted the expiry date as being out of stock! Others have found their software won't issue or accept invoices with dates after December 31st 1999. Quite simply there is no guarantee that machines of various types and not just computers, will accept dates from January 1st 2000.

The reason for it all

When micro chips were first created programmers only used two digits for the date to save memory space on early PC's with only 128k memory. So 1999 is recognised as 99. Once the year 2000 comes round most PC's prior to those built approximately in 1996-7, will fail to work and software that requires dates such as accounting, spreadsheets, and some games will be rendered useless.

Experts started warning about the year 2000 problem as far back as 1990 so its not as if there hasn't been plenty of time to resolve the situation. As it is, we are one year away from potential disaster and some companies are only just waking up to the realisation that they have a major problem on their hands. After all, companies can spend 10's of thousands of pounds updating their equipment, but if the security locks are electronic - they might find they cannot get their delivery vans out!

The knock-on effect of many small system failures could end up causing more problems than just the main computer systems at home or in the business sector - and it is worrying a lot of people.

The government has set out to tackle the bug by setting up its own taskforce Action 2000 and funding 20,000 experts. The fears of the Government were revealed by a leaked memo from Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar to Defence Secretary George Robertson. The memo warned of trouble on the streets by the public if the national power grid and phone lines were knocked out by the bug.

Contingency plans

Proposed cuts in the Territorial Army north of the border could seriously undermine the ability for the Government to cope with unrest. Mr Robertson refused to talk about the memo but is quoted as saying:

"Contingency work is in hand on the issue of the year 2000. Departments are working closely with each other on possible scenarios for the Millenium as in all civil contingency planning."

The bug is a 32 billion time-bomb whose blast will be felt all around the world. Insurance firms are refusing to cover its effects and no matter how many programmers are employed to tackle it, it can still go wrong.

The world of computers is so inter-linked that every OS needs updating on every computer. While its true that the very latest PC's and Macintosh computers are 2000 compliant, some of the software they use might not be.

The Amiga is the only modern 16/32 bit computer to have been designed to calculate dates using 4 digits. This means it is already 2000 compliant and its users do not need any expensive upgrade solutions.

So why is the Amiga immune to this potential global catastrophe? It doesn't have a separate BIOS and operating system - both are integrated into one system. Although the A3000 and 4000 have built in clock, other Amiga's do not. For this reason many Amiga titles are not time reliant. Of course the Amiga also uses a datestamp on its files just like the PC. But even here, the Amiga does it differently. This is because the Amiga datestamp and internal clocks or clocks added via expansion cards do not store dates in two digit form. AmigaDOS stores this information from the number of days from 1 Jan 1978 and therefore is not susceptible to post '99 year trips.

however, even the Amiga does not get away with it scot free. Even on 68k series processors there is another bug which will affect such computers like the Amiga in the year 2035. Mind you, as one magazine said and I quote:

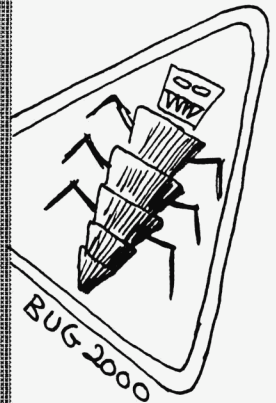
"if your'e still using the same system in 37 years time, you must be the tightest person in the whole world and you deserve all the hassle it could bring."

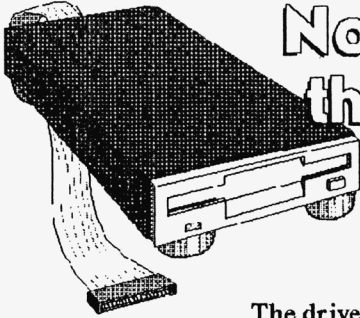
Lets hope that when the parties are finished and all the champagne has been drunk, that we are only waking up to a hangover on January 1st 2000.

Case studies so far

- * A RETIRED Swiss teacher received a demand to attend Primary school. A computer read 105 yr-old Helmut Winkel's birth date as 1993 instead of 1893 and sent a letter to his long dead mother ordering her to bring him along.
- * At Chrysler motors a clock set to the year 2000 locked down the security system and refused to let staff out.
- * Visa had to stop issuing credit cards carrying the date 2000 in case shop tills rejected them.
- * A Marks and Spencer till rejected a tin of corned beef after interpreting the bar code as meaning the food was 96 years beyond its sell-by date.
- * Staff at Hertfordshire travel agency cancelled all Millenium holidays in case they were sending customers into the "unknown".

BUT, the Millenium cloud has a silver lining for bachelor software experts in India. Many have landed high paid jobs in the US, and also become prize targets for brides where fathers have offered dowries up to 5,000!





No Nightmare with the Freddy Drive

A new 3.5 disk drive is
available from Roy Everett and
Nigel Callcutt

The drive itself is a Sony/TEAC precision slim disk
drive like the type the Amiga and PC uses. This ensures a high quality
performance is guaranteed.

Format discs (even HD discs) up to 800K with Parados on the 664/6128. A
drive without a side switch costs £68 or with switch £72. 3" drive belts £2
includes 2 belts, instructions and fitting device.

Payment to Roy Everett at: 2 Coldnailhurst Ave, Braintree, Essex
CM7 7SJ tel: 01376 344572 weekdays 7-9pm

ACE SOFTWARE

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internet book search, helplines. Free membership or full
membership with benefits. Send an SAE for further details to:
Martyn Sherwood, 13 Rodney Close, Bilton, Rugby CV22 7HJ.
Full support for the year 2000 compliant computer!

Clock-up by built in micro-chips

Microchips are built into a vast range of modern devices. It is estimated that there are as much as 7 billion of them worldwide controlling many vital functions. Those processing dates or times are at risk from the bug.

Items chips are in include:

Aircraft, trains, faxes, phone networks, fire alarms, cash registers, safes, photo-copiers, mobile phones, cash machines, lifts, escalators, heating units, ventilation, electronic door locks, conveyor belts, automated warehouses, mailing systems, oil refineries, power grids, electricity supply, bottling plants, water works, sewerage systems, still and video cameras, cranes and factory equipment.

TIP: set old VCR's to December 1971 on December 31st 1999. Why? 1972 uses the same dates as in the year 2000. Old vcr's are the only equipment that can beat the millenium bug.

COMSOFT

NIRVANA - ROM based file and disc management suit. £15.

MICRODESIGN+ - menu driven DTP package. 128K. £29.99

DES - desktop environment system. A GUI system based on Windows. £14.99 (disc), £24.99 ROM.

XEXOR - sophisticated disc backup utility £14.99.

PARADOS - the superb 3.5 disc system. £14.99

DESTEXT - run Des within Protect. ROM users only. £9.99

SOFT-LOK - a tape to disc copier. Will copy speedlock and protected games to disc. Version 2.3 £14.99

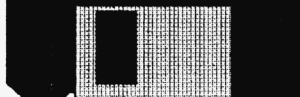
COMSOFT ROMBOX - cased 8 socket Rombox expandible to 16 sockets, ideal for Des, Parados etc. £35 + £2 postage.

First class postage (discs/roms) is an additional £1 (UK). Overseas - add £2 Comsoft, 10 Macintosh Crt, Wellpark, Glasgow, G31 2HW. Tel: 0141 554 4735

Nirvana v2.1

Reviewed by TONY
BAKER.

Disc filing
system for
464, 664,
6128



It is now four years since I reviewed NIRVANA, my favourite utility, so with a new version 2.1+, complete with a poem on the opening screen, I thought it was time to update my

previous review. Quite a number of new UAUG members have bought secondhand CPC's and often they have no system discs so are unable to carry out basic functions such as formatting discs etc. Instead of going to the expense of buying system discs I always suggest investing in NIRVANA as the formatting, copying, renaming processes are much quicker and in some cases more reliable than those supplied with the official discs, which you will only need if you want to run CPM programs. This new version will run on 464's with disc drives, 664's, 6128's, and with one minor exception the 6128 PLUS.

NIRVANA comes with a 13 page manual which together with very helpful on-screen instructions makes the program easy to use. To load the program just type RUN" DISC or RUN" NIRVANA. The main menu offers seven options as follows :- 1) File Management. 2) Directory Editor. 3) Disc Map. 4) Sector Editor. 5) Disc Archive/Restore - NOT 6128 PLUS
6) File Archive - NOT 6128 PLUS. 7) File Restore - NOT 6128 PLUS.

NB If you have adapted your 6128 PLUS to run tape software, then you can use the Archive and Restore options as long as your data recorder is relay controlled i.e. it allows the tape to pause when the program requires it to. This was achieved with 6128's by means of the remote lead.

1) FILE MANAGEMENT.

After choosing this option you will be told to insert your SOURCE

disc which is the disc you wish to work on. The working screen now appears. This displays information about the files on the disc, the amount of free space, the disc format etc. The rest of the screen shows the commands available. These are a) COPY FILE. b) COPY DISC. c) FORMAT DISC. d) CHANGE FILE ATTRIBUTES. e) LOG IN NEW DISC. f) ERASE FILE. g) RENAME A FILE. h) SELECT DRIVES.

Before attempting to copy, erase, rename or change file attributes you have to highlight the required files with the cursor keys then select the highlighted files by pressing the COPY key.

a) COPY FILE.

When copying files, NIRVANA makes full use of the extra memory of the 6128 or any additional (Dktronics) memory packs on all three CPC's (up to 256K). Multiple files can be selected and if you have only one disc drive, many files can be copied with only one disc change. There is full on-screen reporting of how the copying is progressing.

b) COPY DISC.

This option can be used to copy individual tracks from one disc to another or to back up whole discs. It will handle most of the commercial discs available today. I have yet to find a disc that it will not copy.

c) FORMAT DISC.

Discs are formatted very quickly in both DATA and Vendor formats.

d) CHANGE FILE ATTRIBUTES.

Files can be set to RW/DIR, RW/SYS, RO/DIR, RO/SYS. The manual explains what these terms mean for those new to computing. There is also an UNERASE option.

e) LOG IN NEW DISC.

This is used when you want to use NIRVANA on a different disc.

f) ERASE A FILE.

As with the copy file option single or multiple files can be erased after first selecting them with the cursor and COPY keys.

g) RENAME A FILE.

Files can be selected then renamed. I find this useful when there are

long filenames to type in. For example I renamed TASWORD by calling it just T, then loading it by typing RUN" T.

h) SELECT DRIVES.

This option will allow any disc drive combination to be selected, so for example you can copy from A to B, B to A, A to A or B to B. NIRVANA will also read or write to 3.5" and 5.25" drives running under AMSDOS but does not support any other operating system.

2) DIRECTORY EDITOR.

This section provides a very extensive set of file management options similar to those in the FILE MANAGEMENT section with the addition of a CHANGE USER NUMBER option. The display takes up more room than the previous option so pressing N will bring up a second page of information. Another difference is that if you make changes to names, attributes etc you must remember to press the SAVE CHANGES key.

3) DISC MAP.

This maps the source disc then reports on the track and sector for each file on the disc. The information can be sent to the screen or the printer. This is a very valuable option to choose before using the Sector Editor as it will save you a considerable amount of time searching the disc for each part of the file.

4) SECTOR EDITOR.

This option allows you to examine all tracks and sectors, make alterations and save the changes. First you choose the track and sector. The screen is split into three areas. The sector is displayed on the left in Hex notation and on the right in ASCII code. The command keys are shown in the lower portion. A flashing cursor can now be seen on the left character of the first byte in the Hex area of the display. Hitting F1 will toggle between the Hex and ASCII areas, so the code can be changed in either area. For more information on using this option see my article in issue 24 of CPC USER. If there is sufficient interest in this I will ask John to reprint the article in the next issue.

5) DISC ARCHIVE/RESTORE.- NOT 6128 PLUS.

This option is very much like "tape streamers" on the IBM PC's used to

back-up the computer's hard disc. A complete disc can be backed-up to tape thus saving valuable disc space. A DATA formatted disc will archive to tape in about 15 minutes without any attention from the operator. Restoration also takes about the same time. With a 6128 computer it is important that the correct cassette recorder leads are used to allow the computer to start and stop the tape as it requires. There is also a verification option provided.

6) FILE ARCHIVE.- NOT 6128 PLUS.

This option is similar in operation to the Disc Archive but differs in the method used. It also archives the files in standard form by name and in alpha-numeric order. If there are several files to be archived you are advised to copy them first to a DATA format disc and then archive them from there. Verification can be simply done by CATaloguing the tape and checking that each block is OK.

7) FILE RESTORE.- NOT 6128 PLUS.

This option is used to restore files from tape to disc after being archived with option 6. Having chosen this option you are prompted to enter the number of files to be restored. If you do not know the number of files or their position on the tape just enter 0 (zero). Next you can choose Manual or Automatic. Usually you would choose A for auto which restores files using their original filenames. However if you wish to only restore a few files or if you wish to rename them, you would choose the Manual option. In this case as each file is retrieved from tape the program will wait for a filename to be entered. Pressing the ENTER key will restore the file under its original name. If you do not wish to restore a particular file, pressing the CLR key will cause the program to miss the next file.

Full information on each file is given either on screen or to your printer as it is restored.

DOCUMENTATION.

NIRVANA now comes with a thirteen page manual which lists all the options and gives additional information to back up the on-screen instructions. A DATA format sector map is given together with further information in the SECTOR EDITOR section explaining the connection between block numbers and the track and sector numbers.

CONCLUSION.

In my original review of NIRVANA I stated that this was the best file and disc management utility I knew, and although that was over four years ago, my opinion is unchanged. It is available from GOLDMARK SYSTEMS, 3 OAKDALE, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTS. AL87QW. Tel:0707 321711. There is a 10% discount for UAUG members. An added bonus is that if you encounter any problems (and this is unlikely) you can phone Brian Barton and he will sort it out. A few minutes conversation with Brian will convince you that you are talking to a real enthusiast.

STOP PRESS.

GOLDMARK have produced an in-house formatting utility that will deal with the many inferior quality discs now on the market. It will DATA format such discs and when it comes across a bad track it will try to format that track again before reporting it as faulty. When the formatting has been completed you can use the tracks which are error free. A normal CAT will tell you how much space is available for use. This new utility will be provided by GOLDMARK only when you buy NIRVANA but you must ask for it at the time of purchase.

Editors note:

Nirvana is also available from Comsoft (check our discounts page for phone number/address and also available from Brian Watson of Wacco. Shop around to determine the best price on one of the greatest pieces of CPC software. Check to see if the extra Goldmark utility is still available from current suppliers as the market has changed a lot since the demise of AA.

Titanic winner:

**The winner
of our
special
competiton
is Mr Lipsey
of Bradford,
Yorkshire.
Well done
to Mr
Lipsey.**

Editors Request:

During this year, a lot of our European readers have sent in old 50p coins. Could you please stop sending them. I cannot guarantee the nearest bank will continue to change them + it costs more than the value of the coins to reach it.
Thank you.

The Bomb Room

*Superb Freescape
game. Disarm the
rebels nuclear bomb.*

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*Payable to M Bela
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Letters for Linda should be sent to the Editor at PD Power

Games donated to the club

Hello there!

Welcome to the Christmas issue of CPC USER packed with festive goodies - a bit like our proverbial stockings. I've been away for a bit in deepest Cambridgeshire this month and have fallen hook line and sinker for Ely!

And now the Amstrad news. Hurrah! Martyn has been sent some games from Mr Dukes of Ringwood in Hampshire (Thank you Sir!). The games on disc are: Chase HQ, Narc, Hard Drivin', Covenant, Jack & The Beanstalk, Killer Gorilla,

CPC USER competition
In order to win the games donated by Mr Dukes, just answer this question:
What is the name of Fred Flintstones pet?
Answers on a postcard by Jan 10th please.
Good luck!

3D Starstrike, Chuckie Egg, Gauntlet, The Flintstones, Final Fight, Ikari Warriors, Revolution, Gremlins 2, Midnight Resistance, Nightbreed and there's also the Amsoft collection discs 1, 2, 3, and 4. Enough to while away those post Xmas blues. Check the compo section for details and good luck.

I'm pretty much set for Christmas and I'm looking forward to the festive season. I love all that ho ho hoing, and all that lovely food and seeing all my mates! Get the tree festooned and the presents piled. At Linda B's its goona be wild! See you all next year (1999! Spook!)



Love in ever-ascending spirals of glee!

Linda B

the place to come to for CPC shopaholics



Bargain Basement

13 Rodney Close, Bilton, Rugby CV22

All payment is to M SHERWOOD and sales are for the benefit of the club to continue its support and services for Amstrad users.

BACK ISSUES

- (1) Back issues available for £1.70 per issue #4 to the latest. Issues 1 to 3 cost only 80p.
- (2) Volume 1 (issues 1-6 cost £6.90). Volumes 2-12 (issues 7-72) £10 each.
- (3) A set of all issues costs £100 - saving £16.90!
- (4) Europe single issues add 50p, Overseas add £1. Volumes: Europe £13, Overseas £15. Volume 1 is £7.20 and £10.20 respectively.

MASTERFILE (3" DISC)

The best CPC database. Search by any criteria, label maker, full range of functions, including printed manual. £8

FLOPPY DISCS

3.5 HD discs: only £7 for 20 plus £1 post and packing. HD discs are perfectly useable on the Freddy Drive - just cover up the extra hole.

STOP PRESS UTILITY

ENHANCEMENT SET

On 3.5 disc for £5 or 3" disc for £8. Preview Stop Press pages, compress pages to fit more on a 3" disc, view fonts

for selection/paste whole screens onto pages, picture mode converters, + fonts and clipart. Great value.

DRIVE BELTS

Belt fitting service. Only £18. Send your micro or 3" disc drive to the UAUG with adequate protection. The price includes p/p, & insurance.

CPC GAMES

10 disc set on 3.5 discs. Various adventure, shoot-on up, platform. Cost is £10

CPC UTILITIES

10 disc set on 3.5 discs. Various: copiers, printing, comms, text viewers, WP, clipart, fonts. Too many to list! Cost is £10.

AVAILABLE FEB 99

Amsoft games Assortment of Amsoft cassette games which are now public domain.

Financial Times

New finance package for 6128 users on 3" and 3.5 discs.

p/p included in all prices

PRINTER CARTRIDGES RIBBONS & PAPER

Xerox A4 copy paper 80g. 500 sheets. Specially treated to resist curling, static and paper jams. £6.99 per box. Code: VK-48-b

Xerox A4 copy paper 90g. 500 sheets. Ideal for copiers, high speed copiers, laser printers, inkjets and offset presses. Code: VK-48-p

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Thinkjet, Quietjet, Quietjet plus. Hewlett Packard inkjet cartridges £14. Code: VK-91-j
MPS1270 ink cartridge £14. Code: VK-91-mps

Cannon BC01 £22. BC02 £23.50.
BC1-10 £15. BC1-11 £17.50.
BC1-11(black) £15. BC20 £28.
BC121BK £9.99. BC121C £18.99.
BJ101 £11.99

Black cartridge for Epson Stylus 300/400/800/800+/1000 £14

Star LC10 black or colour £9.99
LC24 10/15/20 black or colour £12
LC100/200 black £8.99

All prices include VAT and p/p. Payable to "M. Sherwood".

*Press items should be sent to the Editor
at: 13 Rodney Close, Bilton,
Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 7HJ*



*More news
reaching the
hotline!*



UAUG NEWS UPDATE

The first batch of books have been received from the former UAUG librarian, Brian McKiddie. This means we now have the books 1-75 in the listing. It is hoped that by the time the February issue comes out, the full list will be printed again in CPC User - but if not, we'll aim for the April issue. It looks likely at this stage that the UAUG book service will be operated from the Editors address. This will make it more convenient for members in the long run. If any member wants a list of the books 1-75, they are advised to send an SAE to Martyn who will also supply details of the prices. However it is best to order a book after Christmas when the volume of mail returns to normal.

NEXT ISSUE: February 1999 #73

*Part two of the Rombo digitizer feature
The start of a series looking at the 'C' language
Another special hardware project
More reviews on classic software, pd software
First of a three part diagrammatic series on the 6128
plus all the regular features*

don't miss out - order your copy now!