ISV Department news from Acorn

No. 14 - May 1989

Announcement - The New BBC Micro

The name:	A3000
The price:	£649 - base system exc VAT. Monitor extra. (Educational price £529 exc VAT)
The operating system:	RISC OS
Memory:	1 Mb (expandable internally to 2MB)
Storage medium:	3.5inch ADFS floppy discs
Principal target markets:	Education (Primary and Secondary) Home users

As this newsletter wings its way to you, so the news release is being sent out from Acorn. The new addition to the range of RISC-based machines, A3000, is being hailed as the new BBC micro. It will be available in high volume at the BBC Acorn User Show at Alexandra Palace in July. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to buy - and to take home - the machines from dealers who are exhibiting there.

Did you know that Acorn supplied 62%* of all computers bought by schools in 1988? A3000 provides the opportunity to increase even that large share of the schools' market.

On 26 April, Acorn held a meeting for Educational Advisers in London. At the meeting the advisers were told about A3000. Their response was enthusiastic. They indicated that A3000 would feature significantly in their purchasing plans.

The spec is higher than the 300 series; the price is lower!

As software and hardware developers, you will wish to know more of the details of the A3000 spec. The main question you would ask, I suspect, is, "Will my product(s) work with A3000?" The answer is simple:

If it is software and runs on a standard Archimedes 310 system - Yes

If it is an expansion card - Yes, provided, of course, that you have followed the guidelines in the three documents mentioned in newsletter number 10, that it is a single width card and +5v only.

The features of A3000:
RISC OS and the Applications Suite
New MEMC1a chip giving extra speed
Stereo speakers
Integral power supply
Rechargeable cell for CMOS RAM/clock
Support provided for genlock cards

*Times Educational Supplement survey results published on 17 March 1989

Internal upgrades:

        1 Mb RAM (from 1 MB to 2Mb)

        Econet module (same as for Master 128, Master Compact and Archimedes computers

        Serial interface (a couple of chips to plug in)

        Internal upgrade interface card (8bit, 5 volt) - Acorn is producing a combined User Port and MIDI card. Others will be obtainable from IHVs.

Ports:

        Analogue RGB

        Composite sync (mono)

        Parallel printer port

        External expansion interface (this is where your expansion cards plug in)

        Stereo sound

        Serial port socket fitted

        Econet socket fitted

        Mouse

Other points of note:

        There is a fixed mains cable.

        The monitor is powered separately.

        No fan is required.

        Hard disc circuitry is not fitted; a hard disc can be fitted using an external expansion card.

Add-ons from Acorn and third parties

        Single card external expansion box

        External hard disc upgrade

        Monitor stand

        Second floppy drive

        Internal multiple user port with 5.25inch drive connector and 1 MHz Bus.

Acorn User Show

The Acorn User Show takes place at Alexandra Palace in London from 21 - 23 July inclusive. It is being organised by Safesell Ltd, Market House, Cross Road, Tadworth, Surrey, KT20 5SR (Tel:0737 814084, Fax: 0737 814085).

BBC Acorn User and Educational Computing Magazine will be publicising the event which, when last held in 1987, attracted over 17500 visitors. There will be mentions on BBC TV and in Radio Times.

There will be a series of seminars as well as the usual stands. Acorn will be there. A3000 will be there. I look forward to seeing you there too.

RISC OS

Shipments started, as promised, on 3 April. The intitial volume of orders was so high that not all could be satisfied immediately. The position is now stabilising and substantial quantities of RISC OS upgrade packs have been shipped.

NB It is RISC OS (pronounced *risk oh ess,* not *risk oss);* it is not Risc Os, Riscos, Risc OS nor any of the other variants I have seen!

The Archimedes Range

While on the subject of correctness, please remember only to use the word, 'Archimedes' as an adjective, not as a noun. It should be:

the Archimedes system the
Archimedes 300 series
Archimedes software
 etc.
NOT

the Archimedes

Programmer's Reference Manual for RISC OS

The draft form of the RISC OS PRM is now with our quality assurance department. Photocopies could be made available at cost (£100). If you would like to purchase a copy please send a cheque, for £111.50 (inc p&p and VAT) made out to Acorn Computers Ltd, to me with your request by 31 May.

If the numbers required are viable, we will bank your cheque and arrange to have copies made. We will not make copies on spec. If the numbers requested are not viable, we will return your cheque to you.

The RISC OS PRM will be published in four volumes in the third quarter. Anyone purchasing a draft copy will receive a free printed copy as soon as stocks allow.

Archimedes Catalogue of third party products

Draft copy for the second edition of the catalogue has now been sent to you for correction. If you have not received this communication, but have products available for Archimedes systems and wish them to be included, please send me suggested copy for the text together with a full production pack of each such product. The deadline for this information is 19 May 1989 at the latest.

Kelator Handling Charges

In future, when ordering through the ISV discount scheme, please add to the total of your order:

£5.75 per consignment including a computer
£2.30 per consignment not including a computer

Cheques must be made out to Kelator.
Orders should be on a separate sheet from any other queries or correspondence.

Kelator Servicing

Several companies have asked me to pass on to Kelator their appreciation of the good post-sales service offered to ISVs and IHVs. Kelator are concerned that there have been some exceptions and have asked me to mention to you the information that they experience an upsurge in servicing requests during school holidays. Please avoid these times if you can.

Kelator do all in their power to give you priority, but in school holiday periods some delay is likely.

Occasionally an intermittent fault can occur. A point to note is that such a fault can be very hard to trace. In the unlikely event of this happening to you, do allow time for Kelator to find and rectify the fault.

Archimedes 400 Series Machines and BBC BASIC Guide

The recommended retail prices for the new 410/1 and 420/1 computers and for the BBC BASIC Guide are as follows:

AKB40 Archimedes 410/1	£1199 exc VAT
AKB42 Archimedes 420/1	£1699 exc VAT
AKJ08 BBC BASIC Guide	£19.95

ISV/IHV discount prices for these products will be published in due course.

The BBC BASIC Guide is now available as a separate product. Please note that it is not part of the RISC OS upgrade, but is available through normal channels.
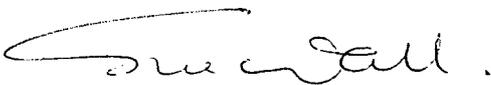
Documentation Style Guide

A style guide for documentation has been produced principally for the use of Acorn personnel and contractors. The guide includes useful items such as a list of Acorn trademarks, conventions of terminology etc. and is a photocopied document of about 50 pages. There is no current plan to publish it in any other form.

In order to give Archimedes-related products a cohesive feel, you may wish to follow the Acorn conventions and to have a copy of the style guide. As with the RISC OS PRM, copies can be made for you to purchase at cost (£5). If you wish to buy a copy, please send me a cheque for £6.15 (inc p&p and VAT) made out to Acorn Computers Ltd.

Competitions

Enclosed are details of two software competitions, Caring for the Future and Caring for the Present. Entries for the competitions will be welcomed. If you do not wish to enter yourself, do feel free to pass on the forms to someone who might.

Sue Wall
ISV Product Manager

Enclosures:

Caring for the Future entry form
Caring for the Present entry form