MASTER

512

Shareware Collection

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What is Shareware

The programs in this package are shareware or public domain programs. Shareware is a distribution system originating in the USA, which works on a principle of honour. The software is handed out to the computer-using community at large, and is spread by being downloaded from bulletin board, and through shareware distributors. The distribution incurs charges to cover the cost of discs, postage and packaging and so on, (and in this package, Master 512 compatibility testing and the production of this manual) but these are small compared with the true value of the software. If you had bought standard commercial programs similar to those in this package, they could have cost over a thousand pounds.

The idea is that the software is 'on approval', effectively a free trial. Each program will contain information about registration. Registration means that you pay a more realistic price for the software, by sending payment to the author. In return, you will receive the benefits of a normal, commercially available package, such as updates, printed manuals, extra facilities and so on.

Because you, the customer, are dealing directly with the author, the registration fee is usually much lower than the cost of similar commercial packages. Even major packages cost only about £30-£40, and small ones may be as little as £3. It is reported that shareware authors are often better at providing customer service than commercial firms. Naturally, registration is a matter of trust, but if you seriously use a particular shareware program, you will want all the documentation and extras that are available, so there is a natural incentive to register. Most of the authors live in America, but many take Access and Visa, or have European agents, and anyway, it is fairly straightforward to obtain dollar cheques.

If you want to know more about shareware for the IBM PC and compatibles, we are publishing a book in 1989 on the subject, giving an in-depth look at some of the most popular items.

The software on these discs is documented within the programs in the form of text files. The details which follow therefore consist of the name of the program and supplementary files, and the name of the documentation file, which can be TYPEd, read into a wordprocessor, or displayed using the LIST file which is in the root directory of each disc. If the file is called README.DOC, then type LIST README.DOC. Other than a brief description, the information given below is limited to any peculiarities about using the software with the Master 512. To discover how to use the software, please read the on-disc documentation.

Compatibility

Every program has been tested on the standard Master 512, ie, without the Solidisk expansion, and found to work correctly. Any minor problems found are noted in this manual and further information is always welcome from you. This is not, however, a guarantee. Some of these programs could have little nooks and crannies which may lie undiscovered for years, that contain some obscure system call which DOS Plus doesn't support. Also, the software itself may have leaks in it at certain points. All we can say is that we've run everything on these discs through each major function, and everything seemed to work as expected.

We rejected a lot of shareware from this compilation because it wouldn't work on the 512. If you would like a list of this material, perhaps to save yourself some money before acquiring or downloading it, drop us a line. To check whether software was hanging up, or it genuinely paused for a long time, we ran the discs with a Master 512 and Amstrad PC1512 sat next to each other. The Amstrad is, I am bound to say, considerably more compatible, but when you see the two running together — and the PC1512 is billed as a Turbo PC — you realise just how fast your little 512 system actually is.

For those of you who want to know, the Master system was a Master 128, internal 6502 Turbo, external (Acorn box) 512 board, homemade 20MB hard disc partitioned 10Mb to DOS, and 10Mb to ADFS, 5.25" and 3.5" drive pair (the 3.5" drive is B:), and medium resolution colour monitor (Philips CM8833). The Amstrad is an early PC1512, with unbranded 20Mb Winchester, 640k RAM upgrade, and colour monitor. The serial port was not tested, neither were any attempts made to use joysticks or light pens. Also, programs which blanked the screen or froze for more than about 30 seconds, after working correctly on the PC1512, were scrapped without further investigation.

Printers

A Star NL10 printer (Epson compatible) with IBM interface cartridge was used to test packages which print in this collection. The majority of Epson-compatible printers will work fine, although some programs expect an IBM-compatible one. This means that the extended character set (ASCII 128-255) is the same as that used on the IBM screen.

Peculiarities to note

There are two or three general areas that can cause problems when running any PC software on the Master 512. This is not the software that won't work — I am talking here about correctly running software, but you should note these points. This is a general list, and it doesn't necessarily mean that the programs supplied suffer from these problems.

1. A lot of software produces all its text output in a bold face, because the programmers have set the text colour as (bright) white. If an option is present to change the text colours, choosing ordinary white or grey may make text easier to read.

2. The vast majority of packages produce sound 'illegally', so everything will run silently on the 512. This is not normally a problem, as the PC can do"little more than beep anyway. Also, very little software correctly addresses the serial port, so if this is an option in packages it will not work — note the absence of communications software from this package.

One point about the silence is that some programs play a tune at certain points whilst displaying a static screen — children's programs and games are the usual offenders. This may leave you to believe that the program has crashed. Give it at least two minutes before coming to this conclusion.

3. Sometimes the packages require the use of the INS and DEL keys, cursors, PgUp and PgDn, and so on. Your 512 keyboard reference card gives the correct translations. Most packages treat keypad 7,9,1 and 2 as arrow keys, as well as 2,4,6 and 8 and the brown cursor keys. For example, you may want to move in a 45 degree line in an art package. The keypad keys can do this whereas the brown cursor keys obviously cannot. If the package suggests you press CTRL-BREAK, don't, press CTRL-C instead. On a PC, BREAK is a considerably less destructive action! Pressing CTRL-BREAK on the Master 512 kills DOS and you have to start again.

4. As no mouse driver outside GEM exists for the 512, the mouse will not operate with any of this software. Dabs are working on this problem, but, for the time being, you will have to forget your mouse.

5. As the screen is periodically copied across to the I/O processor (the 6502) screen memory, sometimes you will see the screen build up in chunks. This can be slightly disconcerting if a package does this continuously. Note also that a lot of software gets confused about where the machine cur or is supposed to be. There's little you can do about either of these.

6. Some programs run in the PC's 80 column text colour (or 'color' as they usually say!) mode. This is a mode which has 16 colours but no pixel graphics, a bit like Mode 7 on the BBC machine. Unfortunately, the Master can physically only support two colours in any 80 column mode, so the 512 emulation is mono only (pure black and white, not even greys) in this mode, making some programs produce white text on white text or similar unreadable results. You can usually solve this by telling the program you only have a mono screen.

Note that the bold face display on the standard 80-column text mode is meant to represent a colour change. Boldness as an attribute does not exist on the IBM PC text screen. The IBM uses the standard eight colours that you know from your BBC, and an 'intensity bit' generating 'bright' versions of the eight colours, making 16 altogether. If a 'bright colour' is used, the 512 displays it as bold.

7. Programs that use pixel graphics often ask what type of screen you have. On the Master 512, you can have a "MDA" text screen (but see 6. above), a 40-column and graphics 4 colour CGA mode, or an 80-column and graphics 2-colour CGA mode. You cannot have colour text mode, and you cannot have "EGA" (or for that matter VGA or PGC), as the host BBC/Master hardware cannot emulate them.

On the subject of screen modes, some programs exit to a 40 column screen. To return to the standard 80 column layout, type **PCSCREEN 2**, with, of course ,your **DOS** utility disc containing **PCSCREEN** present.

8. Some programs read the keyboard 'illegally' and don't recognise Master keys being pressed, and, infuriatingly, sit there waiting for input. Nothing can be done about these and much shareware has been omitted because of this.

9. Some programs provide no obvious method of exit, which is particularly irritating to floppy owners. Most programs either use CTRL-C, Q, X, ALT-Q, ALT-X (ALT is the COPY key), or the ESCAPE key.

10. As you probably know, ASCII code 96 on the BBC Micro is a £ sign, whereas it is ' (close single quote) on the PC. Some programs will therefore display 'THE TITLE£' when they mean 'THE TITLE'.

11. Some programs require that you press both SHIFT keys for a certain effect. The BBC Micro, unlike a PC, cannot tell the difference between the right and left SHIFT keys, so the effect would not happen. However, programs which do this often offer an alternative combination.

BBC Model B

The tests have not been made on a BBC Model B with adapter (Watford Co-Pro or Acorn Universal Second Processor unit), but the only real difference is the lack of a numeric keypad. This does, however, render some programs unusable, which is a pity. We have tried to bear this in mind when making our selection, but there is really very little one can do about it, as so many programs use INS, DEL, PgUp and PgDn. Also on the Dabs agenda is a keypatch which will produce the effect of a virtual keypad on the main keyboard on the BBC B, to allow BBC B users to generate these keypresses. Keep in touch regarding these.

Presentation and Organisation

The Master 512 Shareware Collection comprises five 800k (non-bootable Acorn format) discs, each containing a selection of software. The discs are not copy-protected and you are advised to make backups. If you want to use the software on IBM clones, you will first have to transfer the software to 360k format. To do this, format a disc to 360k (preferably on the other machine), and with that disc in Drive A: and the master in Drive B: just COPY the files across. Obviously the 360k disc will only take part of each 800k disc.

The software is grouped into categories for each disc, as you can see from the list below. Within each, if a program consists of a single file, with no further documentation, it is placed in a directory called MISC. If a program consists of two or more files it is placed in a directory of it's own. This is not the most accessible of methods, but it does at least make it easy to take off individual programs onto their own disc, and to work out which files belong to which programs.

As this is a shareware collection, our guarantee is limited to the promise that all the programs on the discs are as listed and the discs are readable with an 800k drive in the normal way. We have endeavoured to check that each program will run correctly on a standard Master 512 system (see above) without additional ROMs etc. However, our liability is limited to a refund of the purchase price, and no responsibility is accepted for the programs performing as described. Also, if you want technical support on using the programs, you will have to register with the authors as described.

We are planning to compile further collections of shareware discs. If you would like to know about them, drop us a line and tell us the kind of program you would like to see included.

The Programs

There now follows a list of the complete contents of the discs. Note that the better documented, and less troublesome the program is, the less is said here. Don't, therefore, take the documentation here as an indication of the quality of the program! On some of the discs you will find a program called LIST.COM. This can be used to read ASCII text files — you should type LIST <filename> and you will be able to scroll up and down the file, or print it out. Instructions for this program can be viewed by pressing '?' when it is running.

1. WORD PROCESSING

Mindreader

Dir: MINDREAD (all files)

This full-function word processor contains an amazing 'word anticipate' feature, which guesses the word you intend to use while you are typing. A box of suggested words appears, and you type a number or ';' corresponding to the word in the list. This is extremely useful if you have trouble finding keys on the keyboard. For touch typists the feature can be turned off. The program also has a spelling checker and many advanced word processing features.

Note that on the Master 512, the program pauses for about 20 seconds, both when starting, and when exiting to DOS. This is because it goes througn a vocal procedure which is silent on the 512.

SpellCheck

Dir: SPELL (all files)

This is a stand-alone spelling checker, which reads ASCII files, and reports spelling mistakes. When an error is spotted, the whole line is displayed so that you can see the context. To read the documentation TYPE SPELL.DOC. You can also spellcheck the .DOC file — there is a spelling mistake in it! Everything in this program seems to work fine on the Master 512. However, the text files are read from disc and will greatly speed up if you create a RAM drive.

Justify

Dir: JUSTIFY (all files)

This is a print utility that could not be contained on Disc 4, which will fully justify an ASCII text file to the printer. The justification actually includes inter-

letter spacing. Standard 80-column text mode should be used on the Master 512.

Fogfind

Dir: FOGFIND (all files)

This is a stand-alone style checker, a program which reports how 'readable' your text is. The program works normally in 80-column mode. Full instructions are in the file FOGFIND.DOC.

Word Processing for Kids

Dir: WPK (all files)

This lovely program is a simple text editor for young children, with just six commands in a pictorial interface. On-line help is available at any time by pressing f1. The program works in 40-column colour and can edit with very large characters as well. Type WPK to run the program, or TYPE WPK.DOC to read the instructions.

2. OTHER BUSINESS PROGRAMS

As Easy As ...

Dir: EASY (all files)

This is a 'clone' of the world-famous spreadsheet Lotus 1-2-3. It has graphics, macros, the lot! Any book on learning 1-2-3 should suffice as a tutorial for this program. Even the graphics work well on a Master 512 —run the CLOVER worksheet to see an interesting graph. There is some general information if you TYPE READ.ME, and registration information in ORDER.ME, but the program itself has full on-line help. There are lots of sample worksheets. To load one type /F, and select from the menu. The Master 512 supports the /Q quick CGA update option.

FloDraw

Dir: FLODRAW (all files)

This program allows you to design flowcharts and other graphic layouts on a large 16x16 screen sheet, (previewed in minature with f2), which can then be printed out graphically to the Epson printer. To see how FloDraw works, load the DEMO file. The easiest way to do this is to type FLODRAW DEMO. When you

have had a look at it, pressing ESCAPE then f6 will print the sheet out. A copious manual is provided under the name **FLODRAW.DOC** which can be printed out in the normal way. Note that the manual refers to some files which are not present on the disc and to obtain these, you will need to register.

This program works exceptionally smoothly on the Master 512, with no flickering at all.

3. GAMES

Bridge

Dir: BRIDGE (all files)

This is a full-function contract bridge playing game. To run it, type **BRIDGE** from the keyboard. You should answer **N** to the question 'CGA colour' as for some reason the program doesn't seem to work in CGA on the Master 512. You will therefore have to run in 80-column text mode. The READ.ME file provides full instructions on reading the documentation. An EGA version of the program is available, but this has been omitted as the Master 512 cannot support EGA.

Burger

Dir: BURGER (all files)

You have to catch the bits of the hamburger in order to win. Unfortunately, once again, the game was designed on a real PC, and with the lightning speed of the Master 512, it is almost impossible to beat the machine. To play the game, type **BURGER**. Instructions are given on screen. The PASCAL source code is included for a change under the name BURGER.PAS.

Checkers

Dir: CHECKERS (all files)

This is a full-colour board game, not draughts, but something much more interesting. To run the game, type **CHECKERS**. Instructions are built in and you can play a sample game. A READ.ME file gives registration details.

Entrap

Dir: ENTRAP File: ENT-BW.COM

This is a text Othello (also called Reversi) which is not exactly stunning to look at but plays a reasonable game. The squares are entered by typing co-ordinates. A quit option is provided. Documentation can be read by typing **TYPE ENTRAP.DOC**

PC Chess

Dir: PCCHESS (all files)

This is a nice colour chess game, with quite a few options, controlled from the function keys. F3 starts/stops autoplay. The first five key functions are shown at the bottom of the screen. F2 toggles the second five. The program flashes a lot and asks you quite a few questions before starting. Moves are entered in letter-number notation, ie A2A4 moves your rook's pawn two squares. (F8 shows the numbers).

To run type **PCCHESS**, to see the documentation type **COPY PCCHESS.PRT PRN**. Note that the documentation contains printer codes, which should be stripped out first if you intend to TYPE the file.

Sopwith

Dir: SOPWITH (all files)

Enjoy the thrills and spills of the old biplanes, as you loop the loop, dodge the mountains, and generally behave in a rather antisocial manner to the buildings below. To run the game, type **SOPWITH**, to read about it, **TYPE SOPWITH.DOC**. It is all in full colour, but a bit too fast as it was designed for slow PCs.

Wombat

Dir: WOMBAT (all files)

This is a big, interesting text adventure game. To run it type **WOMBAT**. The documentation file is WOMBAT.MAN. A short introduction is supplied by typing READ.ME. Note that the screen colours have been optimised for a Master 512, and may require some alteration for a true colour PC.

Monochrome Chess

Dir: MISC File: BWCHESS.EXE

This is a simpler chess game, although the graphics are nicer! After asking you which side you want (answer with a capital B or W) and play level, default CGA colours are used for the graphics screen, dependent on the use of the Master 512 COLOUR utility. To select a piece move the cursor keys and then press DELETE on the numeric pad. Then move the cursors again, and press INS (ie

keypad 0) to place the piece. The computer will then respond. You should then move the cursor again, press DELETE, and so on. CTRL-C aborts the game, and leaves the computer in 40 column mode. Typing PCSCREEN 2 (with your DOS master disc present) will return to 80 columns. There is no documentation file.

3-D Noughts and Crosses

Dir: MISC File: 3DTICTAC.EXE

This is a text-based version of the famous computer game 3-D Noughts and Crosses, or as the Americans say, Tic-Tac-Toe. Note that you must select the 'Black and White' option (which uses the default 40-column text colours, not necessarily black and white), otherwise the 'O's will be invisible. Typing * followed by successive RETURNs shows possible moves. The game is quite playable if not exactly state-of-the-art in presentation. Cursors (including PgUp and PgDn) and RETURN select your place on the board and ESCAPE gets you out. There is no documentation file.

4. PRINTER PROGRAMS

FX Edit

Dir: FX (all files)

This program is an editor to provide downloadable fonts for an Epson FX-80 printer or compatible. Note that to use this program, downloadable fonts must be enabled on the printer, by setting the appropriate dipswitch, which usually means losing the buffer space. To run the main program type FXMATRIX. To download one font (the .FXF files) type FX <fontname> without the .FXF extension. The full documentation is provided in the FXEDIT.DOC file.

Everything seems to work fine on the Master 512. Note that the program will hang if a printer is not connected.

FXPR4

Dir: FXPR4 (all files)

This short utility will send codes to the printer directly from DOS, ie, if you type FXPR4 EJECT RESET ELITE it will formfeed up to the next sheet, reset the printer, and put it in Elite mode. Full instructions are provided in the file FXPR4.DOC.

ImagePrint

Dir: IMAGEP (all files)

This is similar to LQ above, in that it takes a text file and prints it out in a high quality font. There are some differences, namely, that you only get one font unless you register, but the fonts are better, and there is even a 'typewriter' mode where you can just type straight into the computer and letter quality type appears on your printer. Also, you can insert codes to change character pitch etc.

To see a demo of all the fonts, type FONTDEMO. To run the program, type IMP80 <filename>. Short documentation is in the README file. A full manual running to 110k(!) can be viewed by TYPE MANUAL.DOC.

LQ

Dir: LQ (all files)

This program allows you to produce near letter quality output on your Epson-compatible printer. A large range of fonts and printer drivers are provided. To quickly test it out, just type LQDEMO. You can also produce your own characters with the EDCHAR program, and there is a banner printing program. Full instructions are provided on the text file on disc, and there is a short READ.ME file. It is not possible to activate LQ in the 'resident' mode (although it can be installed) on a Master 512. The full documentation is in a file called LQ.DOC.

Included with the program is another from the same author which runs a calendar system. The program is CAL.COM and the documentation is CAL.DOC. Note that you have to set up a notes file before you can run it.

Sidewriter

Dir: SIDEW (all files)

This program prints text files out sideways on an Epson-compatible printer. To run the program, type SWC <filename> (<filename> ...). If no filename is used, a startup screen asks for the name of the file to be printed. Note that the default printer setting is LST: — don't change this to LPT1:, as this seems to crash the Master 512. Also, the SAMPLE.WKS Lotus file doesn't seem to print out correctly, although plain text files are fine. The documentation is contained in SW.DOC. Note that there is also a mono version of the program (SWM), which does the same job, but surprisingly selects BBC screen mode 3 on the Master — one of the very few programs to do this.

Use the arrow keys to move the graphics cursor (in eight directions). To select commands from the top menu, use the cursor keys to highlight the command and press RETURN, or type the command's initial letter. Everything works well on the Master 512, although the lack of mouse support is irritating.

New Sweep

Dir: NSWP (all files)

New Sweep is a file handling utility, famous in its CP/M incarnation, and now implemented for DOS. Block renaming, deleting, moving, archiving and so on are all possible with the file tagging system. Full documentation is available in the file NSWP.DOC.

PC-Art

Dir: PC-ART (all files)

A nice four-colour CGA art program driven by function keys. There is no on-screen help, so it would be advisable to make a function keystrip. The application of each key is described in the documentation file PC-ART.DOC. A short file READ.ME explains what all the other files are for.

5. MISCELLANY

Casio

Dir: CASIO (all files)

This is an on-screen digital watch, which contains some rather useless features, toggled on and off by typing the first letter of each feature. Full documentation can be read with TYPE CASIO.DOC. To run the program type CASIO.

Finger Paint

Dir: FPAINT (all files)

This is an excellent monochrome 640x200 CGA drawing program, with many features controlled by function keys and ALT-function keys. These are shown as small icons on the left of the screen. To run the program, simply type F. There is no on-disc documentation provided, but program operation is fairly obvious.

To run the program, type WORLD. Documentation is contained in the file WORLD.DOC.

Visual System Information

Dir: MISC. Files: VSI.COM

A visual indication of the system configuration. Doesn't always get it right for the 512 but it is fairly close. Just type VSI.

What Am I?

Dir: MISC File: WHATAMI.COM

A program to give system information. Naturally, on the 512, it gives some pretty strange answers. Type WHATAMI

PC-Golf

Dir: MISC File: PC-GOLF.EXE

This is a golf game which uses text graphics, but is nevertheless quite realistic, offering a range of courses, and the usual choice of woods and irons. Note that when you score a eagle, birdie or bogey, the machine plays a tune, inaudible of course on the Master 512, but it means that nothing happens for about 30 seconds. The game can be continued when the message 'Strike any key...' appears at the bottom of the screen.

PC-Outline

Dir: PCOUTLIN (all files)

Another major program from the authors of MindReader, PC-Outline is an 'outline processor', a word processor which allows you to group ideas into 'levels'. The version supplied 1.08, is, unfortunately, not the latest version. We have tested the latest version 3.35 on the Master 512, and it will not boot up, giving a 'single step' error. Full documentation is given in the various README text files.

World Map

Dir: WORLDMAP (all files)

This interesting program displays a map of the world in several orientations. Areas can be selected by latitude and longitude, or by city name, and there is a pointer system to move around the globe and to zoom in on a particular area.