ADAM

The ADAM Forum

by Paul Pappas

Software Piracy—A Growing Problem

Stand by for a special announcement. ADAM owners (with rare exceptions) have been spared a plague more virulent than any virus—copy protection (an oxymoron if I ever heard one). By fooling the operating system in a variety of ways, it is possible to create a tape/disk which may be used to load a program, but cannot be copied with standard copy utilities. In other words, you can't make a back-up copy of your program. Every time you want to use the program you must use your original media. Should something happen to your original (and rest assured, it will)—POOF—good-bye program. Oh, it's easy enough to obtain a replacement. Just mix proof of purchase, damaged media, $5 plus postage, and six weeks of waiting. Nothing to it.

Due in large part to the feeding frenzy that occurred when Coleco abandoned the ADAM, the unauthorized duplication of copyrighted software is a serious problem in the ADAM community. If it does not stop soon, ADAM dealers will at best copy protect their wares, and at worst simply stop supporting ADAM. A consortium of ADAM dealers has already taken legal action against computer pirates, and research with an eye toward copy protection is taking place. Rest assured any additional cost will be passed on to the consumer (that's you and me, people).

The developers we all depend on only want their rightful due; adequate compensation for their efforts. Is that too much to ask? The answer may be more important than you think.

We now return to our regularly scheduled column, already in progress.

SwiftPRINT is not SmartKey driven. Instead, a crude pick-a-number interface is used. The feeble explanation given in the documentation states this system is better because, "There are no function keys to press driven menus in its last five graphic utilities because such menus are confusing and harder to use (?)."

Although the central feature of Swift-PRINT is printing, PowerPAINT offers more printing options than Swift-PRINT. SwiftPRINT offers only one (roughly 4"x4") print size, compared with the variable length and width options offered by PowerPAINT. Also, SwiftPRINT's maximum picture size is 1x2 cells (screens), compared with PowerPAINT's 4x2 cell maximum.

There are a few things SwiftPRINT can do that PowerPAINT cannot. SwiftPRINT not only reads six different graphic file formats, it also stores graphic images in any of the six formats. SwiftPRINT can vertically or horizontally flip a picture and shade black and white printing. The only important difference is the ability to print in color on an Okimate 20 printer. Normally I would rave about this ability, but the small print size greatly limits its use. Another drawback is the very slow speed at which color printing occurs. It appears the print head makes many more passes per line than necessary, wasting both time and expensive color printer ribbon.

I had high hopes for SwiftPAINT, but found it limited in scope and in need of an upgrade. This program does not meet the high standards set by previous DE releases. Unless you must have color printing on an Okimate 20, I suggest you wait for version 2.0.

SwiftPRINT

As promised last month, here is a brief review of SwiftPRINT ($15) from Digital Express [PO Box 37, Oak Hill, WV 25901, (304) 465-1341]. Swift-PRINT is a integrated graphics utility which provides two central functions, graphics printing and graphics file format interchange. Please see last month's column for additional information on the other integrated graphics utilities from DE.

Like PowerPAINT, SwiftPRINT requires at minimum a 64K RAM expander. Larger RAM expanders give you a RAM drive and the ability to enter text (note that PowerPAINT does not require the larger RAM expander to enter text). SwiftPRINT can use Smart-PAINT, PowerPAINT, PaintMASTER, GraphixPAINTER, BASIC HGR, and RLE graphics. In order to print graphics you need a Centronics (printer) interface and an IBM/Epson compatible dot-matrix or Okimate 20 printer.

The first thing you notice about SwiftPRINT is the menu structure. Unlike previous DE graphics utilities,

PC Pursuit

There are thousands of free BBSs across the country, covering almost every interest, including ADAM (just take a peek at the BBS listings in *Computer Shopper*). Making friends with fellow computer enthusiasts across the country is great fun, until the phone bill arrives. Even on pay services, which often cost less per hour than long-distance, extensive use has forced more than one computer user to sell his computer in order to pay the bill. Telecommunications may be addictive, but it need not be expensive.

Telenet's PC Pursuit Service is designed for computer users who need a cost-effective alternative to long-distance services for telecommunications. With a local call to the Telenet Public Data Network (available in nearly 18,000 cities), PC Pursuit allows computer users to access computer services in most major metropolitan areas across the country. A service is called "PC Pursuitable" if the system resides in an area served by the network.

For a flat fee of $25 per month you have unlimited access to the service

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(408) 297-5594] author of several Z-System utilities, is still supporting the system. Joe has written a new version of the Z-System called NZ-COM. Unlike the Z-System, NZ-COM does not require advanced knowledge of CP/M and Z-80 programming techniques. The user simply specifies which options are desired and installation takes place automatically. Call or write for additional information.

Not quite gone is Coleco Industries, the creator of the ADAM computer. Coleco recently filed for Chapter 11 protection from creditors. This action eliminates any speculation Coleco

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would reenter the home computer market. Such speculation was fueled by rumors Coleco had vast quantities of ADAM products (some never released) in storage. There rumors are given credence by reports several ADAM dealers are negotiating to purchase Coleco's entire remaining inventory of ADAM products. A more serious side effect of Coleco's action is Honeywell no longer repairs ADAM computers. Serious, but far from critical. Quality repair service has been available from several ADAM organizations for almost four years. There is no reason to believe such services will not be available in the future.

Son Of ColecoVision

Telegames USA [Box 901, Lancaster, TX 75146, (214) 227-7694] a major supplier of ColecoVision game cartridges and accessories, has released the Personal Arcade ($70), a ColecoVision compatible game unit. The main interest to ADAM owners is the possibility new games will be written for the system, games which may be played on both the ADAM and ColecoVision. There are even rumors of adapters which will allow Nintendo and SEGA game systems to use ColecoVision cartridges. Considering the quality graphics possible with ColecoVision, and the current resurgence of video games, the introduction of the Personal Arcade should prove to be of tremendous benefit to ADAM users.

Orphanware BBS

Most ADAM users are familiar with the wide variety of products offered by Orphanware [5665 Myers Road, Akron, OH 44319, (216) 882-4720] but many don't know about or have never called the OBBS. The OBBS is probably the most unusual ADAM BBS operating today. At last count the board used eight (thats right, eight) disk drives of various capacities, a 256K RAM expander, and an external serial interface with a 300/1200/2400 baud modem.

Besides the usual message bases and file upload/download areas, this BBS offers a few extras. Because Orphanware is a driving force in the ADAM market, many other ADAM dealers frequent this BBS. Whenever a circumstance of special importance to ADAM dealers arises, you are sure to find an active discussion. This provides an excellent opportunity for ADAM users to go one-on-one with ADAM dealers, especially "Big John" of Orphanware.

OBS products may be ordered via the BBS, and special sales available only on this board are usually in effect. I would suggest ordering Orphanware products through the BBS for two reasons; frequent specials and a more congenial (and direct) method of doing business.

The OBBS operates daily from 5 pm to 8 am at 216-882-4720 and is PC Pursuitable. Set your telecommunications software to Full Duplex, 8 Data Bits, 1 Stop Bit (plus Word Wrap On and Character Filter Off for ADAMLink).

New Newsletter And Free Gift

We have all seen ads which promise a free gift simply for inquiring about a particular product. Typically the so-called gift is something unique and exciting; like a five cent decal not worth the postage required to receive it. Well pardon me as I don my P.T. Barnum hat and tell you about an offer (almost) too good to be true.

ADAMZONE Publishing Company [17 Capstan Road, West Milford, NJ 07480-4816], associated with Eric Danz's ADAMzap Software Company, was scheduled to publish the premiere issue of "NetworkADAM NewsINFO Letter" in September. ADAMZONE will send the premiere issue to any ADAM user who sends them an SASE. No, the SASE is not for the newsletter. The newsletter will be sent separately. Instead, you will receive an ADAMzap catalog and a coupon for a free gift (okay, you pay $3 postage but the gift is free). Since ADAMZONE choose not to announce exactly what the gift is, I won't spoil an unexpected but pleasant surprise. Go ahead, splurge on a few stamps, you won't be disappointed.

Inexpensive Hand Controllers

Radio Shack has received another shipment of original equipment Coleco hand controllers. Unlike last years offering which was largely composed of used equipment, the current stock appears to be in excellent condition. Last time you could have any color you wanted, so long as it was black. This time white seems to be the color of choice. At a mere $3 each, its a good time to pick up a few replacement or back-up units. Don't delay, last years stock sold out very quickly and I doubt if any more will be offered.

Coming Attractions

As I prepare for my first vacation in three years, my thoughts drift farther and farther from my next column. But as always, I will attempt to bring you the interesting and unusual in the ADAM community.

I am always happy to hear from fellow ADAM Users. Contact me via US Mail in care of the Triangle ADAM Users, 2623-A Yanceyville St., Greensboro NC 27405-4407. Due to the volume of mail I receive, you must enclose an SASE if you want a reply. I may be reached by E-Mail on American People Link (PAPPASPM), Compuserve (72277,3303), or FIDO Net's ADAM Echo (151/2). ●