

Cinemaware for the Amiga

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# Commodore

## MAGAZINE

### KIDS ON KEYBOARDS

*Training for their Future*

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#### Software Reviews

Shanghai  
World Tour Golf  
Fleet Filer  
...and more

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#### Type-in Programs

for the C-64, C-128  
and Amiga



# Commodore MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 1987, Volume 8, Number 10



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## Inside Q-Link

Explore the inner workings of the Q-Link telecommunication service with network pro Bob Baker.

Back a few issues I gave a few hints on how to use E-Mail more effectively. Well, here's a few more little tidbits concerning E-Mail that may be of help.

First, whenever you enter the E-Mail menu to read waiting mail, it may help if you remember not to display any long messages from the message boards immediately before going to the E-Mail menu. The reason for this is that whenever you display a long message, there will be a group of flashing up-arrows in the lower right-hand corner of your screen. These arrows normally serve as a reminder that there is additional text beyond what is currently being displayed. However, this indication stays on the screen as long as the message is displayed. The arrows even stay on the screen when you press any of the function keys and bring up various menus.

The problem is that the arrows completely obscure the mail flag if you have mail waiting. However, by remembering not to leave a long message on your screen before entering the E-Mail menu, the arrows won't get in your way. Alternately, you can keep checking for waiting mail until the system informs you there is no more mail waiting.

On the other hand, leaving a particular message on your screen can sometimes be very handy. If you've read a certain message that you're interested in and want to respond via E-Mail to the author, you can usually leave the message on your screen while entering the E-Mail menu. The message text will still be on your screen, where you can refer to a limited portion for reference while writing your mail message.

Also, don't forget that until you actually delete a displayed E-Mail message by pressing F5, you can use the F7 menu option to answer that message any number of times. There's no need to remember the author's id and originate your own message; the system will take care of it for you as long as the message is still displayed.

The current E-Mail system does have various limitations, and could easily be enhanced in a number of ways. Even so,



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it's still an easy to use, effective communications media. I only wish E-mail used the same editor as used within the message boards—it would sure make life easier online. Hopefully, the next generation of Q-Link software will include enhancements in this area.

In the June issue, I discussed some of the Amiga support available on the system even though you couldn't log on with an Amiga yet. Well, SYSOP PJ provided some handy information concerning CP/M support for the 128 that is available on Q-link too—there are a number of CP/M download files available in various libraries created specifically for CP/M.

Since Q-link doesn't allow downloading CP/M files directly to a CP/M disk, you'll need to use one of the various Commodore-to-CP/M format translators that are available on Q-link. A large number of utilities are available in the CP/M libraries, but SYSOP PJ recommends using one of the following programs.

fix.cpm271.168 Uploaded by LERoseman  
 xlink2.1-128.lbr Uploaded by SYSHELP PJ  
 rdcbm21.lbr Uploaded by SYSOP PJ

All three of these programs require the use of one or two disk drives that must be either 1541's or 1571's. Any other drive will not work correctly with these programs. An 80-column monitor for your 128 is also required for these programs, since they only run in 80-column mode. Fix.cpm271.168 was one of the first translator programs designed to transfer files that were downloaded on a disk in 64 or 128 native modes. The files that are intended to be processed with this program should be downloaded in sequential format; program files are not handled properly. Also, two disk drives are highly recommended when using this particular

program.

The first step in using fix.cpm271.168 is to format a CP/M single-sided disk using the normal FORMAT.COM program that came with your 128 CP/M. Next, load fix in your drive 8 and place your formatted CP/M disk in drive 9. Then load

fix.cpm271.168 and follow the prompts. You'll be asked the name of the file to be transferred and the name you want it to be on the CP/M disk. After answering all the prompts, just hit RETURN and your file will begin to be transferred.

If all goes right, you'll see a series of dots going across the screen as your file is transferred. You should be aware, however, that there are a few drawbacks to using this program: it is very slow and is limited to transferring a total of 168K of data.

The second utility, xlink2.1-128.lbr, is a unique program by Miklos Garamszeghy that does a number of different things. It can convert from PetASCII, ASCII to PetASCII, program (with and without screen codes) to ASCII, 128 CP/M single- and double-sided to sequential, and the reverse, plus IBM PC DOS (9 sectors per track) to 128 CP/M.

After you download this file from Q-Link, the original files must be extracted using the Library v1.3 utility before they can be used.

As with the first utility, any files that are to be transferred to a CP/M disk must be in sequential format for this program to function properly.

When you load and run xlink, it presents you with a menu asking what you wish to transfer. After choosing the option to transfer sequential to CP/M, the program will prompt you when to change disks. It works quite fast with a 1571 drive, but it is limited to transferring files no larger than 45.5K (approximately 183 CBM blocks).

Finally, rdcbm21.lbr was written by Rob Tillotson of Turbo Penguin Software and is in the public domain along with all the programs mentioned here. Rdcbm is a transient CP/M program and must first be

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# A Powerful Wordprocessor for the Commodore 128®

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## Designing A Hit

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DK = # of defending knights  
DL = defender leadership rating  
RND = random number from 50 to 100

The leadership ratings are determined in other parts of the game, and are carried into the battle based on performance. The number of soldiers and knights depends on how large an army you've created for yourself, and how large the defending force is. Once a battle is joined, these two formulas are applied, repeating until one side has no men left, or it retreats. The minimum losses per battle step are 1. If the formulas return a value less than one the result is set to 1. Fractional results are ignored. You may retreat with your army at any point if you choose. The computer controlled army will stay until its losses exceed its belligerence rating, set at the beginning of the game. The results of every battle are stored and affect many of your ratings elsewhere in the game.

Remember this little exercise occurs every time you engage in a battle, and that's only a small part of the entire game. The game keeps track of hundreds of variables; your income, treasure, skill at swordplay and jousting, and an array of "hate" variables defining your relationship to the computer characters. There are algorithms that calculate the changing values of all these variables based on your actions during the game. A major part of game design revolves around "tweaking" the algorithms so that the game plays well. Play testing of beta versions helps to discover what aspects of the game need changing. By putting new values in an algorithm, a programmer can change the feel of the game, making it easier to rescue a kidnapped princess, or harder to unseat a knight during a joust.

*Defender of the Crown* is one of the most ambitious projects I've seen to date. In many ways it creates a very rich environment, an involving fantasy that removes you from the here and now and lets you take on a new personality, experience new sensations, and act out new roles. That's what entertainment is all about.

A lot of work goes into every computer game. Game design, art, music, programming; then of course there's the packaging, advertising, marketing and distribution, all the minor details it takes to get a finished product to you. The next time you sit down to play, take a moment to think about the work that went into the creation of the entertainment you're about to experience.

## Telecommunications/Inside Q-Link

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transferred to a CP/M disk using xlink or another suitable utility. Rdcbm also requires Nulu15.com and Uncr23.com (found in Crunch23.lbr) on the CP/M disk. So you'll have to transfer these as well.

Now you can boot CP/M as usual, then at the A) prompt type nulu15 rdcbm21 to run Nulu. When Nulu is loaded, enter -e \*.\* at the cursor to extract the files from within the rdcbm21.lbr file. When the extraction is finished, you can exit Nulu by typing -c to close the library, then -x to exit Nulu. Finally, at the A) prompt again, type in uncr23 \*.\* to uncrunch the files. When this is finished, you're ready to use rdcbm or examine the documentation file rdcbm.doc supplied with the program.

Rdcbm can transfer sequential or program CP/M files that have been downloaded to your formatted disk to CP/M. It can use one or two 1571 or 1541 drives, or a combination of the two. Rdcbm also can use a 1700 or 1750 RAM expansion as well. When you run Rdcbm, you have the option of assigning the source and destination disk drives. The defaults are to use drive A (device 8) for the CBM source disk and drive M (expansion RAM) for the

CP/M destination.

The size of the program you can transfer is only limited by the size of your disks or expansion RAM. If you use the expansion RAM, you must use PIP.COM or NEWSWEEP.COM to transfer the files from the expansion RAM to a previously formatted CP/M disk. If you use two disk drives, you can transfer directly to the CP/M disk.

What makes Rdcbm so nice is that it uses burst loads when used with a 1571 drive. The saves to disk, however, are still at normal speeds. When used with one of the RAM expansions and a 1571, SYSOP PJ indicates you have the next best thing to a direct download to a CP/M disk.

If you have any problems or questions concerning any of these programs, or CP/M in general, drop by the Computer Connection in CIN where you can enter your question on the CP/M message board. If it's something more urgent, you can reach SYSOP PJ via E-Mail for a direct response.

*Bob Baker is in charge of the New Products Information area on the Q-Link network. He can be reached on Q-Link via E-Mail addressed to RBAKER.*