GAMEMAKER 2

If you want to achieve arcade style quality in the characters and shapes you use in your Basic programs, with many colours in one image, varying sizes and fluid movement then you need GAMEMAKER 2. This superb programming aid lets you create Mode 2 images comprising all sixteen colours and varying in size from 2 x 2 pixels up to 16 x 24 pixels. No need to struggle with multiple VDU 23's and VDU 5 commands instead a truly marvellous designer program lets you easily and enjoyably create your images and a simple but powerful set of commands lets you print, move and animate them from your Basic program. In fact, all you need to bring your programs alive.

Designer

Many programming utilities are either pretty boring to use or very technical and therefore beyond most beginners. The designer program of GAMEMAKER 2 is neither of these, as well as its many facilities it is a pleasure to use in its own right. Along with imaginative use of colour and text windows there are prompt screens and the actual Mode 2 design screen is one of the best of its kind on the market. You can create up to 48 standard sized images of 8 x 8 pixels (less if you design larger images). Then you set each pixel in an image to any of the 16 colours available in Mode 2. You design on an enlarged grid of your image with a real sized version alongside so you can view the final effect. One of the many nice features is the ability to colour fill an image with the ZAP key, and another is the ability to view two separate images alternating on the screen so you can check the design of animated images (walking men etc.,).

GAMEMAKER 2 has many similar thoughtful facilities, for example the designer program allows you to build a library of images and image files. Each image can be given a short name for identification and when you select the file SAVE from the main menu you can choose your own file name. As previously created files can also be reloaded into the designer for modifications and additions this enables you to maintain a series of different image files.

Image Usage

At the start of any Basic program that is to use a particular image file you *RUN that file. This activates the GAMEMAKER 2 routines hidden in the file so that as well as your images you have available 11 new simple commands that you can use in your program and which control the printing, animation and movement of the images. This simple way to link into the control routines also ensures that the file is hidden below PAGE and that you also have another of the many facilities — a name prompt under the f1 key (function key 1). The library names used in the designer program are very good aide-memoires when using the images in programming.

The 11 new commands all have the format *GMt where *GM tells the operating system that this is a GAMEMAKER 2 command and t is a single letter identifying one of the eleven commands. For example: u = move the image 2 pixels up on the screen: r = move the image 2 pixels to the right: p = print the image on the screen. Collision testing and the alternation of images for animation are automatic and can be switched on/off by your program.

Compatibility

GAMEMAKER 2 was designed and written for a cassette based Acorn Electron system but the resultant image files run perfectly on a BBC Micro, therefore programs written using GAMEMAKER 2 are portable between systems. The designer program is equally compatible on both machines although you have to LOAD your image files slightly differently if the BBC Micro has ROM's fitted.

GAMEMAKER 2 has been designed to be as powerful as possible whilst still retaining ease of use and flexibility. You do not have to be an expert programmer to obtain superb results from this product but if you are you will still find new depths of possible usage within its facilities.

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