

Software Reviews

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REPLAY

Replay is a magical piece of equipment. Especially interesting for the specialist games player, it has certainly proved useful in reviewing (in its literal sense) all sorts of software, dumping screen (some for A&B) and also in aiding and abetting assaults on high-score tables everywhere.

Of course taking on games with a gadget is not very ethical but when you know that you can complete the first fifteen screens without losing a life...

Replay allows you to save a game (or other program) in its entirety to disc. Thus, when you recall the disc file, the software will run from the point at which you saved it! And that's not all. Replay consists of a ROM which has its own socket. This plugs into a spare sideways socket. It's wired up to a couple of points on the BBC board, a link and one of the legs of IC89.

The Replay menu offers choices to format a Replay disc, to create a file, to delete a file, to display a screen. An "empty" file has to be created ready to receive the contents of BBC memory. This is done a file at a time, one in operation on each disc surface at any one time. You can use up to four disc surfaces.

A Replay file is reloaded by choosing the appropriate letter A,B,C etc from the disc menu display. The number of files per disc varies with the capacity of the filing system. You can have six on your Acorn DFS 80 track drive for instance.

You can reload to continue a game where you left off or you can use the screen load option to dump a screen.

Replay can be summoned at any time by pressing a small switch connected by cable to the ROM. This interrupts whatever is going on on screen. The CAPS LK LED flashes. Hitting function keys 0 to 3 sends the whole memory to the disc surface of your choice. Function key 6 will proceed with the program.

Replay deals with most games. Only special screen formats can cause problems. Some of the more recent are recognised and

the correct data applied to the video controller. New games however won't be recognised and you may have to resort to the Edit option. This allows the easy editing of the registers of the video controller.

The manual does its best to explain but you'll need to go to an advanced guide on the 6854 to understand how to fiddle the registers to your needs. Barry Landsberg's article in A&B last autumn will tell you all you need to know.

As well as being great for pausing screens, saving them to go back to and dumping them, REPLAY is a useful tape to disc and disc to disc backup device. Programs saved in this way cannot be used on any other BBC system, even one with a Replay device installed.

Replay is a pretty marvellous device, more than a toy for those who have to document software, very useful if you can only buy a tape version of a program (it doesn't matter what nooks and crannies the code is packed into) and a good opportunity to have fun with the screens of your choice. A liberating piece of software and highly recommended. **AB**

Publisher Vine Micros (0304 812276)

Machine Price

**Model B
£35.00**

REPLAY must be matched to the DFS in use: the following versions are now available.

- R8271 - Acorn 8271, also
S/D Watford and Pace DFS.
 - R8272 - U.D.M. DFS
 - R8877 - Cumana QFS.
 - R1770 - Opus 3.45 DFS and Solidisk Issue 1.
 - R1770A - Acorn 1770 DFS and ADFS,
also Solidisk Issue 2.
 - R1770B+ - for BBC 'B+' only.
 - R1770C - Opus Challenger only.
 - R1770W - Watford DDFS only.
 - R2791 - Opus 3.15 only.
 - R2793 - Opus 3.35 only.
- (Acorn 'Master' in preparation.)

IMPORTANT

The REPLAY ROM must be installed into one of the computer's own ROM sockets, if a ROM board is present that does not allow use of the main board ROM sockets please contact VINE MICROS for further information.

VINE MICROS, MARSHBOROUGH,
NR. SANDWICH, KENT, CT13 OPG.
Tel 0304 812276.

REPLAY System by Vine Micros
(C) 1985 designed by R.P.D Mallett

Drive: 0 Tracks: 80 Sectors: 10

R A: FRAK
R B: CASTLE
R C: MUSH1
R D: MUSH2
W E: REPLAY
F:

Press appropriate letter to run a program, or number for a utility :-
1) create file 2) delete file
3) display screen 4) edit file
5) initialise disc 6) change drive
<SPACE> catalogue REPLAY disc
Option ?

CONTINUED OVER

THE MATRIX ROM

The MATRIX ROM is an essential tool for Science and Mathematics Departments in schools, for Science, Computing and Engineering Departments in Universities and Polytechnics, and for anyone who writes serious programs for industrial applications.

The MATRIX ROM provides a comprehensive range of commands for performing matrix operations (including inversion). One of the many commands will solve a set of linear simultaneous equations, and another deals with sets of banded symmetrical equations. In addition there are commands for deleting and redimensioning arrays (to re-use valuable memory space), for finding maximum and minimum values in any row or column, and for inputting, saving, loading and printing arrays. All commands are executed in machine code much more quickly than is possible in BASIC. Many lines of coding can be eliminated and much memory space can be saved.

These facilities transform the capability of the BBC Micro when dealing with tasks such as graphical transformations in two or three dimensions, or structural analysis, electrical circuits or vibration problems. In fact any problem where matrix operations or linear simultaneous equations are involved. The power of FORTRAN can now be combined with the simplicity of BASIC and the excellent graphics of the BBC micro.

Suitable for the BBC 'B', 'B+' and ELECTRON computers.

£36.00 (plus VAT), includes comprehensive Manual.

Quantity discount offered to Educational Establishments.

Further details available on request.

The MATRIX ROM was written with the co-operation of:

The Civil Engineering Department,
University of Southampton.