Acorn Technical Publications
Style Guide
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Issue 1 published by Acorn Computers Technical Publications Department.
Issue 2 published by Acorn Computers Technical Publications Department.
Issue 3 published by RISC OS Open Ltd.

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Published by RISC OS Open Ltd.

Issue 1, January 1992 (Acorn part number AKJ17).
Issue 2, August 1997 (Acorn part number 0472,501).
Issue 3, February 2018 (updates by RISC OS Open Ltd).
Contents

About this guide v

1 Writing style 1
   Informality 1
   Simplicity 3
   Some common errors 4
   Vocabulary conventions 7
   RISC OS desktop terminology 8
   Numbered sequences and bulleted lists 13

2 Spelling and punctuation 17
   Alternative spellings 17
   Full stops and commas 18
   Common spelling errors 18
   Writing numbers 19
   Apostrophes 19
   Word divisions and hyphens 21
   Punctuation 23

3 Typographical conventions 27
   Text appearing on the screen 27
   Return key 29
   Chapter and section titles 29
   References to books and chapters 29

4 Trademarks and terminology 31
   Trademarks 31
   Technical terms and abbreviations 33
5 The structure of a manual 37
   Outline 37
   Page numbering 37
   Preliminary pages 37
   Sample preliminary page 40
   Short forms of preliminary pages 41
   Safety information and warnings 42
   Contents page 42
   ‘About this guide’ 42
   Conventions used in this manual 42
   Bibliography 42
   Appendices 42
   End-user licence agreement 43
   Index 44

6 Preparing input text for documentation 47
   Newlines and formatting 47
   Paragraph tags 48
   An example 49

7 British and American English 51
   Introduction 51
   Attitudes 52
   Style and usage 52
   Vocabulary 53
   Grammar 53
   Spelling 55
   Punctuation 56

8 Proofreading symbols 57

9 Glossary 59

10 Index 65
About this guide

This guide was originally written for the use of Acorn's own Technical Publications Department, but it was subsequently found to be of interest not only to other parts of the company, but also to a wider audience outside Acorn. The original requirement for it persists, though, so we hope readers outside Acorn will forgive some rather arcane internal references in amongst items which may be of more general interest.

The Acorn Technical Publications Style Guide is oriented towards manuals, rather than brochures and other publicity material, which require a different style of writing, but it should be of help to anyone in the company who has a piece of extended writing to do.

The guide offers

- suggestions for appropriate writing style
- conventions for spelling, typography and terminology
- an outline of the structure of a typical manual and models for standard document components such as copyright messages
- guidelines for those producing text to be imported into technical publications systems
- a brief reference guide to differences between British and North American English
- a summary of frequently-used proof-readers' marks.

The Acorn Technical Publications Style Guide lays no claims to completeness. It will need both changing and enlarging as our policies are modified over time, when new products are introduced, and in response to comments and criticism.
1 Writing style

It is not within the scope of this guide to offer general advice on how to write manuals and other documentation. However, a few specific points are grouped below under the headings of Informality and Simplicity, followed by details of conventions for vocabulary to be used, rules for presenting lists, and a section warning of some frequently-made errors. For more general advice, see


Informality

Keep the individual user in mind as you write. This should lead you to use almost automatically an informal, person-to-person style. However, take care that a friendly style does not degenerate into false ‘matiness’ or a patronising tone; this can happen when writing for the novice, as in the following example:

You have now learned how to use both of the line drawing tools, wasn’t that easy?

Incidentally, this sentence is also wrongly punctuated: see the section on Incorrect commas in the chapter entitled Spelling and punctuation.

Concrete, familiar analogies can be helpful, like this example from a UNIX manual:

Security is impossible without passwords. In UNIX, a password is the key to otherwise locked doors.

Contracted forms

The conventions for written English include a few contracted forms that reflect the elisions we make all the time when speaking, even in quite formal contexts. The contractions most regularly used in writing are n’t instead of not, and forms of the verbs be, will, and have, as in the following examples:
Informality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full form</th>
<th>Contracted form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>let us</td>
<td>let’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do not</td>
<td>don’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we are</td>
<td>we’re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is/it has</td>
<td>it’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it will</td>
<td>it’ll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they have</td>
<td>they’ve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| it would  | it’d           |
| it would have | it’d’ve       |

These are ranked in order of acceptability in informal writing, from the most to the least acceptable. At the top, the full form *let us* is not normally used at all, and the contracted version (popular in Mac manuals) should be used instead. Those ‘below the line’ are normally only used in the representation of speech in fiction, so do not concern us as technical authors. In between, the examples represent quite a wide range of forms – for example, along with *it’s* and *he’s* and *she’s* – which can be used with restraint in manuals, especially those for the ‘naïve’ user, to help achieve an informal tone. *Don’t* is particularly suitable in imperatives where you are directly addressing the reader – ‘Don’t expose the computer to extremes of temperature’ – but less so elsewhere.

**Verbs vs nouns**

Where you have a choice, using a ‘verby’ rather than a ‘nouny’ style gives a more everyday, less formal effect. For example:

**Verby style**

This enables you to select an option.

Avoid using the computer in damp conditions.

**Nouny style**

This enables the selection of an option.

Avoid the use of the computer in damp conditions.

In examples like these, using a verb construction also allows you to involve readers more, since in many cases the verb will denote something they will be doing, and may also entail using ‘you’.

**Active vs passive**

Don’t use a passive form when an active form fits the context. For example:
Writing style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>instead of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Press a key.</td>
<td>A key should be pressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will see this menu.</td>
<td>This menu will be seen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender

Avoid referring to the user as he, provided you can do so without clumsy modes of expression. ‘Clumsy modes of expression’ include the use of he or she, he/she, etc. Using simply she/her, however justified from a consciousness-raising point of view, is too distracting. Rephrasing to avoid the problem is usually possible, and the plural form can often be used. For example,

Advise the user against servicing this product himself.

can be rephrased in the plural:

Advise users against servicing this product themselves.

If there is no alternative, stick to he/him, on the grounds that clarity is more important in Acorn manuals than social engineering.

Simplicity

Not everything can be simple: sometimes the technical author has to describe complex equipment or procedures. However, unnecessary verbosity should be avoided even in the most technical manual. For example, avoid ‘hedging’ expressions such as the following:

The distribution disc should contain the following files…

Well, either it does or it doesn’t. If we don’t know, should we be selling it? Similarly, the introduction to a recent manual begins:

This manual is designed to provide the information required to diagnose and repair faults on the FileStore E01 and E20 units.

This could open more briefly:

This manual provides the information…

A habit seems to have developed of opening sentences with ‘Note that …’. Often this can be dispensed with altogether, but if you feel it contributes something, ask yourself whether the sentence fits well into its context. ‘Note that …’ seems to be a slightly formal version of incidentally, which is used to indicate that the information it prefaces relates only weakly, if at all, to what it follows.
People are often tempted to use fancy-sounding expressions where plain ones will do. Often the fancy expressions start out meaning something slightly different, so that a distinction is eventually lost. For example, ‘on a daily basis’ does not mean the same as ‘daily’:

1. The figures were calculated on a daily basis.
2. The figures were calculated daily.

1 could mean the same as 2, but it could also mean that at the end of each week, the figures for each day were calculated. 2 can only mean that calculations were done on Monday, then on Tuesday, and so on.

Other examples include the use of majority (meaning more than half) instead of most (meaning almost all), in order to where just to will do, and the remainder instead of the rest.

This section includes only a few remarks on some particularly frequent slips. A good source of further information is Gower’s Complete Plain Words

Mis-attached subordinate phrases

These are best introduced with an example:

As a visitor to last year’s Desktop Publishing Show, I am sure you will be interested in attending this year’s event.

Since the ‘understood’ subject of the first, subordinate, part of the sentence should be the same as the explicit subject of the main, second, part, this example strictly means that I (the writer) was a visitor to last year’s show, whereas what is intended is no doubt that the reader was. It could be reworded as follows:

As a visitor to last year’s Desktop Publishing Show, you will, I am sure, be interested in attending this year’s event.

Another example:

Once set, you should keep the password secret.

The understood subject of set is the password, whereas the subject of the second part is you. A clearer way to write the sentence would be:

Once you have set the password, keep it secret.

Finally:

Weak from their long ordeal, the rescuers carried the survivors to the waiting ambulances.
This actually says that it was the rescuers who were weak, whereas, presumably, it was the survivors who were in this condition.

**Lack of subject–verb agreement**

This is particularly prone to happen where the subject of the sentence is complex; this may result in, for example, a plural word which forms part of the subject occurring immediately before the verb, making a plural verb look correct, whereas the subject noun phrase is in fact singular. For example:

Evaluation of both the method and its results are to start next week.

The fact that *results* (plural) comes before the main verb, *are*, probably accounts for the error. However, the subject of the sentence is *evaluation of both the method and its results*, which is singular. The verb should therefore be *is*. The following shows the same error, but the other way round:

The efficiency and thoroughness of the operation depends on skilful management.

Here, the verb should be *depend*, because the subject, *the efficiency and thoroughness of the operation*, is plural.

Corporate entities (for example, Acorn Computers Limited) are singular (inspite of the plural of *Computers*), so you should write:

Acorn Computers produces (not *produce*) the A3000.

**Fewer vs less**

*Less* can only be used with non-count nouns (and noun phrases) like *software, manufacturing capacity, furniture, information*. With count nouns/noun phrases, such as *program, factory, chair or fact, few or fewer* must be used. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fewer programs</td>
<td>less programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To tell whether a noun is count or not, try the following tests:

- Can it be used on its own, without an article or other determiner? If so, it is non-count. For example:
  
  She sells *furniture*.
  
  He publishes *software* for the Archimedes computer.

- If it can be used with the indefinite article a/an, it is a count noun (or noun phrase). For example:
  
  RISC OS is an *operating system*. 
Some common errors

- If it can be used in the plural, it is a count noun. For example:
  
  A herd of elephants

Many nouns fall into both categories, according to how they are being used. Brick, for example:

  The house is built of brick. (Non-count, therefore less brick)
  Four million bricks were used to build the house. (Plural, therefore count, therefore fewer bricks)

However, this does not mean you have a choice about using less/fewer. A noun phrase is always either count or non-count in a particular context.

Plurals of words of foreign origin

English uses many thousand words of foreign origin, most of which have been fully assimilated into the language and use regular forms for singular and plural. Some, however, are still used with the forms they have in their source language. This causes confusion, especially when the most commonly used form is the plural, since not everyone realises it is a plural. Sometimes the original form is used for one sense of the word and the English for another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>appendix</td>
<td>appendices (in books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appendixes</td>
<td>appendices (in the body, and US usage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>index</td>
<td>indexes (in books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indices</td>
<td>(mathematics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phenomenon</td>
<td>phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>criterion</td>
<td>criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>mediums (spiritualists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media</td>
<td>media (eg recording media, but see note below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formula</td>
<td>formulae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addendum</td>
<td>addenda (meaning ‘things requiring to be added’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memorandum</td>
<td>memorandums or memoranda (similarly, ‘things requiring to be remembered’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ephemeron (not used in English)</td>
<td>ephemera (meaning short-lived things such as handbills and bus tickets)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two forms cause problems:

- Media is often used to refer collectively to the press and broadcasting: the media.

  In this context it is a singular noun. However, our use of it is more likely to be in the plural sense (‘tape is one of several possible storage media’). In this context, its corresponding singular should be used when appropriate (‘tape is a storage medium’; ‘tape is a storage media’ is incorrect).
Writing style

- Data causes a lot of uncertainty. Historically it is a plural (singular datum), but is now generally used as a non-count noun and therefore grammatically singular. Piece of data or item of data can be used when necessary. We will follow this practice; though some people feel strongly that data should be a plural, this would require the use of datum, a form that is unfamiliar to many.

Mid-Atlanticisms

A later chapter deals with US and Canadian English, from the point of view of ‘translating’ manuals to suit the North American market. What concerns us here, however, is the incorrect use of US forms in documents intended for a UK readership. Many US forms are eventually absorbed into UK English, and become acceptable. However, some US forms occasionally used have not yet been absorbed, and their use in UK English only causes confusion. For example, don’t use the following words in the context of their US meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK meaning</th>
<th>US meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alternate</td>
<td>one then the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presently</td>
<td>shortly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocabulary conventions

The rest of this chapter deals with usages that are not matters of general correctness, but merely conventions that we have adopted for in-house usage.

- Use type when introducing something the reader should type, not enter. For example:
  To run the compiler, type
  *cc options filename

- Use press to describe what you do to a key, rather than hit, strike, or depress. In addition, refer to named keys by their name alone: for example, Escape, not the Escape key.

- Terms for brackets, etc, depend on the type of manual, but do not mix these two sets of terms:

  - **In Technical Manuals**
    - ( ) parentheses
    - { } braces
    - [ ] brackets
    - < > angle brackets

  - **In Welcome Guides, etc**
    - brackets, or round brackets
    - curly brackets
    - square brackets
    - angle brackets

- Refer to other parts of manuals by chapter or section names, but by page number only when using publishing software capable of automatic page number cross-referencing. This makes subsequent editing less accident-prone.
RISC OS desktop terminology

RISC IX

RISC IX (pronounced ‘RISC-IX’, like UNIX) is the name of Acorn’s version of the Berkeley 4.3 BSD UNIX operating system. Note the use of a lower-case ‘i’. The ‘i’ may be italicised in headings, but not in running text. The two parts of ‘RISC IX’ should be separated by a hard space so that they are not split over a line break or spread out too much in a justified line.

RISC OS desktop terminology

RISC OS (pronounced ‘RISC-Oh-Ess’) is short for ‘RISC Operating System’, and should always be written in capitals. The two parts of the term RISC OS should be separated by a hard space.

Mouse buttons

The mouse has three buttons:

![Mouse buttons diagram]
Writing style

The buttons have these names because of the actions they perform:

- Select is used to make an initial selection
- Adjust is used to toggle elements in and out of this selection and to add extra selections without cancelling the current ones
- Menu is used to call up a menu.

The mouse moves a pointer on the screen.

Mouse operations

These are the terms you should use for mouse operations:

- **Press** press a button down
- **Release** release a button
- **Click** press and release. You can use click as a shorthand for click Select, but state this at the beginning of the guide.
- **Double-click** press, release, then press and release again within one second, without moving the mouse. (Don’t stress the timing too much, in case you cause users to panic!)
- **Triple-click** double-click, then press and release again within one second, without moving the mouse.
- **Drag** press and move the mouse, or press for longer than 0.2 seconds
- **Choose** what you do to a menu option. You move to a sub-menu (see overleaf), and then choose an option from it.
- **Select** change an object’s state by clicking on it.

It is a common fault to confuse press and click, and to talk about selecting menu options.
Parts of a window

The icons around a window have the following names:

- Back icon
- Close icon
- Title bar
- Toggle size icon
- Slider
- Scroll bar
- Scroll arrow
- Adjust size icon

In running text use these names with initial capitals (with the exception of slider and scroll bar, which should be in lower case).

Other parts of the desktop

You must use the following terminology to refer to other parts of the desktop:

- A menu has menu options or menu items, some of which lead to submenus (no hyphen). You may shorten menu options to options and menu items to items, providing the context is clear.
  - In manuals, menu items and action icons (see below) such as Save should be in bold text.
  - A chosen menu option is shown highlighted (no need to say 'in inverse video').
- A window used for a dialogue with an application or the desktop is a dialogue box. These are discussed in detail below.
  - An error box is a special type of dialogue box that gives information to the user, and requires acknowledgement that it's been read.
- The bar at the foot of the screen is the icon bar.
- A menu that appears when you press Menu over an icon on the bar is an icon bar menu.
A window showing the contents of a directory is a directory display.

Dialogue boxes

A box where the user has to provide information to the program is called a dialogue box. There are three main types of dialogue box in RISC OS:

- Ordinary
- Detached
- Static.

Ordinary dialogue boxes

An ordinary dialogue box appears as a submenu, and functions in the same way – for example a Save dialogue box. It has at least one action icon (such as Save or Cancel - see below) but no Close icon. It is typically small, to make it easy to browse through the various submenus an application offers.

Detached dialogue boxes

A detached dialogue box also appears as a submenu, but suspends its parent application until it is filled in – for example large dialogue boxes in Acorn Desktop Publisher.

Static dialogue boxes

A static dialogue box remains when the menu disappears, but still allows you to use any application, including its own parent. There are two variations:

- A static pane dialogue box is attached to a particular window – for example Draw’s tools.
- A static non-pane dialogue box is not attached to a particular window – for example Paint’s tools. It might however be associated with a particular window – for example Paint’s colours.

Icons used in dialogue boxes

A number of different types of icons are commonly used within dialogue boxes. Note their correct names in RISC OS:

- Writable icons
- Option icons
- Radio icons
- Action icons
- Arrow icons.
Writable icons
A writable icon is a field, containing a caret, where the user can enter text. An example of this would be the writable icon in the Save menu.

Option icons
An option icon is a ‘switch’, and can either be on or off.

Radio icons
A radio icon is one of a group of ‘buttons’, only one of which may be selected at once (like the wave selection buttons on a radio).

Action icons
An action icon is the name for a ‘button’ on which users click in order to cause some event to occur – typically that for which they have just entered parameters in the dialogue box. An example is the OK button in a ‘Save as’ dialogue box.

Arrow icons
An arrow icon is used to increase or decrease a numeric value (such as when setting a Zoom value in Draw or Paint). It is sometimes used in conjunction with a slider (such as when setting a Palette entry).

Scrollable lists and pop-up menus
A scrollable list is the correct name for a window which shows several of the available choices in a window with one or (sometimes) two sets of scroll arrows, scroll bar and slider. These work in exactly the same way as a normal window.
A pop-up menu appears very similar to a writable icon, showing the currently selected choice. For example, this is how a pop-up menu for choosing a typeface might appear:

![Typeface Homerton](image)

It is distinguished from a writable icon by the right arrow, which is identical to that used to indicate that a menu item leads to a submenu.

### Numbered sequences and bulleted lists

Use numbers when you are presenting a sequence of things the user should do in the order given. For example:

1. Select the single-word paragraph ‘newsletters’.
2. Click on the style name **BULLET** in the browser.
3. Repeat the tagging process with as many of the other feature paragraphs as you like.

In this example, each item is a sentence in itself and therefore begins with an upper-case letter and ends with a full stop.

Use bulleted lists for lists of objects or processes that are not in any particular order. For example:

- The filing systems available on the BBC Master microcomputer are
  - the Cassette Filing System (CFS)
  - the ROM Filing System (RFS)
  - the Disc Filing System (DFS)
  - the Advanced Disc Filing System (ADFS).

For both numbered and bulleted lists, ensure that each item has the same format. Consider the following incorrect version of the bulleted list above:

- The filing systems available on the BBC Master microcomputer are:
  - the Cassette Filing System (CFS)
  - ROM Filing System (RFS)
  - the Disc Filing System (DFS)
  - ADFS (the Advanced Disc Filing System).
An apparent exception to this can be found under Complex List 2 on the next page; the requirement is, more strictly, that it should be possible to attach each item to the introducing phrase, thereby forming a grammatical sentence. To show that the example above is wrong, try joining any two items to the introduction like this:

The filing systems available on the BBC Master microcomputer are ROM Filing System and the Cassette Filing System (CFS).

If necessary, numbered lists may be nested under bulleted lists, and vice versa, but do not nest lists of the same type. Finally, do not use bulleted or numbered ‘lists’ when there is only one item in the list!

**Punctuation and case in bulleted lists**

The following conventions are based on those in J Price, *How to Write a Computer Manual*: refer to pages 255-6 for more examples. These should be taken as guidelines, you may need to adapt them for specific cases.

**Unbroken syntax— no colon; full stop ends list**

The filing systems list already mentioned is an example:

The filing systems available on the BBC Master microcomputer are

- the Cassette Filing System (CFS)
- the ROM Filing System (RFS)
- the Disc Filing System (DFS)
- the Advanced Disc Filing System (ADFS).

It is really just a single sentence, broken up to make the elements of the list clearer. Incidentally, do not use *and* between the last two items.

**Typical list— main clause followed by colon; no item punctuation**

Example:

Sprites have the following attributes:

- a name
- a definition mode
- a height
- a width

**Complex list 1— main clause followed by colon; item punctuation**

If any one of the items is a complete sentence, capitalise the first word of each item and end the item with a full stop.
The icon can take three forms:

- A pillar box indicates that the mail system is working.
- A pillar box with bulging sides indicates that there is mail waiting to be read.
- A pillar box containing a white question mark indicates that Mailman is unable to communicate with the network.

**Complex list 2 — no colon; item punctuation**

A complex sentence broken down into a list. Each item should end with a semicolon, except the final item, which should end with a full stop.

This option gives information about the file you are working on, including:

- whether it has been modified since you last saved it;
- what type of file it is;
- its name, including the full directory pathname.
Numbered sequences and bulleted lists
2 Spelling and punctuation

Alternative spellings

There are more alternatives allowed in English spelling than most people realise (even discounting US variants). It is important that usage is consistent throughout our publications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>instead of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ise</td>
<td>-ize (organise, modernise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledgement</td>
<td>acknowledgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buses</td>
<td>busses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caching</td>
<td>caching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>centring</td>
<td>centering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connexion</td>
<td>connexion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coordinate</td>
<td>co-ordinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disc</td>
<td>disk (except in UNIX and PC Emulator manuals, where conformity to US practice may demand <em>disk</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>despatch</td>
<td>dispatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focussed</td>
<td>focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issuing</td>
<td>issueing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judgement</td>
<td>judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>licence (noun)</td>
<td>license (unless passing on a US license verbatim)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program</td>
<td>programme (for a computer program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programme</td>
<td>program (for any other sort)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writable</td>
<td>writeable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some nouns end alternatively in -er or -or. Use the following:
- adapter
- connector
- converter
- generator
- inverter
- multiplexer
- oscillator
- processor

**Full stops and commas**

Don’t use a full stop within or after most abbreviations and contractions. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>instead of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Mr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exceptions, however, are *i.e.* and *e.g.*, as they are otherwise difficult to pick up in running text. Also, *etc.* should be followed by a full stop.

As a rule, however, avoid using abbreviations such as *e.g.*, *etc.* and *i.e.* at all; use *for example* ... and other rewordings, as appropriate.

In names and addresses, keep the use of commas to a minimum. For example:

- Acorn Computers Limited
- Cambridge Technopark
- 645 Newmarket Road
- Cambridge CB5 8PD

**Common spelling errors**

The following words are often misspelt; these are the correct spellings:
- accommodation
- principal (the principal reason)
- loose (loose collar)
- relevant
- separate
- supplement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wrong</th>
<th>Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>occurred/occurrence</td>
<td>occurred/occurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principle (principles of operation)</td>
<td>principle (principles of operation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lose (lose a game)</td>
<td>lose (lose a game)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recommend</td>
<td>recommend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supersede</td>
<td>targeted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are sometimes differences in spelling between the noun and verb forms of the same words, even though they are pronounced the same. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>practice</td>
<td>practise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>licence</td>
<td>license</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take note of the following minefield:

(in)dependent (adjective: an independent inquiry)
dependant (noun: she has two dependants)

**Writing numbers**

Spell out single digit numbers, except where:
- A unit of measurement follows. So: ‘the computer has two disc drives’, but ‘it has 4MB of RAM’. There is no space between the digit and the unit of measurement in the last example.
- The number is the ‘name’ of a disc drive or similar object. So: ‘Insert the disc into drive 4.’

**Apostrophes**

The apostrophe has two uses in English:
- in possessives
- to indicate certain ‘missing’ letters in informal writing style.

It is **not** used in plurals, even in abbreviations or dates written as numerals – RAMs, 1980s – with the occasional exception of abbreviations and unusual usages ending in a lower case letter. For example, you might prefer to write

- dotting your i’s and crossing your t’s
- since
dotting your is and crossing your ts
looks rather odd and is hard to process.

**Apostrophes in possessives**

The rules are as follows:
- singular nouns: add ‘s: ‘The heart of the microcomputer’s software is the operating system’.
Apostrophes

- Singular nouns and proper names ending in s. as above, provided the last syllable of the name is not pronounced iz: 'the campus's designer', 'Charles's book', but 'John Bridges' proposal'.
- Plural nouns ending in s. add an apostrophe after the s. 'Different manufacturers' plugs are not interchangeable'. This also applies to foreign word plurals like 'bureaux'.
- Plural nouns not ending in an s. add 's. 'The children's toys'.

The possessive form of pronouns, unlike that of nouns, does not have an apostrophe before the s. In particular, remember that its does not have one when it is a possessive:

- The cell has a very high energy level for its size.
- Each mode has its own characteristics.

Similarly, the forms his, hers, and yours never have an apostrophe.

Apostrophes marking 'missing' letters

Examples of these appear in the section entitled Contracted forms. There are two main sources of confusion:

- The forms it's/its. The contracted form of it is or it has an apostrophe, but the possessive does not. For example:
  - It's easy to see what effect this will have.
  - Its effect is unpredictable.

- The forms who's/whose. The contraction (of who is or who has) has an apostrophe. The possessive determiner or relative pronoun has no apostrophe, but does have a final e:
  - Who's been eating my porridge?
  - Everyone knows whose porridge it is.
  - Whose porridge is it?

Apart from these cases, watch out for other homophones (pairs or groups of words that sound the same but have different meanings, and are accordingly spelt differently):

- You're/your
- There/they're/their

Finally, there is no apostrophe in the word does!
Spelling and punctuation

Word divisions and hyphens

Sometimes it is not obvious whether to write something as two words, a single word, or a hyphenated word.

Verb + adverb

Examples include set up, log in, back up. These are written as two words when used as verbs, but with a hyphen when used as nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your workstation has been set up</td>
<td>This depends on the set-up you are using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correctly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log in to the network.</td>
<td>At the log-in prompt, type …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look up the filenames.</td>
<td>Use the normal look-up procedure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(You log in to a network, you do not log into it.)

Preposition(s) + noun

Examples include on line, out of date. They are written as two words when part of the predicate of the sentence (ie after the verb), but are hyphenated when used as attributive adjectives (before a noun).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicative</th>
<th>Attributive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The process is on line.</td>
<td>an on-line process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your version is out of date.</td>
<td>an out-of-date version</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other phrases used adjectivally

The same principle applies here: separate words when predicative, hyphenated when used adjectivally.

| The desktop is easy to use. | an easy-to-use program          |

Modifier + noun/verb

A hyphen is sometimes used to join modifiers and nouns or verbs, especially when the resulting phrase is used adjectivally.

| Type all commands in lower case. | Use lower-case letters.           |
| Her behaviour displayed common sense.| A common-sense approach.       |
| The monitor displays an image in high resolution. | A high-resolution monitor. |
| A word processor                   | A word-processed document       |
The treatment of left hand and right hand is similar, except that instead of being hyphenated when used attributively, they are written as a single word:

Take the plug in your left hand. Press the lefthand button.

On occasions, a hyphen can be useful to distinguish meanings. Compare the following:

The screen displays four colour modes. The screen displays four-colour modes.

Finally, a hyphen can be used to join a modifier to a verb when the modifier belongs to a grammatical category not typically used to modify verbs. Flood, in the following example, could be regarded either as a noun or a verb, neither of which typically modifies another verb:

Flood-fill the circle with a solid colour.

Here, the hyphen makes the sentence easier to understand, since without the sequence flood + fill does not obviously form a unit until you get to the end of the sentence. Without the hyphen, the reader tries to interpret flood as an imperative verb on its own, and then doesn’t know what to do with fill.

The chapter British and American English lists some differences in the use of hyphens in the two varieties of the language.

Words with prefixes

Usually, there should be no hyphen between the prefix and the stem: rearrange, predate, subdirectory. The only exceptions are cases where

● the stem has to have an initial capital, such as pre-Christmas, un-American.

● the prefix is rather long and relatively rarely used, e.g. pseudo-filing system, self-formatting disc, anti-clockwise, multi-purpose.

● the combination of prefix and stem is not in general use but has been coined for the occasion. An example is mis-attached, used in a heading in the previous chapter.

● a distinction has to be made between, for example, recover (get better) and re-cover (cover again).

● a clash of vowel letters would otherwise occur, e.g. re-emphasis, pre-eminent. However, use coordinate and cooperate without a hyphen.
Technical terms written as a single word

It has become conventional to write many two-word or hyphenated technical terms as single words. These include:

- backplane
- coprocessor
- database
- filename
- keyword
- linefeed
- multitasking
- pathname

The following expressions should be written as two words:

- file server
- word processor
- bit map

Punctuation

This section does not attempt complete coverage of punctuation, which is too large a subject. General rules can be applied, such as those in Gowers’ *Complete Plain Words*. However, there seems to be a lot of uncertainty in the use of some punctuation marks, especially commas. In addition, usage varies in a few areas, and the last parts of this chapter set out some conventions.

Some notes on punctuation differences in US English are given in the chapter *British and American English*.

Incorrect commas

The most frequent punctuation error is the use of a comma where there should be a full stop, colon or semi-colon. The following sentences display this:

The new modules described in this document handle the % character, it is therefore not necessary to include ArthurLib in the Run$Path once they have been installed.

A comma cannot be used to link two clauses in this way. There are several solutions:

- Use a full stop or semi-colon instead.
- Start the whole sentence with *Since*, and delete *therefore*. 
Your user id is the name with which you identify yourself to the computer, this
name is usually assigned by the System Administrator.

Again, a comma cannot link two clauses. Solutions: use a full stop or semi-colon.
The only circumstance in which a comma can validly occur between two clauses is
a sentence in which the constituent clauses form a list. The structure will then be
Sentence A, Sentence B, and Sentence C. For example:

Daddy Bear sat in the big chair, Mummy Bear sat in the middle chair, and Baby
Bear sat in the smallest chair.

Another example of incorrect use of the comma:

The data is stored in two bytes, the first byte contains the day of the month in
bits 0 to 4.

Here, the second clause elaborates on the information given in the first. A
semi-colon could be used instead of the comma, or the first of which could be
substituted for the first byte. Either solution expresses the link between the two
clauses.

You should be careful how you use however in this context, too:

You can experiment with fonts, colours, line spacing and margins, however, the
features you select do not form part of the text when you save it.

With commas on either side of however it is not clear whether however is attached to
the clause it follows or the clause it precedes. In this instance, there should be a
full stop before however and a comma after it.

The only time you can put commas either side of however is when it is removed
from the beginning of its sentence and embedded into it:

You can experiment with fonts, colours, line spacing and margins. The features
you select do not, however, form part of the text when you save it.

Comma vs nothing

Occasionally, inserting or leaving out a comma can entirely change the meaning of
a sentence. Consider the following two pairs:

I shall wear no clothes to distinguish myself from other men.
I shall wear no clothes, to distinguish myself from other men.

Mrs Jones is trying to make my life hell so I give in my notice.
Mrs Jones is trying to make my life hell, so I give in my notice.
The second case is based on an employee’s letter to a supervisor. If the comma had been left out, it would have meant only that Mrs Jones’ intention was that she should resign. With the comma, it means that she is resigning as a result of Mrs Jones’ actions, whether or not that was Mrs Jones’ intention. As it was, she put in the comma, and it resulted in the loss of her job, as it was taken to indicate resignation.

**En-dashes**

En-dashes are longer than hyphens and should normally be used in pairs – like this – and not singly. A pair of en-dashes has the same function as a pair of parentheses. If you feel moved to use a single dash, consider whether a more meaningful punctuation mark such as a colon might not be better.

**Quotation marks**

Don’t use the ‘straight’ quotation marks “ in running text: use distinct single opening and closing quotation marks, ’ . However, for program listings, the fixed-pitch” should be used, since it appears on the screen.

**Full stops and parentheses**

If a complete sentence is used inside parentheses, its full stop should be inside the closing parenthesis. (This sentence is an example of the preceding rule.) On the other hand, if the contents of the parentheses, though at the end of a sentence, are just a phrase within it, the full stop comes after the closing parenthesis (like this example). There should be no spaces between the parentheses and the text they enclose.

**Spaces after punctuation marks**

Use a single space after commas, colons, semi-colons and full stops. Two spaces after a full stop (a common convention) often produces bad spacing effects in justified text.
3 Typographical conventions

Text appearing on the screen

This section deals only with how the range of fonts selected for an Acorn manual is actually deployed: when to use italics or a fixed-width font, for example. It does not specify fonts for any particular manual. This description therefore works on the assumption that

- the main text is in a proportionally-spaced font (such as Trinity);
- the fixed-width font is Courier.

Text

Normal text (body copy) uses the proportionally-spaced font.

Where to use bold text

Text should be emboldened in the following circumstances:

- For emphasis.
  
  **Never** leave a floppy disc on a radiator

- For menu options.
  
  Click on **Delete**

Where to use italic text

Use italic text for

- indicating that a particular term appears in the Glossary. Only use italics the first time it appears.
  
  Connect a *high-resolution monochrome* monitor to the computer...

- cross references to other parts of the manual, and to other publications.
  
  See **Configuration commands** in the **User Guide**.

- annotations of program listings
  
  `SYS"Wimp_Initialise"` *Tell the Wimp about the task*

- Figure annotations:

  **Figure 3.1** Connecting a *high-resolution monochrome* monitor
Fixed-width font

Where to use Courier Roman

- In program examples and listings.
  
  ```
  PRINT "PLEASE INPUT THE TIME"
  ```

- Where you are asking the user to type in something:
  
  ```
  To load from a file, type:
  void load_file(void)
  ```

  In UNIX manuals, however, it is the custom to use Courier Bold for text to be typed in, and text displayed by the computer is shown in Courier Roman.

  In interactive sessions, where the computer is asking questions and the user is supplying the answers, and you want to show this interaction on the page, the UNIX model should be followed in all manuals:

  ```
  rm -i syn*  
  rm: remove synopsis-final? y 
  ```

  - Where you are showing what the computer displays:
    
    ```
    Bytes free &0033FE00 = 3407360
    ```

    See the previous note about interactive sessions.

- In the body of the text – for pathnames, and for the names of commands in UNIX and languages such as C, where commands can be all lower-case RISC OS commands are usually written with an initial capital, and so stand out from the body of the text without a font change.

Where to use Courier Bold

Only use Courier Bold in interactive sessions, to show the text the user types in response to a prompt by the computer, which is shown in Courier Roman.

Courier Italic

Use Courier Italic to indicate a variable, which the user has to provide to suit the occasion:

``` *copy source_directory.filename destination_directory ```

Use Bold Italic for variables in cases where Bold Roman is being used for non-variables.
Referring to Courier text
When you refer in the body of the text of a manual to text just displayed in a Courier font, use the same font for consistency:

The format of the Link command is:

```
Link -output file [options] files
```

The `files` argument is a list of input files; this is described below.

- `output` is the only compulsory keyword.

Return key
For Welcome Guides, it may be appropriate to indicate explicitly that the user has to press Return at the end of lines; beginners do not always work this out for themselves. Include the `↵` character at the end of the line to be typed:

```
*BASIC↵
```

Chapter and section titles
Chapter and section titles should have an initial upper-case letter for the first word only (except, of course, where the name of something normally capitalised forms part of the title, as in `Starting Acorn Desktop Publisher`).

References to books and chapters
Use italics for references to titles of other Acorn manuals, other chapters in the current manual and other sections in the same chapter:

- Turn to the `Archimedes User Guide` for full details.
- The chapter entitled `Using the debugger` describes these features.
- The section entitled `The Imports menu` describes this in detail.

However, references to the current manual itself should not be in italics, since you will not be using its complete title:

- Full details are given later in this guide.

The next two sections describe the typographic conventions to be used for full bibliographical listings. These are suitable in, for example, software manuals of the more technical kind, where reference may need to be made to textbooks, industry standards, or useful further reading.
References to books and chapters

Books

<Title> / <author[,another author*]> – <edition if not first>. – <place of publication>: <publisher>, <year of publication>.

* If more than three, use the first-named, followed by ‘... [et al]’.

Example:


Papers published in books

<Title of paper> / <author[,another author]> in <Title of Book>. – <edition if not first>. – <place of publication>: <publisher>, <year of publication>.

Example:

Natural language interfaces / A W Smith, E Harding in Readings in natural language processing – Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982

Papers published in journals

<Title of paper> / <author[,another author]> in <Title of Journal> <volume>(<number>), <year>. – <pages>.

Example:

This chapter covers conventions for the use of trademarks and technical terminology, and lists trademarks currently claimed by or belonging to Acorn and other companies.

Trademarks

Trademarks are valuable commercial property, helping a company to protect its successful products against inferior copies and ensuring, for example, that money spent on advertising its own products does not merely promote all products of a similar type. For the company to be able to claim, if challenged, that an expression – a word or phrase such as Archimedes or Econet – is one of its trademarks, it must show that the expression is not normally used as a generic expression, that is, to refer to any one of a whole class of objects of the same type. For example, it would not be plausible to claim that the word microcomputer belonged to a particular company and was one of its trademarks, since it is very evidently in everyday use to refer to lots of different products from hundreds of manufacturers. On the other hand, Acorn is one of our trademarks, for although the word acorn has an established meaning, referring to the fruit of the oak tree, its use – with an initial capital – to denote a microcomputer was something new and unique to this company.

Using trademarks in text

It is open to any of our competitors, or to any Tom, Dick or Harry who wants to set up an exhibition called the Archimedes Show, to argue that expressions we want to preserve as trademarks are, in fact, generics. The most telling point they could make in such an argument would not be merely that someone, somewhere, uses Archimedes as a generic term, but that we at Acorn have done so. It is therefore especially important that we use trademarks carefully.

There are two ways of ensuring that we do not use our own trademarks as generic terms. One is to use initial capitals for all the words that comprise them (with the exception of prepositions that occur in the middle of the expression). An example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acorn Desktop Publisher</td>
<td>Acorn desktop publisher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, when referred to on the copyright page at the front of manuals, Acorn trademarks should be all in capital letters, viz ACORN, ARCHIMEDES.

The second way of making it clear that our trademarks are not generic terms is to use them as modifiers of generics. What this means is that instead of saying, for example, ‘an Archimedes’, we should say ‘an Archimedes computer’, and instead of ‘an Econet’, ‘an Econet network’. In these expressions, ‘computer’ and ‘network’ are the generic terms, describing a large class of products a subset of which is then identified by the use of the trademark as a modifier. The expression as a whole then denotes a particular computer or network.

**Acorn trademarks**

Acorn's legal department has provided the following list of the principal names that Acorn currently claims as trademarks in the United Kingdom (note the use of mid-word capitals in some of these).

| Acorn Termulator | Acornsoft View | Acorn Desktop Publisher ViewIndex | Archimedes ViewSheet | Arthur ViewSpell | Econet ViewStore | OverView Zarch |

The Acorn Computer device or logo and the Master device or logo are also trademarks of Acorn Computers Limited.

**Other manufacturers' trademarks**

When a trademark is used in a manual, it should appear in the list of acknowledgements in the preliminary pages. A list of common trademarks appears below, which are to the best of our knowledge correct at the time of publication. This list cannot be comprehensive: you remain responsible for checking all references to other companies' products in what you are writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trademark</th>
<th>Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AutoSketch</td>
<td>Autodesk Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centronics</td>
<td>Centronics Data Computer Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domesday</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epson</td>
<td>Epson Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethernet</td>
<td>Xerox Corporation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trademarks and terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trademark</th>
<th>Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FrameMaker</td>
<td>Frame Technology Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEM</td>
<td>Digital Research Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>International Business Machines Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrex</td>
<td>Integrex Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterSheet</td>
<td>Computer Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaserJet</td>
<td>Hewlett-Packard Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaserWriter</td>
<td>Apple Computer Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MicroText</td>
<td>National Physical Laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS-DOS</td>
<td>Microsoft Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multisync</td>
<td>NEC Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEC</td>
<td>NEC Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NeWS</td>
<td>Sun Microsystems Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PostScript</td>
<td>Adobe Systems Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestel</td>
<td>British Telecommunications plc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimbus</td>
<td>Research Machines Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Sun Microsystems Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SupaStore</td>
<td>Council for Educational Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIX</td>
<td>AT&amp;T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAX</td>
<td>Digital Equipment Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenix</td>
<td>Microsoft Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Window System</td>
<td>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Pages</td>
<td>British Telecommunications plc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Word Plus</td>
<td>GST Holdings Limited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generic names

The following names are generic terms, not trademarks, though they are sometimes claimed as such. They should therefore not be acknowledged.

CP/M  NFS  Reduce  Viewdata  Winchester  Z80

Most names for high level languages are also generics.

Technical terms and abbreviations

Units of measurement

The following list includes units laid down by the Système Internationale d’Unités (SI). Note especially the case used.

A  ampere  electric current
b  bit  binary digit
B  byte  storage (used only in combination with prefixes k
Technical terms and abbreviations

M and G – kB MB GB
F farad electrical capacitance
g gram mass
H henry magnetic inductance
Hz hertz frequency
MIPS million instructions per second
m metre length
s second time
V volt potential difference/electromotive force
W watt electric current
° degree temperature
Ω ohm electrical resistance/reactance/impedance

Unit prefixes
T tera- million million (2^40 used with computing storage)
G giga- thousand million (2^30 in computing)
M mega- million (2^20 in computing)
k kilo- thousand (2^10 in computing)
c centi- hundred (c or centi is not approved by SI, and should be avoided in a technical manual. However, it is in everyday use in the form centimetre; this is therefore acceptable in many contexts.)
m milli- thousandth
μ micro- millionth
n nano- thousand millionth
p pico- million millionth

Combining units and prefixes
μs microsecond
Mb megabit
MB megabyte
km, kB kilometre, kilobyte
THz terahertz

Notational system for circuit diagrams
Circuit diagrams and their accompanying text use a notational system for component values that is designed to avoid the use of unusual characters and the decimal point.
Ohms
For values less than 1000 ohms, use R (= Resistor) in place of the decimal point.
For values above 1000 ohms, use K or M (the multiplier) in place of the decimal point. For example:

0R1 = 0.1 ohms
150R = 150 ohms
1K5 = 1,500 ohms
15K = 15,000 ohms
1M5 = 1,500,000 ohms

Farads, henrys, amps and volts
As for ohms, use the multiplier in place of the decimal point. Typical multipliers for these units run from m to p as in the list above. The suffix letter indicates the unit. For example:

100pF = 100 picofarad
0μ33H = 33 microhenrys
17mV = 17 millivolts

The suffix letter may be omitted if it is clear from the value and the context what the unit is.

Other terms and abbreviations
Note the use of upper and lower case in these terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard abbrev.</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>alternating current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADFS (not ‘the ADFS’)</td>
<td>Advanced Disc Filing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>direct current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f0</td>
<td>function key 0 on a Master microcomputer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F0</td>
<td>function key 0 on an Archimedes or A3000 computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/O</td>
<td>input and/or output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift-F1</td>
<td>holding down one key while pressing another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISC iX</td>
<td>the operating system (note that the lower-case i does not need to be italic in running text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISC OS</td>
<td>the operating system (use hard space between C and O)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIX</td>
<td>the operating system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 The structure of a manual

Outline

Most Acorn manuals now consist of the following sequence of components:

1. preliminary pages (copyright notice, disclaimers, safety warnings)
2. contents pages
3. ‘About this guide’
4. main text of the manual itself
5. appendices
6. End-user licence agreement
7. index
8. Reader’s Comment Form.

A two-volume manual should have the complete contents and index, i.e. for both halves, in each half.

Page numbering

- Items 1 – 3 in the list above are numbered in a single sequence of lower-case Roman numerals, starting at ii.
- 4 – 7 are numbered in Arabic numerals, starting at 1.
- All righthand pages have odd numbers, all lefthand pages, even numbers.
- Each of the above sections, as well as each chapter and each appendix, starts on a new righthand page.

Preliminary pages

The appropriate selection should be made from the following components, and used in the order given. Items in italics are variables, and the relevant value should be inserted. Items in square brackets should be included or omitted as appropriate.
Copyright message

Copyright © Acorn Computers Limited year
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Neither the whole nor any part of the information contained in, nor the product[s] described in, this manual may be adapted or reproduced in any material form except with the prior written approval of Acorn Computers Limited.

Disclaimers of liability

There are three different disclaimers, each appropriate to different types of product.

Software products only

Use this version for languages, utilities, word processors, databases and games.

The product[s] described in this manual and products for use with it are subject to continuous development and improvement. All information of a technical nature and particulars of the product[s] and its[their] use (including the information and particulars in this manual) are given by Acorn Computers Limited in good faith. However, Acorn Computers Limited cannot accept any liability for any loss or damage arising from the use of any information or particulars in this manual.

Products including a hardware element

Use this version for any product incorporating a hardware element: it thus covers not only computers, but also expansion cards, hard discs, disc upgrades, etc.

The product[s] described in this manual and products for use with it are subject to continuous development and improvement. All information of a technical nature and particulars of the product[s] and its[their] use (including the information and particulars in this manual) are given by Acorn Computers Limited in good faith. However, Acorn Computers Limited cannot accept any liability for any loss or damage arising from the use of any information or particulars in this manual, or any incorrect use of the product[s]. All maintenance and service on the product[s] must be carried out by Acorn Computers’ authorised dealers or Approved Service Centres. Acorn Computers Limited can accept no liability whatsoever for any loss or damage caused by service, maintenance or repair by unauthorised personnel.
Supplier message

Add this sentence to products/manuals designed to be used only by suppliers:

This manual is for the sole use of Acorn Computers’ authorised suppliers and must only be used by them in connection with the product[s] described within.

Support and the Reader’s Comment Form

All manuals should include the following:

If you have any comments on this manual, please complete the form at the back of the manual and send it to the address given there.

Acorn supplies its products through an international dealer network. These outlets are trained in the use and support of Acorn products and are available to help resolve any queries you may have.

Abbreviations

If the term BBC appears in a manual, include the following sentence:

Within this publication, the term BBC is used as an abbreviation for British Broadcasting Corporation.

Trademark list

List in upper case all trademarks appearing in the manual. A list of our own and others’ trademarks appears in the Trademarks and terminology chapter. No distinction is made between registered and non-registered trademarks. The format is as follows:

TRADEMARK, TRADEMARK and TRADEMARK are trademarks of Acorn Computers Limited.

trademark is a trademark of company.

trademark is a trademark of another company.

Publication details

Published by Acorn Computers Limited

ISBN

Current Acorn practice is to assign an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) only if the manual is to be made available separately from the product it describes. The format of numbers is

ISBN 1 85250 nnn n
where 1 denotes the country of publication, 85250 is Acorn’s publisher number, the next three digits are specific to the book, and the final \( n \) is a check digit (in the range 1–9, or X).

**Edition**

Sometimes used to differentiate more clearly between issues (see below) which may have the same title. The format is

Edition \( n \)

**Part number, issue number and date**

Each individual part of an Acorn product, including disc, disc label, function key strip, registration sheet, and manual, is assigned a unique part number. Each time a part changes in ‘form, fit or function’ – a new release of a software product, or a revised manual, for example – a new number is assigned. It consists of a seven digit number (with a comma after the fourth digit).

The first time a product is released, its issue number is 1. It may then happen that some part of a product – the manual, for example – is revised, without the product as a whole being re-released. The new manual should then be described as ‘Issue 2’, etc.

Part number \( nnnn,nnn \)

Issue \( n, \text{month year} \)

The date is the date of issue – that is, when the manuals is released for printing.

(When designing disc label artworks, remember that the part number printed on the disc label is not the disc label part number, but the part number of the software on the disc.)

**Sample preliminary page**

(Suitable for a software manual such as that for a language compiler.)

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The structure of a manual

The product described in this manual and products for use with it are subject to continuous development and improvement. All information of a technical nature and particulars of the product and its use (including the information and particulars in this manual) are given by Acorn Computers Limited in good faith. However, Acorn Computers Limited cannot accept any liability for any loss or damage arising from the use of any information or particulars in this manual.

If you have any comments on this manual, please complete the form at the back of the manual, and send it to the address given there.

Acorn supplies its products through an international dealer network. These outlets are trained in the use and support of Acorn products and are available to help resolve any queries you may have.

Within this publication, the term ‘BBC’ is used as an abbreviation for ‘British Broadcasting Corporation’.

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Published by Acorn Computers Limited
ISBN 1 85250 123 X
Part number 0381,220
Issue 1, July 1991

Short forms of preliminary pages

There is a need for a shorter form of the copyright notice for short documents such as leaflets and release notes, which may themselves be only one page long. In such cases the copyright notice, which should appear at the end of the document, should take the following form:

Copyright © Acorn Computers Limited year
Published by Acorn Computers Limited
Part number nnnn,nnn
Issue n, month year

Other documents, which simply require identification (such as printed customer letters), but no claim of copyright, should be marked as follows:

nnnn,nnn nn month year

where the first seven digits are the part number, and the last two the issue number.
Safety information and warnings

A section on safety should be included in all hardware manuals. Its content is determined partly by legal requirements and should therefore not be changed without approval from the Project Manager, the company Safety Officer and the Legal Department. For a current approved example, see the A3000 Welcome Guide.

Contents page

This should be at whatever level of detail will give the reader an overview of the contents of the manual. Including all headings may produce a very long contents list which is hard to use. It should not run to more than four pages. It should provide a reference to the End-user licence agreement, if appropriate (see overleaf).

‘About this guide’

A section which summarises very briefly what each chapter in the manual covers. This information will vary from manual to manual, but will be drawn from the Chapter Typographical conventions.

Conventions used in this manual

Specifies the use of different fonts for indicating different types of text in the manual.

Bibliography

Some manuals, such as language manuals, require a reference section to other works the reader may find useful, or to published standards. Since this has a different function from the bibliography in an ordinary book, and is also likely to be shorter, it is better placed here rather than at the end. The section entitled Books, chapters and cross-referencing in the Typographical conventions chapter deals with the formats for a straightforward listing of titles.

Appendices

If there is only one appendix, it has a heading in the same format as the chapter headings, with the form ‘Appendix: Title’. If there is more than one, identify them as ‘Appendix A: Title’, ‘Appendix B: Title’, etc.
End-user licence agreement

This should appear in the back of Acorn software manuals, with references to it both in the Table of Contents and the Index. A sample agreement is shown below (from the 1st Word Plus Guide):

End-user licence conditions for 1st Word Plus (Release 2)

1. Definitions

The following expressions have the meanings given here:

‘Acorn’ means Acorn Computers Limited, being either owner of all intellectual property rights in the Software, or having the right to grant licences of the Software.

‘Developer’ means any third party software developer who retains copyright in the Software.

‘Documentation’ means the printed user documentation supplied with the Software inside the pack.

‘Software’ means the programs contained in object-code form on the disc(s) supplied with these conditions:

2. Licence

Acorn grants you a personal non-transferable non-exclusive licence (or sub-licence), as follows:

1 You may copy the Software for backup purposes, to support its use on one stand-alone Acorn computer system. (Separate provision for site licences is made on form APP157 available from your Acorn Authorised Dealer.)

2 You must ensure that the copyright notices contained in the Software are reproduced and included in any copy of the Software.

3 You may not:
   (i) copy only part of the Software, or
   (ii) make the Software or the Documentation available to any third party by way of gift or loan or hire; or
   (iii) incorporate any part of the Software into other programs developed or used by you; or
   (iv) copy the Documentation.

3. Term

This licence remains in effect unless you terminate it:

1 by destroying the Software and all copies, and the Documentation, or
by failing to comply with the Conditions.

4. **Limited warranty and disclaimer of liability**

1 Acorn warrants the disc(s) upon which the Software is supplied to be free from defects in materials and workmanship under normal use for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of purchase, as evidenced by a copy of your receipt. Your Acorn Authorised Dealer will replace a defective disc if returned within ninety (90) days of purchase.

2 The Software is supplied ‘as is’, neither Acorn nor the Developer makes any warranty, whether express or implied, as to the merchantability of the Software or its fitness for any particular purpose.

3 In no circumstances will Acorn be liable for any damage, loss of profits, goodwill or for any indirect or consequential loss arising out of your use of the Software, or inability to use the Software, even if Acorn has been advised of the possibility of such loss.

5. **General**

These conditions supersede any prior agreement, oral or written, between you and Acorn relating to the Software.

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**Index**

Always keep in mind how the reader will want to use the index, by asking yourself whether the entry you are considering is really something he might want to look up. Don’t worry if even a whole page of the manual has no index entries referring to it: an introduction, for example, may be a useful section in a manual but still not contain any information that a user will want to look up. Some pages will be much denser with index entries than others.

Each index ‘concept’ should have a single index entry with cross-references to it, rather than several entries in slightly different forms. Thus, for example, you should have an entry under files, creating and a cross-reference in the form creating files see files, creating.

Entries beginning with non-alphabetic characters should appear in ASCII order at the beginning of the alphabetic sequence, headed Symbols. The only exception to this is * commands, which should be indexed in the position they would have without the * (include the * in the entry itself, though).
The structure of a manual

Each entry begins with a lower-case letter unless it is for something that always has an initial upper case letter. Entries containing more than one word should be indexed as if there were no spaces between the words. Thus the following sequence is correct:
- file
- filenames
- file not found

Sub-entries should be indented, without a dash. For example:
- directory 5, 9-19, 35
  - change 14, 16-17
  - display 11, 16
  - paths 6, 9-12

Do not use sub-sub-entries.

Cross-reference by using the words see and see also in italics. For example:
- ADFS see operating systems
- image data transfer graphics 45-50
  see also graphics

The index should include a reference to the End-user licence agreement mentioned above (if appropriate).
6 Preparing input text for documentation

If you are asked to write text for use by another department or organisation, you would normally think of doing the job on your usual word processor, and leave the problems of reformatting the text to your customer. But the problem with most word processors and desktop publishing programs is that they fill the text with control codes and line feeds which are not wanted by the destination system, and can be difficult to extract.

Check first with your customer, but you should usually provide the text in unformatted ASCII, as produced by an editor such as Edit, and some word processors in text mode. This chapter gives some guidelines on how you can make the job of reformatting the text on the destination system much quicker and easier.

Newlines and formatting

As you write, you may want to format the text so that it is easier to read. However, this introduces line feeds which then have to be edited out. The best way to handle this is as follows:

- Where you want a 'hard' new line (such as at the end of a paragraph), insert two newline characters.
- When you have finished editing the text, replace the single newlines by spaces.

Do not attempt to replicate the layout that the document will eventually have. In particular:

- Do not insert hard spaces in tables; instead, separate the columns with single Tab characters and the reformatter will sort out the final appearance.
- Do not enter bullet characters or numbers for numbered lists; the Bullets and List styles (see overleaf) will insert them.
- Do not indent text directly; identify indented paragraphs with the Indent, Indent Cont’d, or Double Indent styles (see overleaf).
Paragraph tags

You can make life even easier for the reformatter by tagging your paragraphs with style names. Enclose these within angle brackets at the start of each paragraph (or series of paragraphs with the same style). To use a literal angle bracket in your text, precede it with a backslash. Case is not significant in style names. The available styles are:

- Headings
- Chapter
- Section
- Subsection
- Subsubsection
- Text
- Bullets
- Nested Bullets
- Indent
- Indent cont’d (has less space before than Indent)
- Double Indent
- Example (gives full-size Courier)
- Program (gives small Courier allowing 80 characters to a line)
- List (numbered: do not insert the numbers in your text)
- Start Section
- Start Subsection

In addition, you can mark text styles for individual words/phrases with the following Character tags, again between angle brackets. See the chapter entitled Typographical conventions for an explanation of when to use these character formats:

- DefaultFont (turns off other character formats)
- Bold
- CmdLine (for program listings)
- CmdLineVariable
- CrossRef (for references to other publications)
- Desktop (menu options etc)
- Diagram (for annotating illustrations)
- Emphasis
- IactiveInput (text you type in)
- IactiveVariable
- Jargon (Glossary entries)
- ProgramNotes (for annotations on program listings)
An example

The following marked-up text would generate the formatting of the first part of page 1 of this guide:

<text>It is not within the scope of this guide to offer general advice on how to <emphasis>write<defaultfont> manuals and other documentation. However, a few specific points are grouped below under the headings of <crossref>Informality<defaultfont> and <crossref>Simplicity<defaultfont>, followed by details of conventions for vocabulary to be used, rules for presenting lists, and a section warning of some frequently-made errors. For more general advice, see


An example
Manuals written in ‘British’ English read oddly to North American users, so when products are sold into these markets, particularly to the United States, it is desirable that they be ‘translated’ into the local language. This is not just a question of spelling ‘colour’ ‘color’, as this chapter attempts to show.

Introduction

British and US English (UKEng and USEng) differ, like any two varieties of any language, in the following features:

style and usage
For example, a more formal style may be considered appropriate for a given kind of document.

vocabulary
A word may occur in one variety but not the other. It may have different meanings, a sense in one variety that it does not have in the other, or different connotations.

grammar
This includes differences in the use of verb constructions, prepositions, adjectives and adverbs.

spelling
Some of these differences are systematic, arising from Webster’s spelling reforms. Others merely arise from the adoption of different spellings as conventional at the time when spellings became fixed.

pronunciation
In speech, this is the most striking difference, but it need not concern us as we are only concerned with the written language.
The differences between the two varieties are sufficient that it would be a mistake to release documentation written for the UK market onto the US market without revision. Although we do not expect UK versions of manuals for US software, we should not assume any such tolerance in the opposite direction.

This chapter is written in terms of how USEng differs from UKEng, so when it states, for instance, that a process occurs ‘more often’, this means that it occurs more often in USEng than in UKEng. If a feature is simply mentioned, it is a feature of USEng which is different from UKEng. This bias reflects the UK perspective of the writer and the availability of published descriptions. From the point of view of the acceptability of our documentation in North America, the opposite perspective would be better; we really need a list of UKEng features that do not occur in USEng.

Attitudes

The US market is much less tolerant of UK linguistic practices than we are of theirs. This is due to the greater economic power of the US and their greater numbers; we are exposed far more to USEng, both spoken and written, than Americans are to UKEng.

Many sociolinguistic studies support the intuitive view that while actual prestige is attributed to users of the prestige varieties of a language, other desirable qualities such as dependability and warmth are attributed to users of less prestige varieties.

The highest-prestige varieties of USEng are the most British-like varieties of New England. UKEng itself therefore has very high prestige in the US, but a low ‘warmth-factor’. British secretaries and nannies convey high status, but at the same time, British actors are cast as villains more often than chance would predict. We should therefore bear in mind that while British editions of computer manuals may, in the North American context, convey some of the properties we wish users to assign to our products, an overall impression of formality and coldness may also be conveyed.

Style and usage

Product documentation represents a fairly restricted type of written language use. There are differences between guides – for example, a Welcome Guide and a Service Manual – but these are small compared to the differences between a romantic novel and a legal contract. As a general rule, USEng is less formal for our kind of document, with the result that unmodified UK guides might come across as unfriendly. The only way to judge whether our style is appropriate is for a native speaker of USEng to review our documentation.
Vocabulary

Vocabulary differences between UKEng and USEng run into the thousands. In everyday language they are quite noticeable, but this will be much less true of text with technical content, especially since many of the terms used were coined in the US and have been adopted here.

Some vocabulary differences are stylistic: for example, *autumn* and *fortnight* have a poetic and archaic quality in USEng. *Perhaps* is formal: *maybe* would be used instead.

Other differences lie in the connotations of words: *clever* has a negative flavour in USEng, which would use *smart* instead. On the other hand, *smart* does not mean ‘well-dressed’ in USEng.

Grammar

Grammar breaks down into morphology (the shape of words) and syntax (the way words are put together). For present purposes, a large number of differences in the use of prepositions (*to, in, out*, etc) will be included under the heading of syntax.

Morphology

**Regularisation of verb forms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UKEng</th>
<th>USEng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>learnt</td>
<td>learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelt</td>
<td>spelled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Word formation processes**

Many of these are more productive, resulting in an extended vocabulary. For example, *-ify* produces *uglify*, *-ize* produces *hospitalize*.

Word ‘formation’ through a shift of grammatical category is more common, though many of the resulting extensions are now used in UKEng too. For example: to *author*, to *host*, to *pressure*.

Syntax

**Use of auxiliary verbs in USEng**

- *shall* is rarely used, *shan’t* almost never.
- use of *would* in the sense *used to*: When I was young, I would go there every day.
Grammar

- *will* less frequent as ‘predictive’: That will be the postman → That must be/is/should be the mailman.
- use of *must* as negative epistemic in USEng (the example will illustrate!): He can’t be in; his car has gone → He must not be in; his car has gone.
- *dare* and *need* are rarely used.

**Use and meaning of have/have got**

Do you have …? = do you usually have (UKEng)

= do you have now (USEng)

Past forms differ: I hadn’t got … → I didn’t have

**Verb phrases**

Many unsystematic variations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UKEng</th>
<th>USEng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>like you to do</td>
<td>like for you to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sounds (a nice one)</td>
<td>sounds like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(same for seems, looks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come and have/go and have</td>
<td>come/go have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>check up on</td>
<td>check out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fill in (a form)</td>
<td>fill out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet (someone)</td>
<td>meet with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prevent something happening</td>
<td>prevent something from happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protest at something</td>
<td>protest something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stop someone doing …</td>
<td>stop someone from doing …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk to someone</td>
<td>talk with someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visit someone</td>
<td>visit with someone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Use of articles**

Variation in some time expressions:

the next day → next day

in future (meaning ‘from now on’) → in the future

all afternoon → all the afternoon

half an hour → a half hour

**Pronouns**

*One* is seldom used.

One another → each other
Adjectives and adverbs

- variations in placement:
  
  They will never agree to it  Æ  They never will agree to it. (UKEng variant possible too)

- *as well* can occur sentence-initially in Canadian English:

  This has always applied to men. As well, it now applies to women.

- momentarily = in a moment
  presently = at present

- use of prepositions with adjectives/adverbs:
  out of  Æ  out

Other prepositions

  behind  Æ  in back of
  round  Æ  around

Time expressions

  at the weekend  Æ  over the weekend/on the weekend
  Monday to Friday (inclusive)  Æ  Monday through Friday
  twenty to three  Æ  twenty of three, twenty till three
  five past eight  Æ  five after eight
  I’ll do it on Sunday  Æ  I’ll do it Sunday
  a week this Tuesday  Æ  a week from this Tuesday
  Tuesday week: not used in USEng

Spelling

Some differences are systematic, but a great many are not. However, this is not a problem, since in any case the best way to handle spelling is with a spelling checker, switching to the USEng dictionary.

Canadian spelling is not identical to USEng. For example, USEng has -ize, UKEng has a choice between -ise and -ize, but Canadian English uses -iz where the stem is ‘transparent’ (if you detach the -iz, you are left with a well-formed noun that is close in meaning to the verb), and -ise where it is not. Thus Canadian English uses *capitalize*, but *apologise*. In general, Canadian spelling follows UKEng for learned or formal publications, and USEng for informal publications, such as newspapers.
Punctuation

Hyphenation

Word-joining hyphenation
This is used less in USEng. The above heading would therefore probably be written ‘word joining hyphenation’. Hyphens are used much less to join adverbs to the adjectives they modify: a carefully-written report → a carefully written report.

Prefix hyphenation
Similarly, writing prefix+stem as a single word is preferred to the hyphenated form. For example: non-standard → nonstandard.

Formatting hyphenation
UKEng tends towards splitting on the basis of the word’s morphology or etymology. (An extreme adherent of this would favour helico-pter) USEng splits on a phonological basis, i.e. at syllable boundaries as perceived by an ordinary user of the language. Thus UKEng struc-ture becomes USEng struc-ture.

Other punctuation differences

List punctuation
USEng uses a comma before the and joining the two last items:

We ordered beef, roast potatoes, peas, and carrots.

This is acceptable but less common in UKEng.

Capitalisation and colons
UKEng uses a lower-case letter after a colon in running text, USEng upper-case.

Quotation marks
Single quotation marks have become standard in UKEng, but double quotes are the norm in USEng.
Although we do not expect in future to have to mark up paper proofs for typesetters, a good deal of proofreading will be done within the department, by other members of Acorn’s staff and by outside contractors and software writers. The following subset of the British Standard list of proofreader’s marks should prove useful for this purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>In the text</th>
<th>In the margin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delete character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through character</td>
<td>◁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to be deleted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delete word(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through word(s)</td>
<td>◁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to be deleted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insert character(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to upper case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>under character(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to be changed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>under character(s)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to be changed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to lower case</td>
<td>encircle character(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to bold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>under characters</td>
<td>◁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to be changed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to italic</td>
<td>underline character(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>In the text</td>
<td>In the margin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change italic to upright</td>
<td>encircle character(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase space in line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce space in line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start new paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run on (no new para)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancel indent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move to right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Move to left</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

active
A normal sentence type where the subject comes first, followed by the verb, and then the object. For example:
  Dogs chase cats
See also passive.

adjective
A word that modifies a noun. Can be used in attributive position, before the noun:
  ● a red book
or in predicative position, after the noun and a verb like is or seems:
  ● The book is red.

adverb
A word used to modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb:
  ● You can freely export images used by Paint.
  ● This works in two slightly different ways.
  ● This works in two very slightly different ways.

agreement
The grammatical phenomenon in which verbs change their form according to whether the subject of the sentence is singular or plural:
  ● My dog has fleas.
  ● All dogs have fleas.
Punctuation

clause
A phrase containing a ‘tensed’ verb (in other words, not an infinitive or a participle). A sentence must contain at least one clause, but it may contain more (like this one, which has two). A subordinate clause is a clause which, if removed from the sentence, still leaves a grammatical sentence behind.

contraction
A reduced form of a pair of words, reflecting their normal pronunciation. For example, he is contract to he’s, you will to you’ll, and I am to I’m.

denote
Stand for, indicate.

elision
The omission of vowels or syllables made in normal speech.

en-dash
A horizontal dash the width of the letter n. In Novarese, the en-dash is horizontal, unlike the hyphen.

epistemic
A variety of philosophy or logic concerned with knowledge. Cp deontic: concerned with morality/obligation.

folio
The page number as printed on the page.

generic
Applicable to a whole class of objects: tigers, computers, plates. In the legal context, a generic is a product whose name is not a trademark.

imperative
The form of a verb used for telling someone to do something. For example, insert the disc into the drive. Click on the close icon.
justification
The spreading out of words in a block of text so that straight righthand or lefthand margins are produced. *Justified* (or *fully-justified*) text usually means that both margins are straight, but text in which only one margin is straight is called *left- or right-justified*. It is also known as *ranged-left* (or *right*), or *left-aligned*.

modifier
A word used to restrict the meaning of another word or phrase:
- a *red* book (*red*, an adjective, tells you what type of book)
- a *filing* system (*filing*, a noun, tells you what kind of system)
- a *totally* new filing system (*totally*, an adverb, tells you how new the filing system is).

noun
A word denoting an object or concept: *computer*, *system*, *file*, *sock*, *toenail*, *Communism*.
A *noun phrase* must include a noun (or pronoun), but may also contain an article and various modifiers. For example:
- a filing system (article + noun modifier + head noun)
- a new filing system (article + adjective + noun modifier + head noun)
- the totally new filing system that I have just invented (article + adverb + adjective + noun modifier + head noun + relative clause).
- it (pronoun).

passive
A sentence type which reverses the subject and object of an ordinary *active* sentence (and accordingly requires a change in the form of the verb):
- Cats are chased by dogs.

phrase
A part of a sentence which forms a coherent entity.

prefix
A part of a word that cannot stand alone but must be attached to the beginning of other words: *re-*, *pre-*, *multi-*, *pseudo*.
**preposition**
A word used to relate a noun or noun phrase grammatically and semantically to the rest of the sentence:
- a task running in a window
- characters generated by the program
- Move to the next occurrence of the string.

**proper name**
A noun or noun phrase identifying a specific individual or entity:
- Acorn Computers
- King’s College
- the People’s Republic of China.

**proportionally-spaced**
A font in which the characters are of varying widths: the m will be wider than the i, for example. In a fixed-width font, all characters are the same width.

**sociolinguistics**
A branch of linguistics which studies how language varies with social groups such as socio-economic classes.

**subject**
The noun, pronoun or noun phrase in a sentence which denotes who or what did the action (or whatever) denoted by the verb. Sometimes the subject doesn’t look much like a noun phrase, but it has an equivalent function:
- *The sprite file window* has its own menu.
- *Double-clicking on a file icon* loads the file into the appropriate editor.
- *The most frequent error encountered when attempting to log on to a network* is ‘No clock’.

**verb**
A word denoting an action or state: *read, believe, counteract, impersonate*. A tensed verb locates in time the action (or whatever) described in the sentence. (However, a present tense sentence often makes a general statement that something is the case, rather than describing a particular event.)
- This option saves the entire diagram in DrawFile format.
These applications share certain resources.

Many sentences contain a verb group, not just a single-word verb. For example:

- You can open more than one window at once.
- You must change the disc after copying each directory.
- Several modules will have been loaded.
- Several modules have been loaded.

In each of these examples, it is the first word in the verb group that is the tensed verb.
Index

A

abbreviations 39
  punctuation of 18
technical 33-35
“about this guide” 42
AC 35
action icons 12
active
  definition 59
  examples 2
  vs passive 2
addendum 6
addresses see punctuation, in names and addresses
ADFS 35
adjective
  attributive 21
  definition 59
  hyphenation 56
  US English 55
Adjust see mouse (definition of buttons)
adjust size icon
  definition 10
adverb
  definition 59
  hyphenation 21, 56
  US English 55
agreement
  definition 59
  end-user licence 43-44
  grammatical 5
American English see US English
amp 35
ampere 33
analogies 1
apostrophe 19-20

in contracted forms 20
in possessives 19-20
appendix 6
format of title 42
arrow icons 12

B
back icon
  definition 10
backplane 23
BASIC 35
BBC 39
bibliographical references 29-30, 42
bit 33
bold
  proofreading symbol 57
  when to use 27
Bold (character style) 48
books 1
brackets 7
bulleted lists
  when to use 13
Bullets (paragraph style) 48
byte 33

capitalisation
  in lists 14-15
  in titles 29
  proofreading symbol 57
case see capitalisation 14
centi- 34
Chapter (paragraph style) 48
Index

character
  style 48
tags 48
choosing
  definition 9
circuit diagrams, notational system 34
clause
  definition 60
  in lists 14
  linking 23-24
clicking
  definition 9
close icon
  definition 10
CmdLine (character style) 48
CmdLineVariable (character style) 48
colon 24
comma 23-25
  in addresses 18
  incorrect use of 23-24
  omission of 24
command name
  font 28, 29
comment form see reader comment form
component values 34
counter input/output
  font 28
contents pages 42
  two-volume manual 37
contracted forms 1-2, 20
  definition 60
control codes 47
conventions
  typographical 27-30
  “used in this manual” 42
  vocabulary 7-8
coprocessor 23
copyright message 38
corporate identities 5
count noun
  definition of 5
  examples 5-6
Courier Bold

 when to use 28
Courier Italic
  when to use 28
Courier Roman
  when to use 28
criteria 6
CrossRef (character style) 48
cross-referencing
  see also references, books and chapters
  font 27
  index 44-45
  page numbers 7
customer letters 41

data 7
database 23
date see issue date
dealer vs supplier 8
DefaultFont (character style) 48
degree (temperature) 34
delete
  proofreading symbol 57
denote
  definition 60
Desktop (character style) 48
Diagram (character style) 48
dialogue boxes
  definition 10
  detached 11
  ordinary 11
  static 11
  static non-pane 11
  static pane 11
directory displays
  definition 11
disclaimers 38
Double Indent (paragraph style) 48
double-clicking
  definition 9
dragging
Index

definition 9
Draw application 12

e
edition number 40
elision 1
definition 60
Emphasis (character style) 48
en-dash
definition 60
vs hyphen 25
endings
word 17-18
end-user licence see licence conditions, end-user
enter vs type 7
ephemera 6
epistemic
definition 60
error boxes
definition 10
errors
grammatical 4-6
spelling 18-19
Example (paragraph style) 48
expansion card vs podule 8

f
farad 34, 35
fewer vs less 5
figure annotation
definition 60
font 27
file server 23
filename 23
floppy disc 8
folio
definition 60
fonts 27-29
fixed-width 27-28
proportional 27

when to use 27-29
format
lists 13-15
forms
full vs contracted 2
formula 6
full stop 18, 25
function keys 35

g
gender 3
generic
definition 60
name 33
vs trademark 31
giga- 34
Glossary 59-63
font 27
gram 34
grammar
US English 51, 53
grammatical
agreement 5
errors 4-6

h
hardware disclaimers see disclaimers
he/she 3
Headings (paragraph style) 48
henry 34, 35
hertz 34
highlighted
definition 10
however, use of 24
hyphen 21-22
in adjectival phrases 21
in US English 56
modifier + noun/verb 21
prefixes 22
preposition + noun 21
verb + adverb 21
vs en-dash 25

proofreading symbol 57, 58
when to use 27
items see menu items 10
its or it’s 20
-ize endings 17

J
jargon (character style) 48
journals see references journals
justification
definition 61

K
key
definition 7
pressing 7
key-press combinations 35
keyword 23
kilo- 34

L
less vs fewer 5
licence conditions
definition 43-44
date 40
number 40

lower case see capitalisation 57
Index

M

manual
   outline 37
   structure of 37-45
   two-volume 37
measurement
   units 19
media 6
mega- 34
memorandum 6
menu items
   choosing 9
   definition 10
menu options see menu items 10
Menu see mouse (definition of buttons)
menus
   definition 10
   pop-up see pop-up menus
metre 34
micro- 34
milli- 34
MIPS 34
modifier
   definition 61
   hyphenation 21-22
   of generics 32
morphology
   definition 53
   US English 53
mouse
   definitions of buttons 8-9
   use 9
multitasking 23

N

name
   generic 33
   proper 20, 62
   punctuation in 18
nano- 34

Nested Bullets (paragraph style) 48
notes
   when to use 3
noun 62
   count 5
   definition 61
   endings 18
   hyphenation 21-22
   plural forms 6
   subject 62
   verb agreement 5
   vs verb 2, 19
number
   edition 40
   issue 40
   part 40
   writing in full 19
numbered lists
   when to use 13

O

ohm 34, 35
option icons 12
options see menu items 10
-or vs -er endings 18

P

page numbering 37
Paint application 12
Palette application 12
papers see references, papers
paragraph
   proofreading symbol 58
   style 48
   tags 48
parentheses 7, 25
part number 40
passive
   definition 61
Index

form 2
vs active 2
pathname 23
font 28
phenomena 6
phrase
  adjectival 21
  definition 61
  noun 61
  subordinate 4
  US English 54
pico- 34
plural
  agreement of verb 5
  forms 6-7
  to avoid gender 3
podule vs expansion card 8
pointer 9
pop-up menus 13
possessives see apostrophe, in possessives
preferred terms see terminology, preferred
prefix
  definition 61
  hyphenation 22, 56
  unit 34
preliminary pages
  contents of 37-40
  page numbering 37
  sample 40-41
  short form 41
preposition
  definition 62
  hyphenation 21
  US English 55
  use of 53
pressing
  definition 9
Program (paragraph style) 48
program listing
  font 27
ProgramNotes (character style) 48
pronunciation
  US English 51
proofreading symbols 57-58
proper name 20
  definition 62
proportionally-spaced
  definition 62
  see also fonts
publication details 39
punctuation 23-25
  comma 18
  full stop 18
  in abbreviations 18
  in lists 14-15
  in names and addresses 18
  in titles 18
  spaces 25
  US English 56
Q
  quotation marks 25
R
  radio icons 12
reader comment form 39
references
  Acorn manuals 29
  books and chapters 29-30
  journals 30
  papers 30
reformatting text see text, reformatting
release notes 41
releasing
  definition 9
Return key 29
RISC iX 8, 35
RISC OS terminology 8-13, 35
## Index

### S
- safety warnings 42
- scroll arrow
  - definition 10
  - use 12
- scroll bar
  - definition 10
  - use 12
- scrollable list 12
- second (time) 34
- Section (paragraph style) 48
- Select "mouse (definition of buttons) selecting
  - definition 9
- semi-colon 23
- SI units 33
- simplicity of style 23
- singular
  - agreement with verb 5
- slider
  - definition 10
  - use 12
- sociolinguistics 52
  - definition 62
- software disclaimers see disclaimers
- spaces
  - proofreading symbol 58
  - punctuation 25
  - reformatting 47
- spelling
  - alternative 17-18
  - errors 18-19
    - US English 51, 55
- Start Section (paragraph style) 48
- Start Subsection (paragraph style) 48
- style
  - active vs passive 2
  - character 48
  - formal vs informal 1
  - paragraph 48
  - recommended books 1
  - simplicity 3-4
  - US English 51, 52
  - verbs vs nouns 2
- subject
  - definition 62
  - grammatical agreement 5
- submenus
  - definition 10
- subordinate phrases
  - examples 4
  - misuse 4
- Subsection (paragraph style) 48
- Subsubsection (paragraph style) 48
- supplier vs dealer 8
- suppliers 39
- syntax
  - US English 53

### T
- tags, character see character, tags
- tags, paragraph see paragraph, tags
- technical terms 23, 33-35
- tera- 34
- terminology
  - desktop 10
  - mouse operations 9
  - preferred 8
  - RISC OS 8-13
  - technical 33-35
  - windows 10
- text
  - reformatting 47
- Text (paragraph style) 48
- title bar
  - definition 10
- titles
  - capitalisation in 29
  - of appendices 42
  - punctuation in 18
- toggle size icon
  - definition 10
Index

trademarks 31-33, 39
  Acorn 32
  other manufacturer’s 32-33
  use of in text 31-32
transpose
  proofreading symbol 58
triple-clicking
  definition 9
two-volume manual, see manual, two-volume
type vs enter 7
typographical conventions 27-30

definition 62
group 63
hyphenation 21
US English 54
vs noun 2
vocabulary
  US English 51, 53
vocabulary conventions see conventions, vocabulary
volt 34, 35

U
units of measurement 19, 33-35
UNIX 35
upper case see capitalisation
US English 51-56
  adjectives 55
  adverbs 55
  articles 54
  attitudes 52
  grammar 53
  hyphenation 56
  morphology 53
  prepositions 55
  pronouns 54
  punctuation 56
  spelling 55
  style 52
  syntax 53
  time expression 55
  verb phrases 54
  vocabulary 53

V
variable
  font 28
verb
  agreement of subject 5

W
warnings see safety warnings
watt 34
windows
  icon names 10
word
  divisions 21-23
  endings 17-18
  single vs double 23
word processor 23, 47
writable icons 12
writing style see style