

## *Gerald's Column* by Gerald Fitton

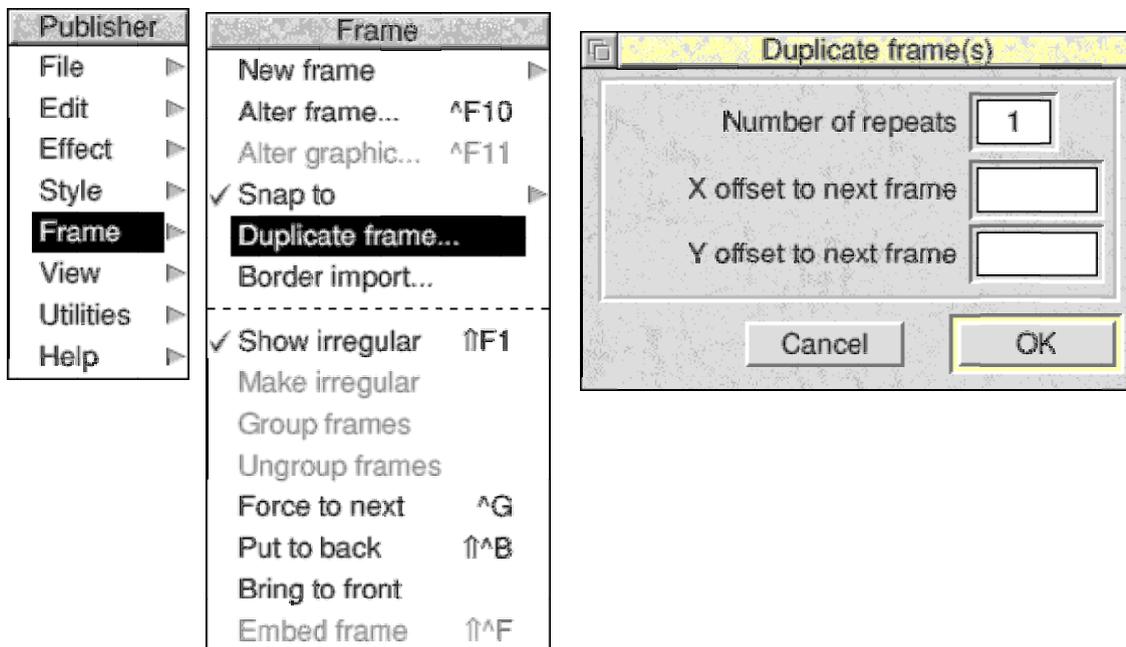
A big thank you to all those who have sent me examples of Ovation Pro documents and an explanation of the way you have produced them. I will need a little more time to digest them so bear with me. Sorry, but its still no Ovation Pro article this month!

I have a couple of pieces of correspondence which I wish to share with you. I follow this with a list of 'filters' (file converters) about which I am asked fairly regularly.

### **Duplicating Impression Frames**

Last month's article was about printing labels from Impression. In it I suggested that the method I preferred is to create the design of a single card using Draw or DrawPlus and then Load this graphic to Impression. The Impression document consists of a set of linked frames. Dragging the modified drawfile to one of the linked Impression frames causes the whole set of frames to change. This method allows changes to be made to just the one drawfile rather than to every Impression frame.

David Crofts has written to me questioning my method of creating the set of linked Impression frames. He is quite right to do so. I missed it; for years I have ignored a menu option Frame – Duplicate frame. It is a much more elegant method than the one using Copy and Paste which I described.



Dave writes:

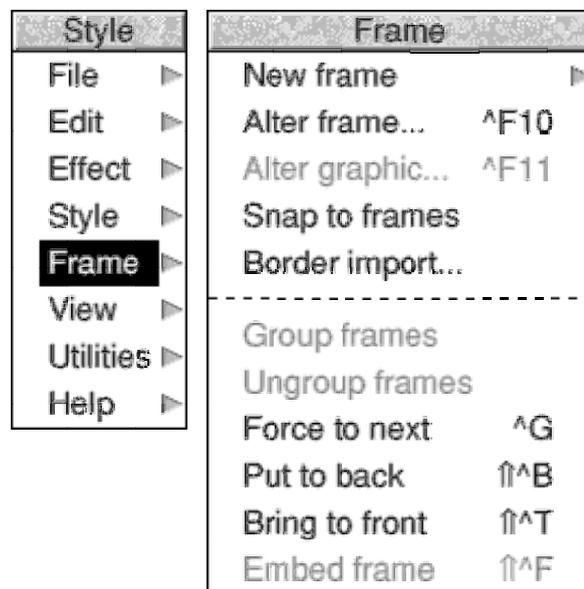
“In the Frame menu there is an entry: Duplicate Frame... I use this a lot as it allows the accurate placing of frames within a document. There is the option to copy a chosen number of frames at set distances apart in the X or Y direction.

“I usually copy the required number across, then select them all and copy the whole set downwards. Then, deselect with care and proceed with linking. If you get the linking wrong there is no alternative but to delete back to the incorrect frame and copy again as above! It takes a whole lot less time to do than to explain and has the advantage of total accuracy.

“If you want a set of frames with a border around then make sure the background is transparent before copying, otherwise the adjacent lines can disappear.”

I have a couple of points to make about Dave’s contribution to this discussion.

Firstly I have remembered why I missed the ‘Duplicate frame’ menu option. It doesn’t appear in Impression Style and that was what I was using at the time I developed this method. I was using Style even though I had Publisher because, at that time, Publisher required a dongle. The dongle was a hardware protection device which plugged into the printer port and caused me (and others) all sorts of funny problems with PipeDream and Fireworkz.



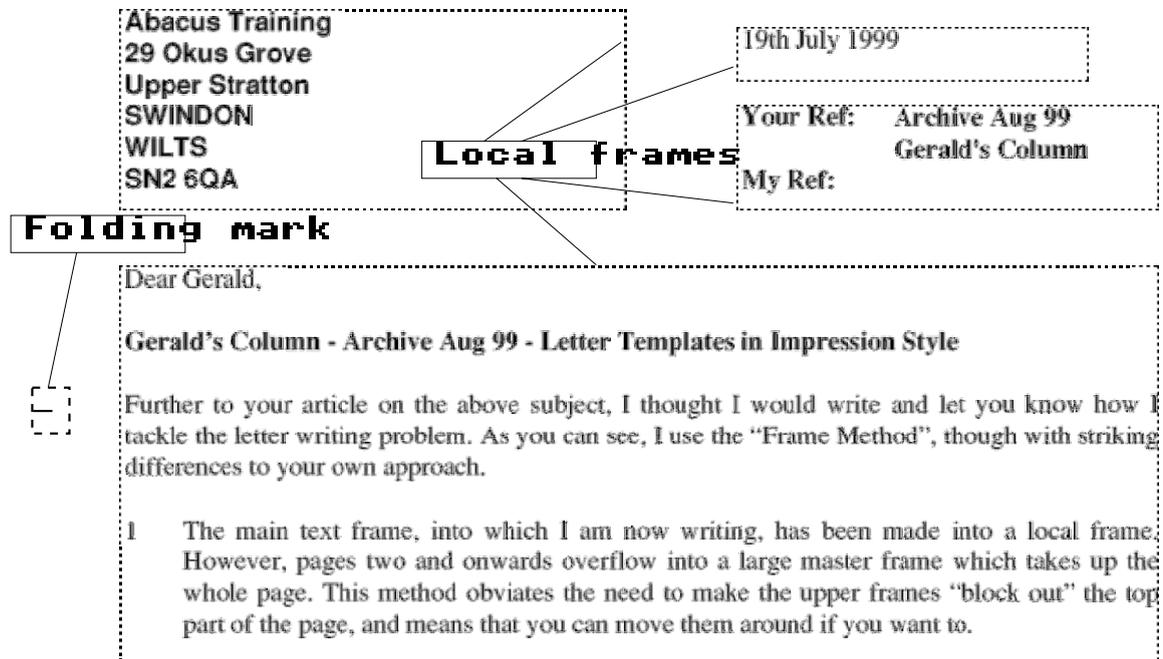
Secondly Dave’s last remark needs clarification. Many frame borders extend outside the frame and, in many cases, curvy borders are drawn on a white background which is thicker than you might suppose when you look at the border. This thick white background might encroach on the space where you want the border for an adjacent frame to appear; if the white background does overlay the adjacent border then that border will ‘disappear’ beneath the thick white background. The solution is to make the background transparent rather than the default, white.

## Letters in Impression

Robin Hampshire has written to me explaining his technique for letter writing in Impression. The screenshot below shows part of his letter.

Robin says:

“Further to your article on the above subject, I thought I would write and let you know how I tackle the letter writing problem. As you can see, I use the ‘Frame Method’ though with striking differences from your own approach.”



- 1 The main text frame, into which I am now writing, has been made into a local frame. However, pages two and onwards overflow into a large Master frame which takes up the whole page. This method obviates the need to make the upper frames “block out” the top part of the page, and means that you can move them around if you want to.
- 2 I have a small frame close to the left margin which includes a folding mark, so that the recipients address will always show in the envelope window correctly. The placing of the main text frame is also designed so that the first line of the letter subject matter (in bold, above) appears just above the fold.
- 3 As the Royal Mail prefers a sans serif font for addresses, my “Address” style is in Homerton Bold.
- 4 Although it is not evident from this letter, I save my template with a <space> at the top of the Address frame, and nothing else in that frame. The <space> has the style ‘Address’ applied to it. That way, as soon as I click the cursor into that frame, any text I subsequently type in takes on the ‘Address’ style, even if I first delete the space. This is even more useful when you drop a complete address into the frame from another source. Just click into the frame, delete the <space>, then import the address. It will automatically have the correct style applied. This method is useful for other frames which may start off empty, but then need their own style applied to the whole frame.
- 5 Footers with page number. I like my letters to go out with page numbers at the foot, but only if there are multiple pages to the letter. As I do not know whether or not it is possible to force Impression to print page numbers if and only if there is a second page,

and as most of my letters are single page, I usually leave the footer blank and try to remember to add the page number if necessary. It's not an ideal solution, though.

- 6 All of my Impression templates, letters or otherwise, are saved with two "Bullet" styles
  - i The first one, called "Bullet" was used for most of the text of the letter
  - ii The second one, called "Bullet 2" is as shown allows for neat indenting of related sub-sections.

Robin's letter is included on the Archive monthly disc.

## **Filters**

A 'filter' in the sense in which I am using it, is a file converter.

Recently many of my correspondents have asked me about the conversion of PipeDream and Fireworkz files to other formats. Here is a brief summary of some of the conversions available. It is not comprehensive but does include most of those which appear in my correspondence.

PipeDream to Fireworkz.

All PipeDream files will load directly into Fireworkz for RISC OS and Fireworkz for Windows. This applies not only to PipeDream 4.5 files but all PipeDream files including the earliest PipeDream 2 files and the MS-DOS version of PipeDream called PC PipeDream.

In the Windows environment you need to use the extension .pd so that Fireworkz for Windows will recognise the file as a PipeDream file. The extension appears automatically if the RISC OS file name includes /pd; an example is PDFfile/pd which converts to PDFfile.pd on an MS-DOS or Windows disc.

It is recommended that the RISC OS filetype on the MS-DOS format disc should be set as DOS but I have not found that to be essential.

Fireworkz to PipeDream.

One of my correspondents, Harriet Bazley, has written a BASIC program which does this most effectively. The BASIC program is embedded within an Acorn multi-tasking application called !FirePipe.

Fireworkz to Impression.

Harriet is responsible for this !FireToImp converter. Of course Impression does not evaluate spreadsheet formula so Harriet's converter changes the formulae to values.

Although there is a Save in RTF (Rich Text Format) facility available as part of Fireworkz I find that this method has its limitations. I prefer to Save in ASCII and then apply Styles in Impression rather than use those created by the RTF filter.

PipeDream to Impression.

The utility !PD\_Impres was written by the Colton Software team and it has been in existence since Colton Software released PipeDream 4. An alternative is to Save in Paragraph format and Load to Impression using the Impression Text loader.

PipeDream to Lotus WK1 & Lotus to PD

The most recent version of the filter !PD123 is version 1.08 dated 27th July 1999. It is a bi-directional converter which works well in both directions. The earlier !PD123 utility created and accepted Lotus WKS format whereas the latest uses WK1 format.

Fireworkz to Lotus WK1

This filter is built into the Fireworkz package as one of the 'Save other' options.

Lotus to Fireworkz

Fireworkz recognises and 'understands' Lotus WKS and WK1 format files. They load automatically when you drag the Lotus file to the Fireworkz icon.

PipeDream & Fireworkz to Excel.

This is a two stage process. Convert the PipeDream or Fireworkz file to Lotus format. Excel will Load files in Lotus format.

Excel to PipeDream.

Save the file from Excel in Lotus WK1 format and then use the !PD123 converter.

Excel to Fireworkz.

Fireworkz for RISC OS and Fireworkz for Windows both recognise and understand Excel 4 format files. They can load some Excel 5 format files but this is unreliable. The most recent version of Excel is (I think) Excel 8. Fireworkz does not recognise this format but the programming team are working on it. Indeed, Fireworkz does not recognise Excel Worksheets (a collection or set of Excel files); you have to Save each file from the Worksheet separately in Excel 4 format and then reconstruct the set from within Fireworkz.

Fireworkz for RISC OS to Fireworkz for Windows.

Fireworkz files are completely interchangeable provided that the file types can be recognised. The usual method is to use a file name such as MyFile/fwk in RISC OS; this converts to MyFile.fwk in the Windows environment. Drawfiles which are imported into the Windows environment should be called something such as Draw/aff; this converts to Draw.aff in Windows and can be referenced in a Fireworkz document in either environment. Although sprites should (and used to) transfer if they are called something like Sprite.ff9 there is a problem at present with some systems. The programming team are trying to discover under what circumstances this technique fails; then they might be able to fix it. What does work well is to drag the Sprite into Draw and Save the sprite as a Drawfile with the extension /aff.

It is recommended that the RISC OS filetype on the MS-DOS format disc should be set as DOS but I have not found that to be essential.

## **Finally**

Please write to me at the Abacus Training address which you'll find in Paul's Fact File at the back of Archive. I would prefer that you don't telephone – you'll probably get an answering machine.

I am getting a massive number of junk faxes some arriving during the middle of the night and waking me up. The majority of these junk faxes do not have a number to ring back and do not respond to the BT 1471 method of finding out where they came from! So now I take the fax machine off line from 6.00 pm and I unplug the whole Abacus Training system including answering machine when I go to bed!

You can still send me emails! If you write rather than email me then please include return postage. A self addressed sticky label is always helpful.