Gerald's Column
by Gerald Fitton

In this month's article I shall describe an addictive game and provide you with a small programming challenge. There is one 'catch'. You need either Fireworkz or Resultz if you wish to play this game. Consequently I have included a demo version of Resultz on the Archive monthly disc and elsewhere. The Demo version allows you to Play this game, Create, Load and Edit your own files—but you will be unable to Save or Print your work.

Mine Sweeper

I guess that most people who use Fireworkz have scarcely looked at the Examples disc which came with it. When Resultz was first issued (I think it was released for an Exhibition in 1993) this game was included as one of the Examples.

Originally Mine Sweeper was a game which could be run in a Windows spreadsheet package. Robert Macmillan, Colton Software's Marketing Director, was determined that anything which could be done on a Windows machine spreadsheet could be done with their new spreadsheet, Resultz.

So Robert adapted the game for Resultz.

It is a tribute to the Colton Software Programming Team that software originally written for Resultz Version 1.03 in 1993 still runs, and this game runs better than ever, in Fireworkz Pro Version 1.31/05 on a RISC OS 4 machine.

If you have Fireworkz or Resultz (even the Demo version supplied with the files) then try out this game. I can guarantee that if you have ever written a spreadsheet application then you will be surprised at the variety of interesting effects which Robert has included in this Mine Sweeper game.

In previous articles I have referred to Wish Lists. Some of the effects demonstrated by this game have appeared in wish lists for Fireworkz even though they already exist and have existed since the original version of Resultz released in 1993!

How to Play

The game consists of three files, [!PlayMe], [Board20] and [c_game]. The third of these files is a custom function; it does most of the work. You will find all these files and the demo version of Resultz on the Archive monthly disc. You will find them on our own web site and the Archive web site. If you are unable to obtain a copy then let me know.

Double click on [!PlayMe] to Load the game. The file [!PlayMe] displays one message during this Loading and Initialising stage and a different message afterwards. Furthermore the message changes as the game progresses.

I have been asked many times how to create such an effect. The custom function adapts the message it returns to [!PlayMe] reponse to 'flags'. I suggest that you look at the construction of the custom function and adapt it to your needs.

The file [Board20] consists of a 'board' of 400 squares arranged in a 20 by 20 pattern. You play your first move by double clicking on any square in the [Board20] file.

When you double click on one of the squares the content will change from a blank to either an upper case M or a number between 0 and 8. This feature is controlled by the little used 'doubleclick' function and executed through the custom function.

If you get a number then this number is the number of adjacent squares, including diagonals, which contain mines.

If the number is zero there can not be any mines in adjacent squares so Resultz 'turns over' all of the surrounding squares for you. This is another feature which is controlled by the custom function in response to 'flags'.

If the content of the square changes to M then you have hit a mine and you have lost the game! The location of all the mines will be revealed. In the version of the game on the Archive disc you have to discover the location of sixty mines without hitting any of them.

You can play again by clicking on the word "Resultzsweeper" in the [Board20] file.

Penguins

In Robert's original explanation of how to play the game he says:

"Tread carefully and watch out for the penguins." The original Resultz graphics package was marketed under the name 'Penguin Graphics' because the graphics package included pictograms and the example used for the pictogram was a penguin! The marketing drive included selling 'Penguin Mugs' which had amusing pictures of penguins (including a Pavaroti Penguin) on the mug!

A Small Competition

One of the 'problems' with the original game is that it is almost impossible for anyone to complete the 20 by 20 square (400 cells containing 60 mines) and get it right. Of course practice helps and some people manage to get half way—but I know of noone who has completed this game sucessfully! This version of the game is too hard.

I have two 'Competitions' for you.

The first is to modify this game so that it is much smaller (say 5 by 5).

The second is to modify the game so that you can hit up to four mines before sustaining fatal damage. By this I mean change the custom function so that it is the fifth mine which causes the procedure to terminate rather than the first one.

If you do succeed then please let me have your version of the game for publication. I am sure that there will be many Archive readers who will enjoy this Mine Sweeper game more if they can win now and again!

Finally

Thanks for all your letters and emails. Please write to me at the Abacus Training address which you'll find in Paul's Fact File at the back of Archive.