Gerald's Column
by Gerald Fitton

As a result of my references to fonts for Ovation Pro I have been asked to expand on the notes Paul included at the end of my column last month. I shall do that; then I shall introduce a topic which might be considered a bit controversial and wait for your reaction.

PostScript Typefaces

You will recall from last month's column that there are eleven typefaces (font families) which have PostScript names. These eleven PostScript typefaces have the names: AvantGarde, Bookman, Courier, Helvetica, HelveticaNarrow, NewCenturySchlbk, Palatino, Symbol, Times, ZapfChancery and ZapfDingbats. Eight of them come in Bold and Italic varieties so that the full set is thirty five fonts in all.

Acorn Fonts

It was about 17 years ago (around 1990) that we saw the advent of Acorn's new Outline Font Manager; prior to that only bit mapped fonts were available for the Archimedes. I believe it was RISC OS 2 which first included support for vector (drawn rather than bit mapped) fonts. With this RISC OS upgrade, Acorn supplied a handful of vector (called 'outline') fonts including Trinity (serif), Homerton (sans serif), Corpus (monospaced serif) and Selwyn (symbol).

Ovation

Beebug released Ovation (note the absence of the word Pro) in 1990 complete with a set of outline fonts. These outline fonts are still available and they are still shipped with Ovation. Ovation is provided as bundled software with some computer packages and the RISC OS emulators provided by Virtual Acorn. The entry level VirtualRPC-SE retails at about £80 and the top of the range product VirtualRPC-AdjustStronARM at about £120 include Ovation. Have a look at the URL: http://www.virtualacorn.co.uk/product.htm for details.

Ovation Pro

Do not confuse Ovation with Ovation Pro. In nearly all respects they are two different programs and have two different owners. Files created using one of these programs will not load into the other program. The rights to Ovation Pro are owned by David Pilling.

Ovation Pro, like Fireworkz, comes in two varieties, Ovation Pro for RISC OS and Ovation Pro for Windows. David Pilling owns both of these varieties of Ovation Pro.

Fonts for Ovation Pro

Although the original Beebug fonts are shipped with Ovation Pro for RISC OS I suggest that you do not use them any more. Even more strongly I say to you, "Do not use the original Beebug fonts for any document which you might wish to transfer to Windows and use with Ovation Pro for Windows".

RISC OS Typefaces for Ovation Pro

Have a look at the URL:

http://pilling.users.netlink.co.uk/ovationpro/fontup.html

On that URL you will find an invitation to owners of Ovation Pro for RISC OS to upgrade their original Beebug fonts to a new set of fonts designed by Tonnie Demarteau. Please note that these fonts belong to David Pilling and that you must not use them unless you own a legitimate copy of Ovation Pro for RISC OS. I have listed these typefaces below and I have included in brackets the corresponding PostScript font.

Vogue (AvantGarde), Bookmark (Bookman), Curator (Courier), SwissB (Helvetica), Paladin (Palatino), SymbolB (Symbol), Chaucer (ZapfChancery) and DPDings (not quite - ZapfDingbats). DPDings matches the Acorn Selwyn font rather better than it matches the PS font ZapfDingbats.

David has not supplied any equivalent for the PostScript typefaces NewCenturySchlbk and Times but these are covered by the Acorn typefaces NewSchbook and Trinity.

These fonts come with a PostScript Type 1 file. As I explained in an earlier Gerald's Column, the advantage of using Type 1 fonts is that PDF files are smaller than they would be if you used the earlier (Beebug - which are not Type 1) versions of the fonts.

Windows Typefaces for Ovation Pro

Have a look at the URL:

http://davidpilling.info/cd/fonts.html

If you buy Ovation Pro for Windows then you will find that there is a set of TrueType fonts with exactly the same names as the RISC OS fonts I have described in the previous section. They were designed at the same time by the same designer, Tonnie Demarteau. The Windows versions are identical in both metric and shapes to the RISC OS versions.

The set of glyphs (the characters making up the font) are deliberately more extensive than those for RISC OS; they contain the full set of the Latin encodings found in Windows codepages 1250, 1252, 1254 and 1257.

From RISC OS to Windows

If you own both Ovation Pro for RISC OS and Ovation Pro for Windows then you can create a DTP document using your RISC OS machine, save the file on your RISC OS machine and then load that file into Ovation Pro for Windows. Well, you can do that anyway but, if you are careful to use only those fonts which have the same names on your RISC OS and Windows machines (as have the fonts designed by Tonnie that I have listed above) then you will not be asked how you want to map unknown (to Windows) RISC OS fonts to a corresponding Windows font.

Let me repeat this in different words. You will want your document to look (and print) exactly the same on your Windows machine as it does on your RISC OS machine. This will happen if and only if the metrics (the character spacings including all kerning pairs) are the same for the fonts used on both RISC OS and Windows. Tonnie has designed these fonts so that they have exactly the same metrics on both platforms and, because they have the same names, the whole process of transferring your document from RISC OS to Windows is completely transparent to the user.

Impression

As far as I know Impression for Windows does not exist.

If you own Impression as well as the two Ovation Pro programs then you may use Tonnie's fonts when creating your Impression documents. These Impression documents can be ported into either Ovation Pro for RISC OS or Ovation Pro for Windows. In Ovation Pro, they will look very similar to their appearance in Impression.

I know that our esteemed editor, Paul Beverley, uses Impression rather than Ovation Pro. He has a good reason for doing this; he is familiar with the way Impression works and he is not so familiar with Ovation Pro. Nevertheless, there are many other people who have migrated from Impression to Ovation Pro; one of their reasons for doing this is because they will be able to continue to use Ovation Pro on a Windows machine.

Fireworkz

I have been asked whether Tonnie's RISC OS and Windows fonts can be used with Fireworkz. Let me repeat that you are allowed to install and use these fonts on your machines if and only if you are the legitimate owner of both Ovation Pro for RISC OS and Ovation Pro for Windows.

However, if you do own both Ovation Pro for RISC OS and Ovation Pro for Windows, plus if you own Fireworkz for RISC OS and Fireworkz for Windows then you can use Tonnie's fonts with both Fireworkz programs. If you do this then your Fireworkz documents will transfer from RISC OS to Windows as transparently as do Ovation Pro documents using these fonts. In Windows the document will look identical to its appearance in RISC OS.

Advice to Fireworkz users

My advice to owners of Fireworkz for RISC OS and Fireworkz for Windows is that Ovation Pro for RISC OS and Ovation Pro for Windows are good programs. I hesitate to suggest that you should buy both these versions of Ovation Pro if your only reason for doing so is to use Tonnie's fonts, but being able to use a full set of PostScript fonts in both RISC OS and Windows is a wonderful bonus.

Finally I must add that the font designer, Tonnie Demarteau, has taken a great deal of care with the shapes of the characters as well as the metrics. They are a beautifully crafted set of fonts and, in my opinion, the quality is at least as good as you will find anywhere and better than many fonts I have seen and, with some reluctance, used.

New Topic

I have had several emails asking me what computing equipment I have and how I use it.

I have several RISC OS machines including an A440 with RISC OS 2, an A540 and a couple of RiscPCs which I use regularly. In addition I have a PDA (the HP h4150 iPAQ) which is more portable than either my A4 RISC OS laptop or my Dell Windows laptop. However, the machine I am considering telling you about is a Windows desktop machine that I built out of parts and on which I run a couple of different RISC OS emulators.

For many of the things I do, for example sums in a large complex spreadsheet, I find that the RISC OS emulator is faster than my aging RiscPC. Also jobs which involve lots of hard drive access do run more quickly on my home made Windows machine. Sometimes I use a RISC OS emulator to do some parts of the work and then I do other bits of work on the same project or file using a Windows application. It is convenient having both the RISC OS and Windows Operating Systems present on the same machine.

I know that this use I make of a Windows machine might be considered a controversial topic for Archive, a RISC OS magazine, so I thought I would just test the waters this month to see how violent your reaction is before embarking on a series which might meet with too much resistance for our editor to stomach!

I have been asked by many of my RISC OS correspondents for advise about how hard or easy is it to build one's own Windows machine these days, how much it costs, the advantages over a ready built one and my opinion of various emulators.

I thought that I might answer some of these questions, at least in part, by sharing with you my own experience of computer building in the hope that it might save you a few bob, give you some personal satisfaction (it feels creative even if it isn't!) and you will finish up with a machine running a RISC OS emulator which has a (RISC OS) performance which is not sufficiently different from a dedicated RISC OS machine to cause you any concern.

Communications

You can email me at archive@abacusline.co.uk with comments, criticism and to let me know whether you might find an article or two about building your own Windows computer (with a RISC OS emulator installed on it) of any interest.