

# *The Quill*



## *Adventure Writing System*

The Quill is a highly professional machine code program designed to help inexperienced programmers create their own high quality machine code adventure games. Despite its simplicity of use The Quill is an extremely versatile writing tool regularly used by many well known software houses to create commercial adventures. It is now also finding wide acceptance in schools for the generation of a wide range of 'Interactive Literature' applications - indeed it is currently featured in the 'Learning with computers' exhibition from the British Council as a particularly important part of this new area of education.

The program is menu driven with helpful onscreen prompts wherever necessary and leaves about 27-30K of free memory depending on machine. All aspects of an adventure are covered in their own sub-menu e.g. Vocabulary, Location Text, Object descriptions, Movement etc. The package includes a comprehensive manual which is split into two main sections; a tutorial which takes you through writing a simple adventure step by step, and a detailed reference section describing each function in detail.

The only differences between machine versions are generally in the Colour and Sound handling. The final program can be saved to tape (or disc if fitted) as a stand alone game which will autorun on reloading without The Quill present.



## Using the Quill

The Quill consists of three main sections:-

- 1) A database of information which contains all the information about the program you are writing. E.g. The Vocabulary (words the game understands), location descriptions etc.
- 2) An interpreter, the heart of the system which uses the information in the database to execute the adventure.
- 3) A database editor, the bit that makes it all so easy, allowing the addition, editing and deleting of information in the database.

Initially the database contains only a minimum of information covering common words needed in a game and the definitions for several system commands such as QUIT or SAVE game etc.

You can add words to the vocabulary and define several words to be synonyms (mean the same) e.g. GET, TAKE and PICK could all be given the same code and whichever the player entered The Quill would treat them the same.

You merely add location descriptions as needed, and use the movement table to link them together e.g. If you have two locations numbered 0 and 1 where 0 is North of 1 you would enter the following:-

Location 0: SOUTH 1

i.e. if the player enters the word SOUTH when in location 0 then put him in location 1! It doesn't even need to be a direction it could be the word ABRACADABRA if you wanted!

Defining objects is just as easy, you give them a description and say where they start the game; at a location, carried, worn or not created yet.

Next you define any messages you will need in the game (you can always add more later as you work on the game of course). e.g. If you are going to allow them to fire a gun you might need a message like "There is a loud bang, and a cloud of smoke drifts from the end of the barrel". The Quill will give the message a number so you can use it as many times as you like.

Any of the commands the player may enter are defined in the Event table in a simple process language e.g. for the gun example:-

```
FIRE GUN  CARRIED  1      ;You are carrying object 1 (the GUN)
          MESSAGE  1      ;Print message 1 "There is a loud ...
          DONE      ;Thats all folks!
```

Quite complex commands can be built up like this if required to provide all sorts of adventure puzzles and problems.



The entire game is entirely under your control The Quill forces nothing. For example you could, instead of creating a traditional format game of the player entering commands and getting a response, write a multiple choice type game by using A,B,C etc as words in the movement table; The location description is set to the question with the possible answers, and the locations that each letter moves you to, contains the next question or a correction.

Don't take our word for it see what the Critics say:-

'produces programs on par with handwritten commercial programs.'  
SINCLAIR USER

'In my opinion, The Quill is one of the most amazing programs I have come accross. It does all the authors claim for it and a bit more. I cannot praise it highly enough...'  
COMMODORE USER

'an excellent utility.'  
COMMODORE COMPUTING INTERNATIONAL

'... a robust, well documented and very usable system.'  
YOUR SPECTRUM

'An extremely valuable utility; the best answer to the adventure writer's dream of painless programming.'  
PERSONAL COMPUTER NEWS

'Useful and impressive programming tool.'  
COMPUTER ANSWERS

'Highly recomended.'  
POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY

'Once in a while, a product comes along to revolutionise the whole microcomputer scene. The Quill is one such and will change the face of microcomputer adventure. .... With The Quill, anyone can sit down and let their imagination run riot and fashion satisfying programs.'  
MICRO ADVENTURER

'The Quill is a massively worth while investment since it is one of the few programs for the spectrum on the market which will give lasting satisfaction and arouse the creative urge.'  
CRASH

Finally a comment from the master adventurer himself....

'... gets my vote for the most useful program ever released, and surely largely responsible for the current popularity of adventures.'  
TONY BRIDGE (P.C.W.)



The Quill is available on a wide range of machines and several formats, summarised as below. Price includes disc/cassette, approx 60 page manual and a smart protective 'video' style case.

Machine	Disc Price	Cassette Price
BBC 32k/+/Master	£22.95	£16.95
Electron	N/A	£16.95
Spectrum 48k/128k	N/A (Mdrive POA)	£14.95
Amstrad CPC range	£19.95	£16.95
Commodore 64/128	£17.95	£14.95
Oric 1/Atmos	N/A	£16.95

N.B. BBC version features 30% text compression and the Disc version can be used to write games to run on tape or the Electron. All disc versions support tape as well.

Versions are also in development for several other systems.

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