ADAM Inn ACTION! by Robert W. Jones

As dedicated "Adamites" we can all agree that this is a great little machine. It does word processing, plays games, and is wonderful for just "hacking." But what can it REALLY do?

In the hotel I manage in Smithfield, RI, I have an ADAM hooked up to our master TV amplifier and run cable-TV style bulletin board messages to all 117 guest rooms. These messages provide information about guest services, local restaurants and more. The system is programmed in SmartLogo and runs continuously on Channel 3.

The operating system is simple. In SmartLogo, single letters or words can be "defined" to execute a long series of commands such as screen color, sprite shapes, print statements, and much more. For example, the "super" command that runs my system is called simply: TV. This definition is:

> TO TV
>
> MOVIES PIZZA COFFEE EATS1 EATS2 CLUB TV
>
> END

Each of those terms is a defined command that creates a new screen of text. "TV" calls each routine in turn, executes it, and moves on to the next. Note that the last command is TV, calling the whole list over again (an endless loop.) Some of the routines call sub-routines that scroll multi-page listings, activate sprites (in Logo these are called "turtles"), and other such "frills".

Just as SmartBasic looks for and automatically runs a user-defined "HELLO" file upon booting, SmartLogo auto-runs a "STARTUP" file. I have written a STARTUP file that sets up the "turtle" shapes: a stylized shield for our company symbol, a "happy face" for our coffee shop, and so on. STARTUP then "recycles" the system and loads and runs the TV file.

This is handy in case the system crashes due to power failure or other reasons. All my desk clerk has to do is insert the SmartLogo tape in the drive and hit the RESET switch. ADAM does the rest. The entire operating system and TV file loads and begins running in three minutes. The datapack can then be removed and put safely away.

After SmartLogo boots up, there is enough RAM left in ADAM for 8-12 screens of text, depending on how much use is made of graphics. The more turtles that are programmed in, the less memory space left for text. If anyone can think of a way to have access to a memory expander in SmartLogo, please let me know. I would like to run many more messages.

SmartLogo is so easy to program in due to the built-in ("resident") commands such as: CS for Clear Screen. These commands are pre-defined by the operating system and are explained in detail in the operating system manual supplied with SmartLogo.

I put the system on line last March, and naturally have made several improvements and additions. That's the really nice part about SmartLogo. The more I use it, the better I get at achieving the same results with tighter commands, leaving . more RAM available for actual text.

For example, the definition:

> TO SS
>
> PR [ ]
>
> END

causes the text to scroll up one line. Pretty easy programming, huh? SmartLogo allows 28 text characters per line with 23 lines from top to bottom of the screen. To avoid a cluttered look, I type "SS" after each line of text. This command prints a blank line between each two lines of text, reducing the available text to 11 or 12 lines per screen.

It is now only one step further to the definition:

> TO S
>
> TO S :N
>
> REPEAT :N [SS]
>
> END

…where N equals the number of blank lines you wish SmartLogo to insert after a print statement. If I type "S 23", Logo will insert 23 blank lines, in effect scrolling the current text off the screen. Otherwise, I would have to type " [ ] " 23 times in a row. That sort of thing quickly fills the system, leaving less room for actual text.

The hardware hook-up wasn't too difficult because TV channel 3 is blank on our system. I did have to install a low-cost VHF-RF (radio frequency) amplifier to carry ADAM's Channel 3 output from the front desk to the utility room through a 50-foot co-axial cable.

Also, I found I needed a Channel 3 bandpass filter to avoid causing interference on adjacent channels 2 and 4, which are NOT blank. This whole procedure took less than a day, including tuning the bandpass filter. This setup has worked very nicely for over nine months.

Possibilities for your own use include putting a TV in a store window with ADAM hooked up, and advertising your "hot specials" or other attention getters. Since that would be a single-set hookup, no RF amplifier or band-pass filter is needed.

If anyone is interested in installing a similar system, feel free to call me for assistance. This technique is ONLY easily applied to ADAM or other small computer with an RF output designed to display on a standard TV… IBM & Mac users need not apply!

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