

## RISCOS pico 8-BIT EDUCATIONAL TITLES

The supplied archive contains a directory structure to support a number of 8-bit educational titles running natively on the Raspberry Pi under RISCOS pico. All the programs are accessed through a MODE7 menu structure reminiscent of systems in use in the eighties.



In the eighties the name Anita Straker was synonymous with quality mathematics and logic puzzle software. She was a prolific program writer and was known for the elegant simplicity of her MODE7 programs. The majority of the programs shown above are Anita Straker titles.

Program I, Genetics, links to a suite of Biology programs from the Warwick Science Simulations, published by Longmans. These are exceptionally well-written and allow experimentation with genetics concepts. They were notable for the quality graphics they used. I actually bought and used these programs in 1982 to teach A-Level Biology students.

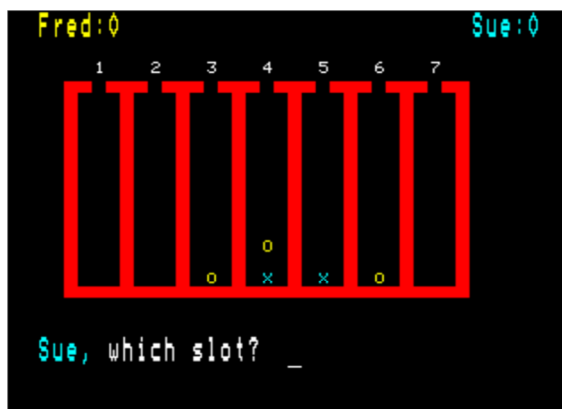
As a collector of educational software I approached the publisher Pearsons, who had bought the Longman name. Unfortunately they no longer have any interest in the old 8-bit software they produced, have no archives and disbanded the team who produced the software ages ago. This title turned up in a mixed batch of discs I was given to archive.

The Lasermaths title is one of my own. It was written in 1981-82 under the Logical Educational Software label. Its claim to fame was twofold; shortly after it was released it featured on the BBC program "Pebble Mill at One" as an example of high quality educational software and latterly it proved to be one of the most-copied pieces of software throughout Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. At that time Education Authorities paid little attention to software copyright. Over the years I had lost this title and it was only when I was wading through over a 1000 floppy discs I had been loaned to archive that it came to light.

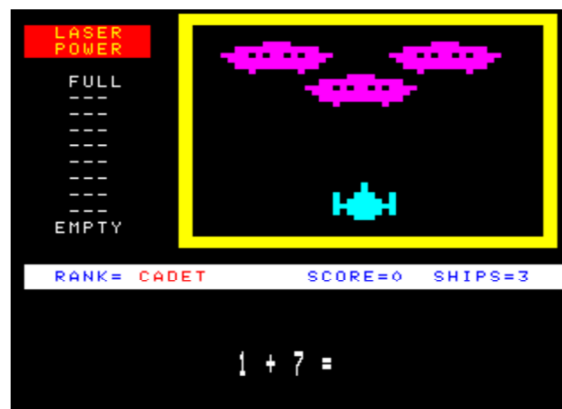
In the mid-eighties a company called CommuniTel produced an amazing viewdata emulation system that had the ability to create and search viewdata databases. Viewdata was the world wide web of its day and spawned numerous bulletin boards. The software would run under emulation on the old Archimedes computers using !65Host but would not run natively on the Raspberry Pi as the software used 6502 code.

Since the BBC BASIC on the Raspberry Pi is pretty quick under RISCOS I re-engineered the search software to run natively in BASIC V. The Viewdata option from the menu can access and display two databases that I have collected, the original CommuTel demonstration database and an Econet manager's database from Acorn. I added to the original software functionality to allow the command D to switch between databases.

Below are some screen displays showing some of the software in action.



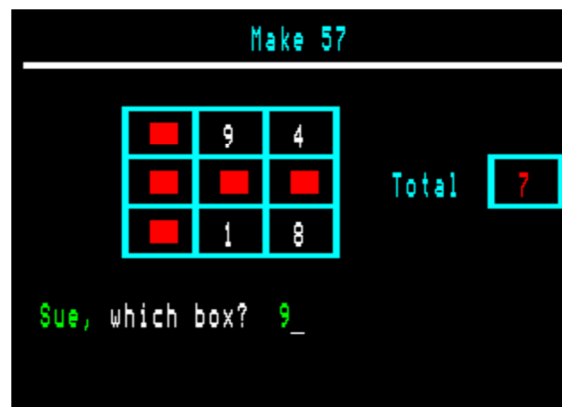
A game of Connect



Starting Lasermaths



A Viewdata page



Part way through Make57

### Why do I do this?

The simple answer is "because I can" and it is a challenge. A more complex reason is that I have seen that many of these titles are still extremely good educational programs. Running on the Raspberry Pi under RISCOS pico there are no distractions as one would get on a Windows machine or an iPad. RISCOS pico is incredibly fast to start and can be easily customized to load the CAL menu on boot. This means that teachers can have different SD cards for different lessons.

### **The future?**

I have many more of these programs that will readily convert to RISCOS and I am still collecting. As well as educational titles I am looking to port some games. The Sphinx Adventure is one ready to roll out. All that is required is that the software be well-written, that the software does not use direct disc access to load files and that any machine code is generic and does not rely on the presence of BBC micro hardware.

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