

TPUG Newsletter

Views and News of Toronto Pet Users Group, Inc.

c/o John Easton, 258 Lake Promenade, Etobicoke, Ontario, M8W 1B3 phone (416) 251-1511

Fall—Winter 2006

From the President -

Commodore user groups have been around since the 80's. Anyone associated with a user group is familiar with the benefits they offer. Most important is the fellowship of others with a similar interest. This in turn forms a base of knowledge and experience in which all can draw from. Attending the club meetings you are exposed to demos of software and hardware. They provide the opportunity to discuss problems with ours who have already had similar experiences.

The Commodore community was not confined to a single club for information; you also had other resources in which to obtain a larger knowledge base. In the early days there were so many clubs that it was possible to attend their meetings as well. BBS'es were another source of information and software, but a lot of us were limited as to how many of them we would use because of long distance calling charges. Then, along came the internet, a much larger and powerful concept of the BBS. Now, long distance calling charges were no longer a barrier. You could contact a website in another city or province or from the other side of the world as easily as a website from down the street.

Commercial shows were a great opportunity to see the newest and the greatest products and information. Vendors would be eager to show off their wares and answer questions. Unfortunately Commercial shows became a thing of the past. The user groups now host the shows and there is still new information and products coming out even after 25 years.

The shows still have vendors; although they are fewer in numbers they are a welcome sight when you consider that the main stream market died out in the early 90's. Individuals demonstrate their talents and knowledge which gives others the opportunity to learn and be inspired resulting in new projects. New information and products are still coming out even after 25 years.

In September a group of us went down to Chicago and attended the ECCC expo. The ECCC expo was held to replace the SWRAP expo which unfortunately was cancelled. Jason Compton paid for the ECCC expo out of his own

pocket just to be able to visit with friends from the Commodore Community. This selfless act was very beneficial to all of those who attended. We made a new friend, Craig Ernster and ran into some old friends, such as Dale Sidebottom from the LUCKY club, Bill Griffin from Censible Software, and Jerry Ellsworth who designed the C1 and the DTVs and many others. The first demo was given by Craig Ernster discussing methods of getting around write protection on software for the Commodore 64. Dave Murray demonstrated his hacked DTVs, which included a 4 line by 16 characters LCD (monochrome) display and using a LCD (colour) screen from a Playstation. You can visit Dave's website at www.dtvhacking.info to see his hacking videos.

As in most expos there are several people with their high tech 64s with peripherals such as IDE drives, flash cards and LCD monitors, to name a few. Talking to others we find out they are working on projects to resolve problems facing the Commodore community like what can be done to use USB devices on our C64.

December 2nd, 2006, TPUG will be hosting the World Of Commodore expo. The expo is held at the same time of the year as the original World Of Commodore used to be when Commodore it-self was hosting it. The charismatic Jim Butterfield, a founder of TPUG, an 8 bit guru and TV personality from the BITS AND BYTES programs, will be here. He is a delight to listen to and a great educator. At last contact Jerry Ellsworth says she will be here and willing to do a demo. Rob Adder will demo the "Prophet 64", a music cartridge. Greg Nacu will demo a new adventure/role playing game for the C64, called "Newcomer". James Long will be doing a demo called: "C64 Integrated Development Environment for PC with cross-transfer to C64 for verification / execution". As a bonus, it doubles as a MIDI Driver for C64 with a sound engine. Those are just a few of the demos and people that are lined up. Check out our website for information on draw prizes. Items for the Draw Prizes are being added all the time and will be added right up until the start of the show.

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Member Information

Voice Info

We have discontinued our TPUG phone listing - contact members as listed here at home phones.

Website: www.tpug.ca
e-mail: info@tpug.ca

Membership Rates

Canada	\$25
USA	US \$25
International	US \$25

Board of Directors

President	Tom Luff
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Meetings	Tom Luff and Ernie Chorny
Shows	Tom Luff & Ernie Chorny
Webmaster	Leif Bloomquist

Newsletter

Editor John Easton (416) 251-1511
jeaston@rogers.com

Meeting Schedule

Westside and Amiga West: Third Thursday of the month (except summer) at Alderwood United Church, 44 Delma Drive. Delma Drive is just west of and parallel to Browns Line, south of the Queen Elizabeth Highway, north of Horner Avenue. From the west, exit QEW at Evans Avenue, east on Evans to 2nd stoplight, south on Gair to Delma Drive. From the north or east, follow signs from QEW or Hwy. 427 to Browns Line, exit right to Evans Avenue, turn south on Gair (first stoplight) to Delma.

Contact - Tom Luff (905) 812-5231 e-mail: tomluff@rogers.com
or Ernie Chorny(905) 279-2730 chorny@tamcotec.com

From your Editor ...

OK Folks ...It's Newsletter time again, and for a change I'll merely pass on what I had to say LAST year. Of course, it was Newsletter time long ago, but then, what with this new-fangled electronic communication stuff, the need (or reality) of the written word (like, on paper) seems to have dropped in urgency. There are now countless Newsgroups and websites wherein one might gather all the latest gossip and rumours about our favourite out-of-date (chuckle - out-of-date?) machinery. I chuckle, because continuing development on these 8-bit machines are nothing less than spectacular. And that is just one reason to attend the World of Commodore Expo next month. Should I mention that pre-registration via the website is a good idea?

By way of illustration of this constant information update, let me point out the local Commodore info site, **TorontoCBM**, an email discussion group for users of the good old Commodore computers (Commodore 64, VIC 20, etc.) in the Toronto area.

1. In your Web browser, go to <http://www.freelists.org/list/torontocbm>
 2. Type your email in the box provided
 3. Select "Subscribe" where it says "Choose an action"
 4. Press the Go button
 5. In a few minutes, you will receive an automatic confirmation email. Simply press Reply in your email program and then Send to confirm your subscription.
 6. Email messages from the list will appear with [torontocbm] in the subject line
 7. To send an email to everyone on the list, send it to torontocbm@freelists.org
- From the web link above you can also read archives of all the past discussions on the list. So, there you have it, an instant substitute for this venerable (well, would you believe, Grey-Haired?) Newsletter

John ... y'r humble Editor

TPUG Newsletter is meant to be published somewhat quarterly by the Toronto Pet Users Group Inc. (TPUG). TPUG is a volunteer non-profit corporation dedicated to the service and support of owners and users of Commodore computers.

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Notice to new owners of SuperPet and CBM 8296 machines

TPUG has copies of the Waterloo LANGUAGE DISKS (3 in 4040 format) as supplied with the SuperPet on original purchase.

TPUG has the EXECUDESK disk (8050 format) as supplied with the CBM 8296 on original purchase.

These disks are an integral part of the operating systems of the above machines and since Commodore insisted on referring owners of these machines to TPUG for service, we have added these somewhat proprietary (and also virtually unobtainable) disks to our library - all part of the TPUG mandate of service to our members.

We also will attempt to search out copies of original program disks to replace corrupted disks. In this category you will find such programs as VISICALC, WordPro, and PaperClip.

MMC64 Card Reader for the Commodore 64

The MMC64 allows you to use the Multimedia and SecureDigital cards known from the PDA market on your Commodore 64. This means with MMC64 you can access any of these cards of sizes up to 4 GB formatted with FAT16 directly after power-up. The built-in flashable BIOS with its integrated file browser allows you to load and start games and applications, play SID files with the integrated player, or write a D64 image to floppy disk. Furthermore, the MMC64 features a 'clock port' for expansions like RR-Net, and it has a pass-through expansion port that lets you use e.g. the Retro Replay or the S-CPU together with the MMC64.



The latest expansion (only!) for the MMC64 is called MP3@64. It is an MP3 expansion module for the clock port connector featuring a DSP and a 20-bit D/A converter, enabling the Commodore 64 to play MP3 files in CD quality!

ItemPrice in EUR incl. VAT,excl. s&h MMC64, MMC and SD card reader for Commodore 64 (2nd edition with blue PCB) (Individual Computers) 53.90 Prices incl. German VAT and excl. shipping costs

To add an item to your order, please click onto the shopping cart icon on the right hand side of the item's price. The colour underneath the icon indicates the item's delivery status:

= in stock

http://www.vesalia.de/e_mmc64.htm

INSTANT 1581 DRIVE KIT
(Just add a standard PC floppy drive)

\$49.95

Includes upper and lower shell with logic board & faceplate. A serial cord and power supply box.

- Power Supply only (1581/41-II) \$24.95
- Upper case only \$ 9.95
- Lower case only \$ 9.95
- 1581 Logic Board only \$14.95
- Serial Cable only \$ 8.95

OPTIONAL:

- 1581 JIFFYDOS ROM add \$32.95 plus 10% shipping (15% USA)

Taxes are extra for Ontario and Canada residents (PST/GST)

Mail cheque or Money Order to:
JP PBM Products by Mail
Box 60515, Jane/Wilson P/O
Downsview, ON, M3L 1B0

Note: Dealers and User Groups Welcome

JP. PBM Products by Mail is the NEW Manufacturer of Super Snapshot Cartridge V5.22 - NOW SHIPPING

*CURRENT Commodore Club MEMBERS SAVE \$5 MORE off the regular price before freight and taxes.

Mail Cheque/M.O. to:
JP PBM Products by Mail
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SSv5.22 Cartridge	\$ 74.95
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32K RAM add \$19	+\$_____
subtotal \$_____	
+10% Freight (15% USA)\$_____	

All Prices Are Cdn. Funds
10% Exchange On US Funds
Send \$2 for a catalogue
on disk (1541 format)

Subtotal	\$_____
Ontario Res. add 8% PST+	\$_____
Canada Res. add 6% GST+	\$_____
TOTAL (CDN. FUNDS)	\$_____

Visit JPPBM.COM for full product listings.

The show starts at 10 am at the Alderwood United Church (44 Delma Drive, Etobicoke) and will run till 6 pm at which time we will break for Dinner. (If there are more demos we can return to the church at 8 pm) For dinner we are making arrangements at a family restaurant close to the church that will offer generous portions of good food at a reasonable price. Check our website www.tpug.ca for more information. The website is updated from time to time so revisit it weekly for any changes. Out of towners please check out the hotel information and links. It is always a good idea to book early.

Come on out and see us at the World of Commodore expo. You are sure to have a good time and you are bound to make new friends. And remember do not be intimidated by the knowledge of others. We all came into this world with the same knowledge and had to learn the rest. What others know may be what you want to learn. This knowledge is not a competition but rather a treat to learn.

I hope to see you all there at the World of Commodore.

Regards, Tom Luff

Tom's World

Recently four of us from Toronto drove down to Chicago for the ECCC expo. The trip is about 10 hours in length. In a car with kids it becomes important to bring something to entertain them or run the risk of driving the driver nuts (some drivers it's a short drive). For adults we have to entertain ourselves. Talk will dominate the first hour or two, than silence falls over the group. It's not as bad as I make it sound, but the point is, aside from the driver the rest of us slept or wrote notes (sometimes we wonder if he is sleeping as well). The trip can be long and boring at times even though it was a good bunch of people to be with. Not a lot of fun. But the expo was worth the trip.



A week or two after the trip I was out looking for parts for another project. Since I use public transportation it becomes more of a problem to avoid the rain. At one transfer point, I had time to kill and decided to check out the FUTURE SHOP, an electronic appliance store, just to get out of the rain. Inside I came across a portable DVD player. Now I already had one but there were some features on this one that intrigued me. My portable DVD player had a seven inch screen but this one was ten inches. Other features include audio/video input, a SD card reader so I could plug the card from my camera into it, the screen rotates 180 degrees and comes with its own case which can be strapped to the back of a car's seat. What cinched the deal was the price. It regularly sold for \$300, but I was in the day after the sale ended and they had not removed the sale price off the shelf. I paid \$ 200 for it, otherwise it would have stayed on the shelf.

With the 10" portable DVD player and my original DTV joystick, not only will we be able to watch DVDs but we will be able to beat each others high scores and if I get off my butt and get the hacking done, we will be able to program from the back seat.

Tom

World Of Commodore

Toronto Expo

To be hosted by the Toronto PET Users Group, now in its 27th year.

December 2, 2006.

Hours are 10am till 10pm.

**At Alderwood United Church,
44 Delma Dr (Browns Line/Evans Ave),
Toronto, Ontario, Canada.**

**Accommodations at ... Motel 27 (650 Evans Ave)
(Note: Motel 27 changes to Best Value Inn Dec 1/06.
(416) 255-5500 - info@motel27.com**

There will be vendors selling new and old products, Demos of innovative ideas and guest speakers revealing facts about days gone by from Commodore and TPUG.

Admission is \$15 per family.

Tables are \$15 for the first one and \$10 for each additional table.

Guestrooms are \$79/night and will accommodate 4 people.

(Ask for group name: TPUG)

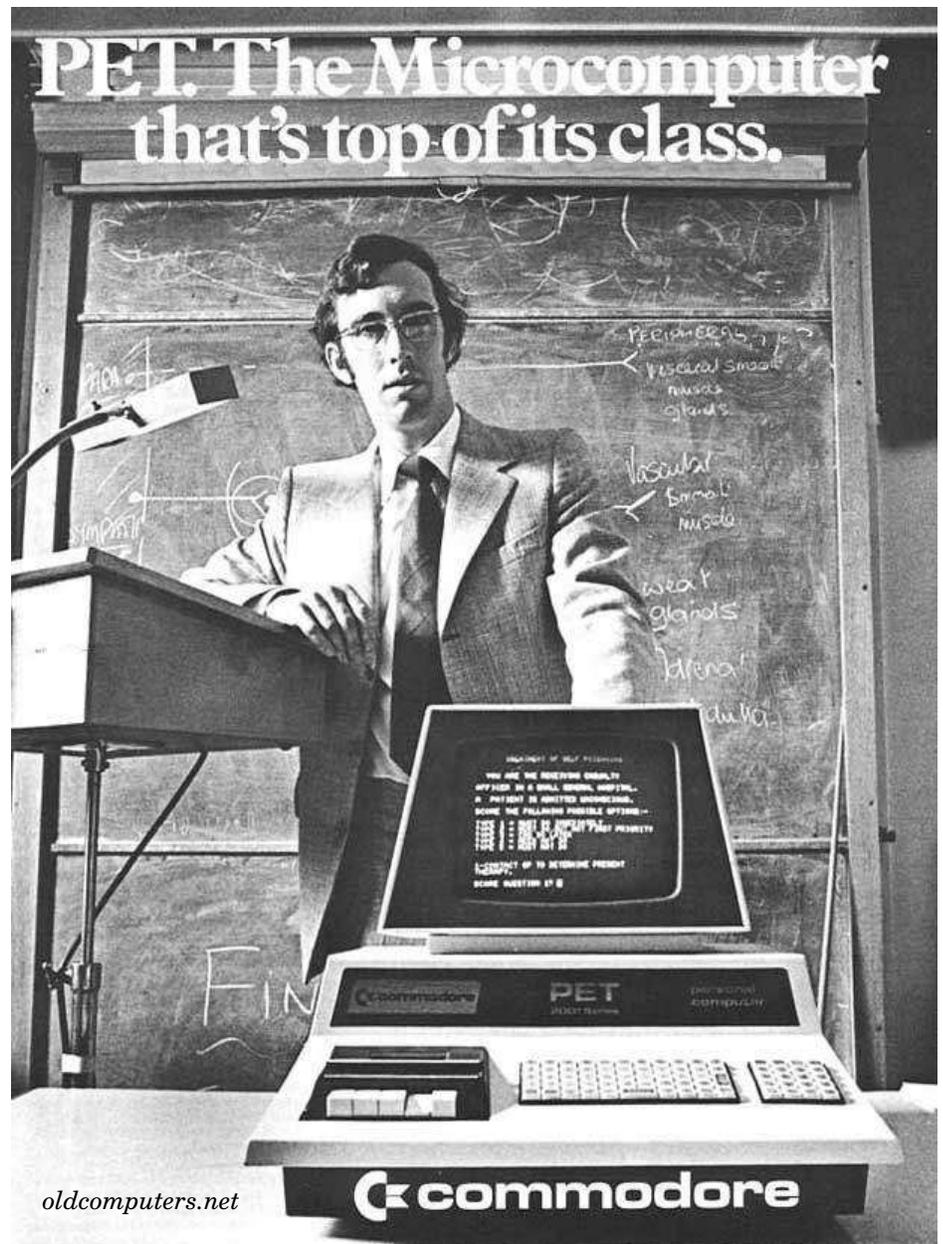
All funds are in Canadian dollars.

TPUG will set up a freebie table and there will also be door prizes and a raffle.

On Friday TPUG will have a hospitality room at the church where overnight guests can gather and say hello to old friends. Saturday will be the main event. Sunday morning the overnight guests are invited to a round table to discuss the weekend.

For more information visit our web site, www.tpug.ca/woc. Please pre-register early so TPUG can get a better idea as to how many are coming and their needs.

Crazy Canadians Commute and Checkout Cincinnati Commodore Convention



oldcomputers.net

The Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club (CCCC) is a well-known and very active Commodore user group. They are present at most other “Expos” with an impressive and well-organized selection of Commodore hardware and software for sale. This year they decided to hold their own Commodore “Expo” for the first time, on June 3-4, 2006.

Joe Palumbo, Joe's dad Paul, and myself were able to attend from Toronto and represent TPUG. Jim Butterfield was also there, but he drove down on his own the day before. We had an uneventful drive down to Cincinnati. Crossing the border with a huge pile of software in the back of the truck presented no difficulties this time.

CCCC 2006 was held at the Drawbridge Inn, a fascinating venue just outside of Cincinnati (Fort Mitchell, Kentucky). It has an old-world medieval theme, perfect for “old” computers! A large billboard out front welcomed all the attendees, and a very large room (3,800 square feet) was rented for the weekend.

Friday night was the vendor and demonstrator setup. One wall was devoted to demonstrations and programming. A large number of C64s and VIC20s were set up near the middle of the room for anyone to use. A projector and screen were at the front of the room, and the various vendors were distributed around.

Vendors included CCCC themselves selling software and hardware, JPPBM selling C64 software and 1581 drive 'kits', and FWD Computing who sold Amiga software and DVDs of old radio programs and sci-fi-themed music. The Dayton AmiTech group was there as well.

The Expo formally opened on Saturday morning. It was noticeably more laid back than previous Expos, with plenty of time to wander around and see the demos, chat, program, and shop. Approximately 45 people attended.

The first demonstration was given by Jeff Ledger. He demonstrated how he had hooked a PICAXE processor up to his SX64. PIC processors are low-cost but easily programmable devices. Jeff talked about how this has given him the ability to work on much more sophisticated hobby projects, and can now do things like control a CD Player from his SX64.

Jim Brain was up next, and he gave everyone an update on two of his current projects. **The first is C=Key, an interface board that lets you use a dead C64 keyboard as a PS/2 keyboard for your PC.** It also works the other way, and lets you use a PS/2 keyboard on your C64.

His second project in the works is the uIEC, pronounced "micro I E C." (IEC is the name of the serial bus that the Commodore 64, 64DTV, VIC20, and 128 use.)

The uIEC is a small board that lets you take a Compact Flash card (the kind used in digital cameras), load it up with games using your PC, and then put it on your C64 in place of a 1541 floppy drive! A typical compact flash card will easily hold thousands and thousands of C64 games, for instance. This is an extremely exciting project, as it represents a modern way to replace the old floppy disks which aren't available any more. The also uIEC supports subdirectories and works with JiffyDOS.

My demo was next. Since my son was born last December (exactly a week after the World of Commodore!), I haven't had much time to work on hobby projects. So I instead demonstrated a program called GuruTerm on behalf of the programmer (Joel Ricci), who lives in Sweden.

GuruTerm is the world's first "Telnet" program for the C64 and RR-Net Ethernet cartridge. Using GuruTerm, you can call Commodore BBSes directly over the Internet (for free!).

We also managed to do another "first" at the Expo - wireless Internet access with a C64. Instead of wiring up all the rooms, the Drawbridge lend out tiny little wireless Ethernet boxes. Sure enough - they work with a Commodore 64, too! A very exciting discovery.

Unfortunately, my adaptor box quit working halfway through the demo. Jim Butterfield covered for me while I ran to the front desk for a replacement. Jim repeated past "programming jokes" with examples, showing how *not*

to write BASIC software.

I finished my demo, and that was the end of the official program for Saturday. But just like at past Expos, that's when the real fun started. We went out to a local buffet and quickly returned to the Inn for more shenanigans.

Jeri Ellsworth, designer of the CommodoreOne and 64DTV joystick, brought out a PlayStation 2 and a hilarious Karaoke game. The rest of the evening was spent singing along with classic 80s tunes. Jeri even brought a pair of classic rollerskates and zipped around the Expo room, encouraging more people to join in the Karaoke. The fun went on until at least 3 a.m.

On Sunday, even though we were all very tired, there were two additional demos. Dale Sidebottom from the Louisville Commodore Klub International (LUCKI) demonstrated his C64-controlled T-shirt making process. It tied in nicely with Roger Lawhorn's system for transferring pictures from his digital camera to his C64 through a Linux PC. Dale and Roger took pictures of several people and made them famous on T-shirts—whether they wanted to be or not!

The last demo was from someone in the Cincinnati area (I didn't get his name, unfortunately) who demonstrated his Commodore 128-controlled Christmas lights.

That marked the official end of the Expo, but many of us were staying for another day or so to visit some more and do some sight-seeing. The Expo ended with a bit of a treat - all the C64s on display were free for the taking!

Thanks to Dave "Snogpitch" Witmer, Mark "Dragos" Gladson, and Oliver "Six" VieBrooks of CCCC (plus anyone I forgot) for putting on an excellent Expo! We are all looking forward to another one next year.

Leif Bloomquist



The World's Smallest "DIGI"!

By Leif Bloomquist

About Digis on the Commodore 64

As a Commodore owner, you're aware of how innovative the SID chip was for its time, with its three voices and different waveforms. But the SID has another way to produce sound - a "fourth voice", if you will, in the form of digitized sound samples. These are usually referred to as "digis".

Digis work by manipulating the volume register (54296 or \$D418 hex) at high speed. You can hear this effect yourself. Turn on your C64, turn the volume on your monitor or speakers up a bit, and then type:

```
POKE 54296,15
```

You will hear a slight "pop" from the speaker. The effect is even more pronounced on older C64s, due to a slight design flaw in the SID circuit. But this flaw was used by programmers to great effect for digitized speech or drums in game music.

By changing this register very quickly, you can play back digitized samples on the C64. With 4 bits dedicated to the volume register, you even get 16 levels of sampling resolution which makes them sound even better.

The TinySID Contest

The TinySID contest, organized by Stefano Tognon in Italy, is an "online C64 music-programming competition made in love of SID music." It challenges people to write songs for the C64 and SID chip, that are either 256 bytes (yes, *bytes*), 512 bytes, or 1,024 bytes (1KB) in length.

The website for the contest is here. This is the second year it has been held.
<http://digilander.libero.it/ice00/tsid/tinysid2/index.html>

I decided to enter the contest this year. I had been playing around with digis on the C64 and thought - what is the smallest digi possible? With some experimentation, I found that 256 bytes was about the smallest digi that still sounded good. Any less than that and the sample became too rough and crackly.

However, I still needed room for the code to play back the digi, and to store the notes for a short "song". So I would not be able to enter the 256 byte category, I had to move up to the 512 byte category.



Creating the Mini Digi

To start, I needed samples to work with. Note that a digi has 4-bit resolution, but a byte has 8 bits. So I was actually able to cram *two* digis together, one in the upper four bits, and one in the lower four bits.

Also, it is possible to change the pitch or frequency of a digi, by playing it back faster or slower. So I decided to make my entry a drum solo, with two different instruments. By changing the pitch, I could simulate more instruments.

To create the drum sound digis, I used a Windows program called 'FruityLoops' (www.fruityloops.com). Fruity-loops is a PC-based music and "looping" software for creating electronic music. I created a bass drum sample, and a snare drum sample.

From there, I manipulated the sample in another Windows program called GoldWave (www.goldwave.com) to be only four bits per sample. Finally, I wrote my own software in Microsoft Visual Basic (the modern version of BASIC on the C64!) to change the samples so they contained only positive numbers.

Now that I had my samples, I needed to write software in Machine Language on the C64 to play them back. Machine Language is necessary to get the playback speeds, BASIC is too slow!

Each note in the "song" has three elements:

- Which sample to play (1 or 2)
- Playback frequency
- Duration (time before the next note)

I came up with a scheme where I could pack all this information into a single byte. The highest bit determined the sample. Three bits were used for the playback frequency. Four bits were used for the duration. This way, I had 16 choices for the duration, which could be evenly divided into whole, quarter, half, and sixteenth notes. I used the C64's Jiffy clock to determine the elapsed time.

By changing the frequency, I could simulate other instruments: When sped up, a bass drum sounds like a tom-tom drum. A snare when played faster sounds like a hi-hat.

Pulling it all Together

The last thing to do was to actually write the drum solo. Using Excel on the PC, I generated a spreadsheet that would allow me to easily write the song as a series of notes. Excel would then “pack” the song into the bytes using the format described above.

I assembled the song, software, and digis together using the DASM Assembler (<http://www.atari2600.org/DASM/>) on my PC and transferred it to my C64. From there, I tweaked the solo a little bit and went through a few iterations until I was happy with how it sounded.

Here's the breakdown of the final program:

Samples: 256 bytes

Playback code: 143 bytes

The song: 109 bytes

TOTAL: 508 bytes

Then two bytes are needed for the load address (\$0801) and I was done, with two bytes to spare!

The Results

While I received many technical compliments, I still came in last place in the 512-byte category. The judges' commentary is given below:

* But were sample tiny music impossible..? Good engine!

* Clicke-di-clak. :)

* Whooa! Impressive

* Good concept, I suppose, but didn't really work for me. Perhaps some sort of soft synth or sample generator or something would have worked better.

* Bah.. “cool”, not.

I was still very pleased that I managed to make the digis work in such a small space! Next year I will try again.

If you want to learn more, the source code to the program is available at the contest website (given above), along with all the other entries.

Leif

Hi all,

Several people recently asked me about how to read/write DSDD 1581 disks under Windows 2K/XP without any special cables or hardware. Here's a quick tutorial.

1. You need to read or write the disk as an entire .D81 image. Some tools for manipulating D81 images and adding/removing programs are:

-**DirMaster** (www.style64.org)

-**64 Copy** (www.64copy.com)

-**Star Commander** (<http://sta.c64.org/sc.html>)

2. You can read or write the images with either of these tools:

-**OmniFlop**

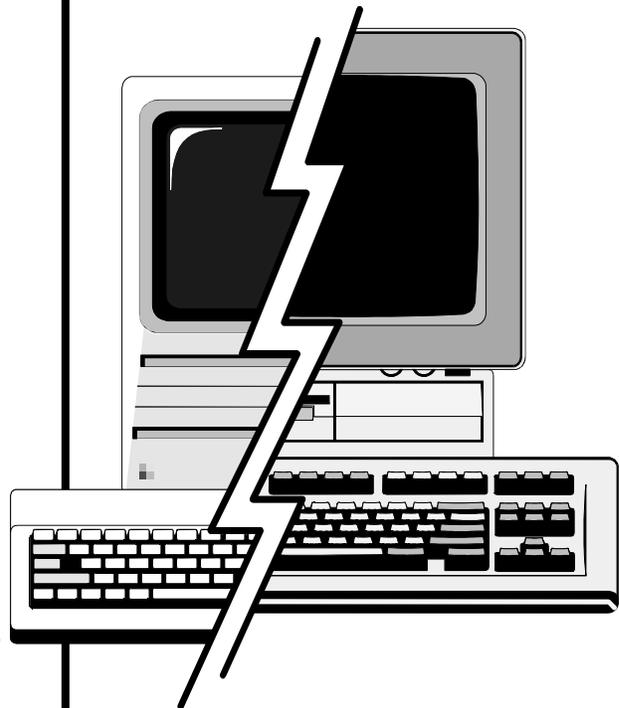
(<http://www.shlock.co.uk/Utils/OmniFlop/OmniFlop.htm>)

-**1581Disk** (<http://obo.homeip.net/1581disk.zip>)

Instructions are included with the programs. For what its worth, I couldn't get OmniFlop to work on my PC, but many others have used it just fine.

1581Disk works very well and is super-simple to install and use (just type '1581disk a: mydiskimage.d81' for example.)

Regards,**Leif**



What Commodores get used for in 2006

- Leif Bloomquist

I recently took an informal poll of Commodore users on the Usenet group comp.sys.cbm regarding what they use their Commodores for. Here are some of the responses:

David Mueller:

One 128DCR with 2 1571s mostly for Games, Programming and Looking-Great-Next-To-My-PC and of course for Questions when visitors see my room :).

An Amiga600 (if it counts) somewhere under the Computer desk, I take this thing up sometimes for a little gaming and trying to get this Amiga-PC-Corssdos Stuff to work (no luck yet).

One C64 at work (in the lab), monitoring Measurements (and for Games, of course).

Jeff Ledger:

My SX sits on my desk next to my PC, shamefully it hasn't been used for much more than connecting to Quantum Link Reloaded.

Most of my hardware is used for either gaming or tel-bbsing, although recently I've been playing with the 128's basic.

"Stealth":

A single C64C with two missing keys and a LED, accompanied by a 1541-II with a missing power supply. Right now, both are sitting there waiting for a combo power supply and a monitor cable. From there on out, it's expansion and chassis modding time.

Cameron Kaiser:

A single 128DCR with Datel cartridge expander, Turbo232, FastLoad, SuperSnapshot v5 and a UDS-10, with a side-car 1571 and a switchbox for accessing shared volumes through 64HDD. Used for ... whatever. :)

Rick Balkins:

Currently, none of my C= computers except the 64DTV are hooked up (shamefully) due to not enough power outlets or space to have them actively displayed.

Other than the C64DTV (which I have 2 of them), I have my PCs running VICE and other C= emulators that I use for most of my Commodore activities including gfx work and coding work.

David Murray:

Commodore 64DTV (completely modded) is primary commodore I use with my 1581 on my desk because it takes up little space.

Commodore 64 (breadbox style) in the closet hooked to 1084 monitor and 1541 disk drive. Has been hacked, soldered, etc... in experiments. Don't care if I ruin it as these are easy to replace and I have several more.

So what do I "do" with them? Well, mainly I'm working on a variety of experiments for my shuttlecraft I'm building.. yes, I'm building a life-sized shuttlecraft from star-trek in my backyard. And it will need a computer. Website (needs to be updated) is here:
<http://galaxy22.dyndns.org/shuttlecraft/index.html>

Guy Macon:

I use it to develop 6502 and Z80 assembly language programs that get embedded into children's toys.

Golan Klinger:

I've gone 100% with emulation and I still feel like I'm part of the community. I use to have a great deal of Commodore hardware but I didn't have enough space to have it all set up so I kept it boxed up in closets and basements.

I downloaded VICE and Power64 (an emulator for the Mac) and was pleasantly surprised to learn how far emulators had advanced. The emulation was near to perfect and I was able to do things that I couldn't do on a real C64.

Now I spend a few hours every day playing games, programming, connecting to Commodore bulletin boards etc. and I'm having way more fun than I ever remember having with a real 64. Oh, I also have a C64DTV which I started to mod and I'll finish one of these days.

"AxiMaxi":

Perhaps next year, in my new house, they will see some daylight again. The SX64 is planned to be included in a musical / MIDI setup.

John Elliot:

I am posting this with Novaterm 9.6/10 from c64 mode using the 128 80 column screen. All my e-mail is to and from the above address using Tin.

My blogs (usually written only to myself :>) are posted so that with Links & Hyperlink I can view intended colours, character size & other emphasis markups.

My web page (not revised in long time, include parallel frames viewable with Links on my 64/128.

Leif Bloomquist:

C64 #1. Runs Jamming Signal TelBBS @ bbs.jammingsignal.com. Hooked up to a VIC-1011A and a single 1541.

C64 #2. This is the blue 64C that I keep hooked up for main use - Games, programming, etc. My IDE64, RR-Net, etc. are on here.

VIC20. Hooked up in my Rec. room for games. I've collected about 120 cartridges for it. This is my original from age 13.

PET 8296. Was dead when I got it, working now thanks to this group! I actually found a use for this. I keep it set up next to my chest freezer in the basement, and my wife and I use it to keep track of what is in the freezer and when it went in. Just uses a simple BASIC program I put together in an evening. With 2031LP drive.

SX64. Not much, I must admit. Occasionally got used to play games on the patio in summer.

Matt N3SOZ:

Used for VHF packet ham radio, when connected to my AEA PK64 TNC. Also used for games, via a 1541 or my laptop through the HDD64 interface and cable. At various times I've run Linux and Contiki on it, unfortunately I haven't connected it to the internet (yet).

Why Emulation Isn't Enough

<http://user.tninet.se/~pug510w/datormuseum/vic20software.html>

0. Emulation is quite good these days, but not 100% accurate. Not the graphics and certainly not the sound which is pretty unlike. Especially the noise channel.

1. It's a pain to find the right keys on the emulator. Not only the graphical signs, but normal characters like =,* etc.

2. If you program on the emulator, you could end up with a non functioning program on a real VIC-20. As we recently found out, the VIC emulation in VICE has bugs that can cause this to happen (for example POKE36869,72). Also, all color combinations on VICE are readable and clear. Not so on a real VIC.

3. One of the reasons of making a VIC-20 program is the amazed feeling of how it can be possible to do such a thing on the limited vic-20 hardware/or basic. If you don't run it on the VIC-20 hardware, then where is that feeling? You are running your program on a CPU monster! There is a special feeling in making it possible on a 25 year old machine.

4. There is also a special feeling of using a 25 year old computer for things like word processing or for making pages for your homepage. Because most people don't think this is possible. But there is no meaning at all in doing such a thing through emulation. That's just silly.

5. You can use real joysticks, paddles and other hardware devices with a real VIC-20. I really like my VIC-1020 ex-

pansion port expander. It's cool to have many carts plugged in at the same time and use functions from them simultaneously. But where is the fun in attaching a couple of cartridge image files in an emulator???

6. If you have the 9v VIC-20 and a cold room, you can warm your hands on your dear VIC-20! ;-)

7. The VIC-20 looks nice!!! So does all of the accessories.

8. There is a joy in getting hold of an old run down VIC-20 to fix it up into almost-new condition. And maybe improve it a bit too ;-)

9. It's fun to collect and buy new stuff for your VIC-20 at bargain prices. Cartridges, books and other things.

10. There are no computers like the VIC-20 today. Hobby computers. A computer you can understand how it works, to experiment with, to learn, to have fun with because of the computer itself. Modern computers are tools or game machines. You buy them to be able to run the available programs, not to make your own programs and explore the computer itself.

11. VIC-20 is a very inexpensive hobby, yet fun and giving. And all VIC-20 enthusiasts are nice and helpful! I don't know why, but that's the way it is. The friendly computer has friendly users! ;-)



And the internet makes us closer than was possible before. Now your friends at home don't have to have a VIC-20. You can develop programs with a Canadian or a German for example. And almost all VIC-20 programs ever made are available online and you can easily transfer them to your VIC-20! Being a VIC-20 user has never been easier.

by Anders "Boray" Persson, VIC-20 Enthusiast

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— NEWSLETTER 2006 —

