

FRONT-EXTRA-PAGE

THE DESKTOP PUBLISHER FOR THE
SINCLAIR QL WITH MIN 256K EXTRA RAM

by

GAP SOFTWARE

USER'S MANUAL

C O N T E N T S
=====

INTRODUCTION	3
PRINCIPAL CHANGES	3
BACKING UP	5
PRINTERS	5
FIRST STEPS	7
TEXT	9
LINE DRAWING	12
LOAD AND SAVE	13
PRINT	15
CUT AND PASTE	16
WINDOWS	16
MISCELLANEOUS	18
USING FRONT PAGE EXTRA	19
PRINTERS AND MEMORY	20
HINTS AND TIPS	22
QUICK GUIDE	24

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
=====

FRONT PAGE EXTRA was written in Superbasic and compiled with Q_Liberator by Liberation Software.

My thanks to Ian and Adrian of Liberation Software for all their help.

Even more thanks to my wife Bev, for putting up with me while I have been writing Front Page Extra. Where DO you get your patience from?

Peter Chambers

Front Page Extra is ©1987 Peter Chambers

INTRODUCTION

=====

FRONT PAGE EXTRA is the version of Front Page for expanded RAM QLS. It requires a minimum of 256K extra RAM, making a total of 384K. We have tried to keep this figure down so that those of **you** with such software as TaskMaster and Swopper can make use of the other 256K. In 256K, you have space for two pages. This is NOT increased if you have more RAM, as we feel that other software is of more practical value than more pages. Let us know if you disagree!

Since the original Front Page appeared in October 1986, we have had a lot of feedback, comment, etc. Also a number of suggestions. Most **of** them printable! We have tried to put FPx together to meet as many of these needs as possible. Undoubtably there will be more...

A couple of points first about apparent lacks.

Sophisticated graphics. Nope! There are two principal reasons for this.

1. They tend to take a lot of memory.
 2. There are enough good graphics programs on the market (GraphiQL+, EyeQ) to make their inclusion superfluous.
- We have therefore tried to concentrate our efforts on text handling and layout.

FPx is not breathtakingly fast. After watching other people, as well as our own experience, we feel that speed is fine for games, but sometimes makes serious software difficult to use. Try drawing freehand with a mouse! Where speed is necessary, we have looked for controllable ways of achieving it. One of the criticisms we had was that the graphics cursor was too slow. We have therefore included a routine for moving it a screen at a time with one keypress (Shifted cursor key). Few people complained of speed, or lack of it, even on the original FP! Surprising, really, reading all the stuff about software and processors in the journals.

We have retained the menu-driven approach using the function keys at most exclusively. We do not like command lines and mnemonics because of the risk of user-error. We are not keen on drop-down windows because they tend to clutter the screen too much. However, if everyone wanted them we would see what could be done. We cannot remember anyone asking for them on the original.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES

=====

TEXTFILE READING

=====

This reads `'_doc'` files from Quill, Editor (Digital Precision) files, and all the source files we have on various editors. It even reads Superbasic! It does not like `'_lis'` files from Quill.

The routine allows for work in columns (2,3 or 4 across the page) and gives you a switchable microjustify. The default is ON. This is right-justify by spacing out each letter rather than the more normal insertion of spaces between words. It looks tidier, and is fascinating to watch on the screen!

The text automatically overflows to the next column and page, and you can stop text reading at any line to allow changing of various parameters like font and print position.

CUT AND PASTE

=====

This now works by moving a block around. It has 'TRY' and 'FIX' options, and multiple pastes are possible. You can even paste to the other page in memory by pressing F1, then carrying on moving it around!

WINDOWS

=====

Not the GEM kind! This is a small routine that allows you to clear, inverse or scroll/pan the contents of a specified window. It can be used for creating interesting borders, trimming graphics/pictures, centring and accurate placing of text, or anything else you find it useful for.

ERROR-TRAPPING

=====

At last! We don't know if it traps absolutely everything (we're sure you will let us know!) but it is fine in normal use.

TEMP_FILE

=====

We know that a lot of you liked the idea of always having a recent backup of whatever you were working on in **case** of disaster, but frankly, it was too complex to be usable once you have two pages in RAM. Especially if you are working with microdrives or RAMdisk. We have therefore dropped it. This does of course **have the** benefit of speeding up various operations, so it **is** not **all** bad.

There are a number of smaller changes to Front Page, and these will be covered in later pages of this manual.

BACKING UP
=====

Front Page Extra (henceforth FPx) is not protected, so you do not have to go through all that silly rigmarole involving cartridges in drive 2.

You are encouraged to do a direct copy of the disk/cartridge as a security copy. This is NOT a licence to pirate. Any copies you make must be for your own use only.

The copy supplied is purely for producing a working copy. It is not usable itself.

Place it in drive one, reset, and press FL to boot it.

Backing up mdv/mdv, mdv/fdk, mdv/flp or +lp/flp in a dual-drive system is straightforward. Just follow the instructions on-screen.

If you have a single-drive system, you should back up from an mdv. If you have already purchased a disk version, go through the backup until you are asked to choose the destination medium. Then BREAK (CTRL-SPACE). Type the following lines after putting a disk in drive 1:

```
SBYTES FLP1_GEN_CODE ,scrprt,5000
OPEN_NEW#4,FLP1_DEVICE
FRINT#4,"flp1_flp2_"
CLOSE#4
```

Press ENTER at the end of each line. Then COPY, or WCOPY if you have it, all files on the original medium EXCEPT gen_code and bootyf. This latter should be renamed 'BOOT'.

PRINTERS

Front Page Extra is intended for Epsoms and close compatibles. You should ensure that your printer is set for NON-auto linefeed. i.e. requiring a carriage return AND a linefeed (codes 13 and 10) to do a linefeed. There is normally a dipswitch on the printer to set this.

The other main requirement is that it should print 960 dots per line in double-density mode. The main ones that do not are Shinwa, Mannesman Tally, Serial 8056, and any printer that only does single-density graphics. If you have any of these, ring GAP.

Note that Seikosha printers are not compatible unless you have the '1000' series. Printers like the Seikosha 100, 250, 500, 800, etc are NOT compatible.

If you use a serial printer, load the boot program from your working copy and change the BAUD rate shown to whatever you need. Then

delete the old boot and save the new one.

If you have any difficulties with setting up your printer, ring GAP.

Regarding display, a television is not recommended. It will work perfectly well, but unless your TV has a picture width adjustment, you will probably lose columns at the side of the screen. You are therefore recommended to use a monitor. It does not matter whether it is monochrome or colour. You may also suffer from eyestrain in places if you use a TV!

When you have successfully completed your backup, put the original and security copy away somewhere safe. All you have to do now is to reset your QL with the working copy in drive 1, then press F1.

F I R S T S T E P S

=====

FIRST STEPS

=====

On successfully loading FPx, you are presented with a four-part screen. The large white bit is your window on the page in memory. The green part to the right is the Status Block. The green part below is the Menu Block, and the red bit at the bottom is for occasional input. On the main menu it shows how to get out of FPx, and a note of free memory.

The Status Block shows row, column and page numbers. These are self-explanatory.

'MODE' refers to drawing or moving, you toggle between them with F2.

FONT refers to the font selected. This can be QL font, or any of the other 5 built in. You toggle them with F5.

'PROG' refers to the drive that you would normally load the program from, as well as any data such as other fonts.

'WORK' refers to the drive that you will normally load your pages, screens or text-files from. You will also normally save to this device. The menu window will normally indicate which drive is to be accessed, and it is shown in the Status block to the right of the main window.

THE MENU WINDOW

=====

The top line deals with udgs. It shows current Set, Subset and udg number. The current udg is shown in the Status block at the right of the main window. The second line shows the filenames of the current pages in RAM. These are the names you loaded them under. If you started from blank pages, they will indicate "No name". The last two lines show menu options at the current stage, or instructions for carrying out the current operation.

Until you are more used to FPx, watch the menu and status areas closely. There is quite a lot in there, but it is all written in English! Look through the 'crib' of sequences in the back of the manual, and the diagram of menu structure on page xx.

This manual is not intended to be a blow-by-blow account of how to do a newsletter. It is intended to show you around, and then to leave you to explore the software. The point is that not everyone will want to do the same things, and the ways of achieving your objectives will vary. Experimentation will almost inevitably lead to making mistakes, but most people tend to learn better from mistakes than from learning by rote how to do something. You are also likely to get far more out of FPx by trying it!

Now. You are at the main menu, press the cursor keys. When you reach

the right hand or bottom edges of the screen, the display scrolls, revealing more of the page. Notice that the row/column indicators

update as the cursor moves. Do the same using the SHIFT key and a cursor key. It moves you to the other side of the page if you use the left/right cursor keys, or to the next block of 25 lines if you use the up/down keys. This speeds up getting around the page.

Now for a quick look at the other options at the main menu.

If you press Shift-F4 and shift-F5, you will see that the udgs displayed change. Keep an eye on the Set/Subset numbers on the top row of the menu block. There are 3 sets of 4 subsets of 8 udgs, making 96 available in all. By pressing shift-F3, the current one can be inversed, so it could be argued that there are 192 in all! Press F4, and you are asked which one you require. Pick a number 1-8. The one displayed in the Status Block is changed.

Now, press F2. The "MODE" indicator in the Status Block now shows "DRAW". The cursor on screen has probably changed, depending on what you chose. Now move it with the cursor keys, and it draws the cursor shape. Press shift-F3 and draw some more. It is now inversed. Just draw some shapes, switching between "MOVE" and "DRAW" modes.

That more-or-less covers moving around the page and getting some simple designs onto it. You may find the udgs useful for such things as circuit-board components or map symbols. They can also produce some distinctive borders, and can be used as block graphics for large letters or rough design.

Pressing F1 switches you to the other page. Do it, then draw something on it. Then switch it back Just to prove there really ARE two pages there!! More on this later.

Key F3 is shown as "FUNCTIONS". This is the gateway to most of the other things you can do with FPx. We will look at this later.

Key shift-F2 is for Text. As this is probably what you will be using FPx for most, press it, and turn the page...

TEXT
====

If you are carrying on from the last section, you should have options shown of F1 for manual text, F2 for text reading, or ESC to return.

The two methods of getting text into FPx would be used in different circumstances. Manual text entry is useful for adding text to diagrams, adding short items, editing, and so on. Doing advertising artwork or business cards would probably be easier with this option. Anything freehand that requires continuous modification or experimentation, in fact. Reading text files would be better for magazine/newsletter articles, especially if you take contributions from other people. In general, manual text entry is better for short items, and text reading is better for longer items. Let us deal with each in turn.

1. MANUAL TEXT ENTRY -----

Take the F1 option. You are asked a number of questions, and to open a window. This can be tip to the size of the screen. Just follow what it says in the menu block. Choose a fairly large window to start with. For text size, you can use any of the QL sizes, i.e. from 0,0 to 3,1. Use one of the smaller ones to start with (0,0 or 1,0). You are also asked whether you want to clear the window or keep the current contents.

Once the window is open, it is coloured green, and a red cursor appears at the top left corner. What you have now is a full-window editor. You are limited to the size of the window for entering text. Please note that this is NOT a word-processor. The editing commands are minimal. CTRL and left cursor deletes at the current cursor position; CTRL and right cursor inserts a space at the current position. Note that inserting a space will lose any character at the end of the line. There is no wordwrap, automatic justification, etc. The cursor cannot move out of the window.

There is a menu of options for this routine. Most are mentioned above. The only other one is F5, which allows you to toggle through the 5 fonts available in addition to the normal QL one. Font can be changed at any time during text entry. You can do every letter in a different one if you like!

You press ENTER to finish text entry. You will be asked whether you wish to inverse the window. Note that this inverts the whole window. If you only want part of it done, use the Windows routine (See later).

2 TEXT ENTRY FROM A FILE -----

This routine will read most text files. It has been designed to read doc files from Quill, and Editor files (Digital Precision). It also reads files of Superbasic and most other text files. However, for

one reason or another, some may not come out very well. Language editors, such as the talent Workbench and Computer One Pascal do not appear to use end-of-line codes, which means that they tend to run lines together when read. Also note that it does not like _lis files from Quill very much. However, since it is much easier to produce a doc file, we feel that this will not be a major problem. The last point to mention is word-length. FPx defines a word as a series of ASCII codes separated by spaces. There is no hyphenate function. If a 'word' is encountered that is longer than the width of the column being used, the text reading will abort. This is only likely to be a problem if you are using wide characters and narrow columns, or if your text contains lines of asterisks, dashes or underlines. This kind of item would not normally make any sense in columnised text anyway.

AVOID LIKE THE PLAGUE SECTION

FORMATTED LISTS	TABULATED DATA
FORMS/INVOICES, etc	SPREADSHEETS
DATABASE RECORDS	ANYTHING STRUCTURED/FORMATTED

Again, most of these will make no sense in columns.

Now to look at the routine itself.

It is designed to read text into 2,3 or 4 column format on an A4 page. If your Epson-compatible printer cannot do 960 dots per line in double-density mode, contact GAP. The routine leaves a small space at the bottom of the page for page numbers, etc. It actually does 78 lines per A4 page.

Now have a file ready for reading in the 'WORK' device as shown in the Status Block. Now follow the instructions in the Menu Block. Before it starts reading the file, it stops with a menu of options. This gives you the opportunity to move the start position, change font, switch pages, etc. Just press SPACE to get it going. Pressing F1 stops text reading at the end of the current line. Just press it ONCE. Do not hold it down.

Notice that the text is microjustified. That is, pixel spaces are inserted between each letter. This gives a much more even and tidy appearance than the more normal 'whole space between each word' method. It also makes it almost impossible to edit! You can't have everything!

When the text reaches the bottom of the column, it automatically goes to the next. At the end of the page, it moves to the other page in memory.

Remember that you can stop text input at any time by pressing F1. You are then presented with the same menu that you saw at the beginning of text input. You can switch columns, switch pages, move the print position down to leave space for a piece of graphics, or to skip over something that is already there, change fonts, abort the reading, turn justify on/off, or return to the eading. Note that

the left and right cursor keys reset the print position to the top of the next/last column.

As a general rule, three or two column work in text width 1 is the most readable. Width 0 is very small! If you are reading in Superbasic listings, it is best to use 2-column format, with justify off (it can look pretty silly justified!), and with text width 0 or 1

L I N E D R A W I N G (F3-F3)
=====

This does exactly what it says, although we did not actually put it in for that! It was intended for smoothing out the 'steps' in the larger character Sizes that the QL does. We most certainly do not claim that it is competition for GraphiQL+, etc

This routine has it's own menu. The options are the cursor keys for moving the drawing pixel, a GO TO, and a toggle between MOVE and DRAW. You should note that MOVE erases anything that it passes over.

The keys for diagonal movement (/ , ? , \ , |) may not seem logical. However, / moves the cursor up and right, and ? is shifted /. This moves down and left. The others make a similar pair.

The GO TO is based on pixels across and down the screen. The first one you enter is the number of pixels across the screen. This is 480 all the way across, so 240 is half way, etc. The second is the number of pixels up the screen. The actual number up the screen is 200, but in order to get the best diagonal line, FPx is set for a scale of 270. Believe it or not, this gives the best result! We had a lot of fun finding it. We tried everything from 100 to about 500. Some of them are strange. Most of them produce dotted lines of one kind or another. Anyway, if you want halfway up the screen, enter 135, and so on.

We would like to apologise in advance for the strain on the eyes that this routine can cause. It is NOT recommended for TV users!

If you use it to produce higher resolution characters, cut and paste them onto a 'clipart' page for future use. i.e. you don't have to do it every time (sighs of relief?).

This routine can be used for lines that you cannot do any other way, or for underlining. It is also very useful for creating udg's for storing on your working copy. More on this later.

Pressing ESC from this routine puts you back at the Main Menu.

LOAD AND SAVE (F3-F2)
=====

We may also include Directory in this bit.

LOAD is at F3-F2-F2. From here you can choose to load a file (F1), a screen or part-screen (F2) , or a font (F3)

Whichever of these you choose, you are given the option of entering a filename, hitting 1 for a directory, or 0 to return to the previous menu.

Loading a file successfully puts the filename on the second line of the menu block. You can load to page 1 or page 2, regardless of which page you are currently working on.

You can load a screen or part-screen, in which case it takes the place of whatever is currently shown. A few words on screens.

You can load any screen, but you are advised to save it with a length of 25600 bytes rather than the 32766 of the full QL screen. This will trim it to the actual length of the window in FPx.

You are advised not to load colour screens. Because FPx is in monochrome, you will lose the colour, and possibly a lot of detail as well. Some work better than others.

Loading fonts is straightforward, providing they are in standard DL format, and their length does not exceed 1800 bytes. This is more than enough to cover up to code 191. This is the code of the highest printable character in the QL set. See the DL manual, Concepts, pages 5-9. When loading a font, you must choose which of the current sets is to be overwritten. This does not affect your working copy.

SAVE is at F3-F2-F3. Most of what has been written about Loading applies to saving as well. You should note that saving a file deletes automatically any file already existing with the same name. i.e. overwrites it.

When saving a screen, you are asked for the number of lines to be saved. These are graphics lines. i.e. each line is 8 bytes deep, the same as a graphics cursor (udg). The maximum is 25 for the full screen length.

In all cases except one, loading and saving are directed at the WORK device. The exception is loading fonts, when they are expected to be on the PROG device. It makes sense if you think about it!

A directory can be performed by F3-F2-F4. This operates on the 'WORK' device again. It reads 8 files at a time to a window opened on the screen, and you can use ESC to stop the directory. So if the file you want is the first one shown, you do not have to plough through another 150 files on a disc before typing what you want!

There is a limit of about 150 files that can be handled by this routine- There is a danger of crashing the QL if there are more than

this. You are advised not to use it on hard disks, or floppies with lots of small files.

That's enough on files and fings...

PRINT (F3-F2-F5-F1)
=====

This is straightforward providing the printer driver is correctly installed.

You are asked whether you want 1 or 2 passes of the printhead. Remember that 2 take twice as long as 1!

We have tried higher numbers of passes, but we decided against offering more for two reasons—

1. Many printers are not precisely accurate on carriage returns. That is, they tend to drag the paper one way or the other. This tends to blur the final image on paper.

2. Multiple printhead passes on thermal printers may result in burning right through the paper, and possibly damage the roller on the printer. We don't think you would thank us for either! While on the subject of thermal printers, make sure you use the right paper. If it is too thin, or burns too easily, you may get damage even with only two passes. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

If you sometimes get VERY fine lines across the printout, try doing some more printing. Our printer (a venerable RX80FT+) seems to improve as it warms up. It is presumably because the pins expand slightly and close the gaps.

Books could be written about printer problems and incompatibilities. If you have problems, ring GAP and we will see what we can do. Remember that your printer should be set for non-auto linefeed, and should print 960 dots/line in double density mode.

C U T A N D P A S T E (F3-F4)
=====

This is an extremely useful routine.

You begin by opening a window. This is the same as you did for manual text. Just follow the instructions in the Menu Block.

Once the window is defined, you move the border around to where you want it.

The options you have are shown. The cursor keys move the block a row or column at a time. The shifted cursor keys JUMP a longer distance, either from one side of the page to the other, or up/down by a screen at a time. This speeds it up if you need to move it long distances.

The SPACE bar 'tests' the placing. It is non-destructive. If you don't like what it looks like, just carry on moving it. ENTER fixes the block, and asks if you want to move it somewhere else now. F1 switches to the other page. You can then move it all over there as well! ESC stops the routine, leaving the page as it was.

You can move as little as a udg size, or up to the size of the screen.

Beer money -

Design a business card for a local business in an area say, 50 cols by 20 rows. Do a multiple cut and paste until you have 10 or so on a page. Print it out using 2 passes. Take it to a High Street printer and get it photocopied onto coloured card. Say 10 copies. Take it home and trim it down to individual cards. Result - 100 cards for about 1-50. Sell them for 5-00. Take 3-50 to the pub and buy beer. Who says computers can't be useful?

W I N D O W S (F3-SHIFT F4)
=====

This is a routine for manipulating a user-defined window. The window is set up in exactly the same way as the text and cut/paste ones.

You are then presented with a short menu with the options Clear, Inverse, and scroll/pan. The first two are self-explanatory. Scroll/pan moves the contents of the window in the direction indicated by the cursor key you press.

This routine can be used for a number of things. The most obvious is probably for centring and accurate placing of anything on-screen using scroll/pan option.

The Inverse option can be used for emphasising titles, etc.

Now try this -

Open a window round something. Use the scroll/pan option to centre it in the window. Now inverse it (F2). Now use the cursor keys - up 1, down 2, up 1, left 1, right 2, left 1. Now inverse it again. Press ESC to finish. The contents of your window now have a box 1 pixel wide all round. (A sort of window box...)

You may have noticed that scrolling and panning loses anything passing the boundaries of the window. The routine can therefore be used for trimming pictures, etc.

The window can be from one cursor size up to the full screen.

M I S C E L L A N E O U S F U N C T I O N S

=====

There are a number of functions in FPx that are not used as part of the page design process, but are nonetheless useful.

1. CLEAR PAGE/SCREEN (F3-F5-F1/F2)

These do exactly what they say. Be careful that you press the right keys! In the case of clearing the page, you are asked for confirmation before it happens.

2. REDUCE PAGE (F3-SHIFT F2)

This shows a reduced size page on-screen. It is not generally readable unless you have some very large lettering on it. It is used to see roughly how your layout is progressing. It shows the page you are currently working on.

3. MEMORY CHECK

This is not an accessible function. it is a routine within FPx that checks available memory. If it falls below about 2K, a warning is printed in the Menu Block. This happens for every subsequent keypress at the main menu, and it requires a keypress to clear it. You cant ignore it!

You should not rely implicitly on it if you are multitasking. It is only operative while you are in FPx. If for instance you happen to be in Superbasic formatting Ramdisks of 50K when you only have 40K available, you run a good risk of crashing the QL, regardless of the memory check function. This has occasionally happened here. It is sometimes easy to forget that even 640K can be used up!

U S I N G F R O N T P A G E E X T R A
=====

It is about time we got here isn't it?

Once you are over the initial problem of most new software (what shall I do with it?), you are strongly advised to mess around for a couple of hours. Just familiarise yourself with the various functions, what they look like, how they work and where they are.

Load in the supplied page and try some of the routines. Try everything! Do not try saving a file of the same name to the supplied medium, or you will overwrite it! Refer to the list of functions in the back of this manual and watch the Menu and Status Blocks closely to see what happens. Experiment a lot, and dont be afraid to make mistakes. People usually learn better that way! There will be things you like, and things you don't like. Probably also things you would like to see. Let us know. The software is for YOUR use, and we cannot provide what you want if you dont tell us! Mind you, we may not be able to anyway, but tell us!

Now, what CAN you do with it?

Probably the first thing that springs to mind is producing newsletters or small magazines. With its flexible text-handling, FPx is ideal for this. It will handle 2, 3 or 4 column work, all aicrojustified, and controllable to leave spaces for graphics, pictures, diagrams, etc. You can load screens from other software, or even from a digitiser if you have one.

Then of course, business reports and academic work (papers, theses) are not very different in concept from newsletters.

We use it (YES, we use our own software!) for Sales literature, leaflets, our letterhead, compliments slips, and so on. Also the manual cover, the Front Page Club cards... We have already mentioned under Cut and Paste how you can do business cards very economically indeed.

You will know that we do our advertising artwork on it. One of the advantages of this method is that the artwork can be very easily amended in case of changes.

We also do the Front Page Club newsletter on it.

You may find when starting with FPx that you can do some very complex things. Change font every line? Six different borders arranged concentrically round a piece of graphics? Lots of inverse print? Yes, it is easy enough, but remember that someone has to read it!

If you do a newsletter, bear in mind that there is an optimum size/shape of text to keep it readable. A good place to start is character width 1 in 3-column mode. And stick to whichever number of columns you decide on. Although you could do two column mode on the

left half of the page and four column mode on the right, it will not help your presentation!

Do not chop and change font either. It can be very wearing on the eyes. Use font changes for emphasis, not to prove it can be done!

Take care with inverse text as well. It will not look as good on paper as it does on the screen, especially if there are a lot of narrow white lines in it. Again, use it for emphasis, not to use up your printer ribbon!

Back on text size for a moment, remember that long lines of small print are difficult to read. Dont cause eyestrain in your readers!

Try to format the page well. Lots of graphics can be impressive, but lots of different-sized pictures with small amounts of text can appear cluttered and untidy. Whoever is going to be reading whatever you write, make it easy for them to read. Or they wont read it. There is sometimes a very fine line between being distinctive and being unreadable. A whole page in the smallest character size using font 4 (a sort of olde English) would be next to unreadable, even if it IS distinctive.

Always remember that it is not YOU that you are trying to impress. It's your readers!

P R I N T E R S A N D M E M O R Y
=====

These are just a couple of extra points.

PRINTERS

FPx is designed to support Epson-compatibles. This phrase has been somewhat liberally interpreted by some printer manufacturers. Shinwa and Mannesman-Tally are completely compatible at control-code level. (Similarly their badged variants, like Tatung and Cosmos). Unfortunately, they then built in 1280 dots per line instead of 960 for double density. The net effect of this is that an A4 page from FPx comes out about 4.5 inches wide. Of course, in text mode they do very well, but in graphics....

When you have spent out good money, this is no joke. Similar problems arise with the SER8056 printer and any printer that can only do single density printing. For these printers, we will produce a modified copy of FPx so that you can use it. It will be free-of-charge on return of your original copy of FPx

As an alternative, we are prepared to print your pages for you at 10p plus return postage. If you want to take advantage of this, send a microdrive cartridge or 3.5" dd/ds disk with the page(s) on. It will be returned! We could also quote if you want quantities run off.

As yet another alternative, try to find someone with a full compatible who doesn't mind you borrowing it or using it. We regret that we cannot write special printer routines for other printers. e.g. Microlines, Seikoshas, NEC, etc. We understand that the Seikosha 1000 series has an Epson-compatible mode, but earlier ones (GP100,250,600 etc) do not.

MEMORY

In our 640K system with CST disk interface, free memory with only FPx loaded is just under 300K. If a ramdisk is formatted to 512 sectors (256K), FPx will not load properly. In fact it quietly crashes on loading. When FPx was loaded as normal, then the Ramdisk used dynamically by saving 3 pages and a 25K screen to it (Total 265K), it was perfectly happy, leaving aboutt 12K spare. We frankly have no idea why the ramdisk works dynamically but not when formatted. Bear this in mind if you have problems.

H I N T S A N D T I P S

=====

1. PHOTOREDUCING

This can be a useful method of increasing dots per inch resolution. The general idea is that you do an A4 page, then reduce it to A5, either by actual photoreducing or with a reducing photocopier. This can increase the dpi {dots per inch} from about 120 to about 200. Laser printers manage about 300, and typesetters work on about 1000. That's why it looks good! The new 24-pin dnt-matrix printers do about 360.

Care, however, with fine lines, especially inversed ones. The image through a ribbon is slightly blurred anyway, and photocopiers invariably give a slight blurring of their own. By the time your printer and the photocopier have done their work, lots of fine white lines and holes (like in the top of an 'e') have vanished forever, becoming black blobs.

You can often reduce the initial dot-matrix blurring by using a lightly-killed ribbon. i.e. not a brand-new one. You may also find that film ribbons rather than fabric give a sharper image if they are available for your printer.

2. CHARACTER SIZES

Just to give you an idea what you can cram onto a page-

Char width	Char height	word/page (approx)
0	0	1500-2000
1	0	1200-1500
2	0	750-1000
3	0	600-750

These figures are very approximate. They will vary depending on column format (2 is more economical than 4), and your propensity regarding the utilisation of considerably overextended wordlengths (using lots of long words). Try to avoid very long text files. If it goes over two pages, you may end up overwriting the first one.

3. MANUAL TEXT ENTRY IN COLUMNS

Open a text window as normal, and do your first bit of text. When you finish, scroll until the top of an 'l', 'h', 't' or similar i.e. ONE PIXEL LINE below the top of the screen. It doesn't matter which line. Then stop and open a text window from the top to the bottom of the screen of the same width as you had been using. DO NOT clear the window(!), then move the cursor to the first blank line and carry on typing. This will ensure even linespacing all the way down.

4. GRAPHICS vs TEXT

It nay never be of any use, but 5 graphics cursor lines = 4 'height 0' text lines = 2 'height 1' text lines.

5. UDGs

When designing UDGs, make sure that lines that should line up, do. It is probably a good idea to draw an actual ddesign, like a circuit board, and then save the various bits of it. There is nothing more infuriating than finding that all your battery and capacitor symbols have the horizontal line on the fourth pixel down, and all your resistors and rectifiers have it on the fifth line down!

6. SUPERBASIC FILES

When reading Superbasic files with the text reading routine, watch for long lines. Many programmers tend to miss out spaces, and this means that a multistatement line can look like one word. If this is longer than the column is wide, the routine will abort. e.g.
AT#4,6,2:PRINT#4,"MULTISTATEMENT":AT#4,7,2:PRINT#4,"LINE"

It is also an idea to turn off the microjustify. Microjustified listings look very odd!

7. MULTITASKING

FPx does not multitask via CTRL-C. It does however run happily under Taskmaster and Swopper. You should reserve space of 300K under both of them. Copy the relevant lines from the FPx boot programs into the boot you use for TM or Swopper. Phone GAP if you have any difficulty.

Q U I C K R E F E R E N C E C H A R T

=====

EXIT FROM PROGRAM	ALT - LEFT CURSOR
MOVE CURSOR	CURSOR KEYS/SHIFTED CURSOR KEYS
SWITCH PAGES	F1
TOGGLE MODE (MOVE/DRAW)	F2
FUNCTIONS	F3
CHANGE UDG CURSOR	F4
TOGGLE FONT 1-5,QL	F5
TEXT ENTRY (MANUAL)	SHIFT F2 - F1
TEXT ENTRY (FROM FILE)	SHIFT F2 - F2
INVERSE CURSOR	SHIFT F3
TOGGLE UDG SUDSET	SHIFT F4
TOGGLE UDG SET	SHIFT F5
LINE DRAWING	F3 - F3
CUT AND PASTE	F3 - F4
CLEAR SCREEN	F3 - F5 - F1
CLEAR PAGE	F3 - F5 - F2
REDUCE PAGE	F3 - SHIFT F2
UDG CAPTURE	F3 - SHIFT F3
WINDOW ROUTINES	F3 - SHIFT F4
LOAD A FILE	F3 - F2 - F2 - F1
SAVE A FILE	F3 - F2 - F3 - F1
LOAD A SCREEN	F3 - F2 - F2 - F2
SAVE A SCREEN	F3 - F2 - F3 - F2
LOAD FONT	F3 - F2 - F2 - F3
PRINT A PAGE	F3 - F2 - F5 - F1
DIRECTORY	F3 - F2 - F4
TOGGLE PROGRAM DEVICE	F3 - F2 - SHIFT F1
TOGGLE WORK DEVICE	F3 - F2 - SHIFT F2

Several of these sequences also have their own sub-menus, notably text, cut and paste, line drawing, and windows. Some also have instructions on screen, such as load/save routines.

An escape option is available at all points.

All load/save operations have options of entering filename, exit, or get a directory.

ABOUT FRONT PAGE EXTRA

=====

FRONT PAGE EXTRA requires a minimum of 256k extra RAM. It gives you two A4 pages, and you can cut and paste between them. The text import routine handles Quill _doc (YES doc!) files, as well as Editor, Superbasic, etc. It MICROJUSTIFIES for a really tidy finish, and there is automatic overflow of text to the next column AND the next page! It supports Epson-compatible printers, and has a host of other features allowing you to easily produce newsletters, adverts, business cards, business stationery, etc. No hype, easy to learn and use, and above all - economic!

GAP SOFTWARE, LONDON, U.K.

FRONT PAGE EXTRA IS COPYRIGHT © 1987 P. A. CHAMBERS