Educational Software

Simulations and
Adventure Games

TOPOLOGIKA

Design & Consultancy

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GIANTKILLER   Technical Notes for BBC versions

Getting Started Switch the computer, monitor and disk drive on. Put
the disk in the drive, then follow the instructions on the disk label.
The disk drive will whirr and the program will start. Refer to the
separate Information Booklet for details of how to use the program
itself. If nothing at all happens, it may be that some part of your
computer system is not switched on or is not correctly connected.
Check, then try again. If still nothing happens, it may be that you're
using a version of GIANTKILLER that does not suit your machine. The
following notes may help you sort things out.

If you have a Master COMPACT version (3.25" disk), and after trying
all the above you still can't get the disk running, return it to us in
the original packaging and we'll test it and replace it if necessary.

If you ordered a BBC version (5.25"), we'll have supplied this in
what's known as 'DFS format'. When you switch your computer on you'll
see a message something like this:

                        BBC Computer 32k
                        Acorn 1770 DFS
                        BASIC

This 'start-up' message comes in many forms, but the key letters to
look for are 'DFS'. The 5.25" disk that we supply as standard will
only run on machines with DFS in their "headlines". If your machine
says 'ADFS', switch off, try typing *DISC <RETURN>, then follow the
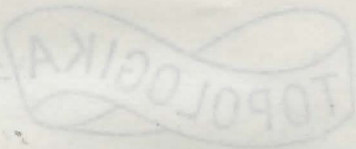loading instructions on the disk label.

Another thing to check is the type of disk drive you are using. It may
be that you are trying to use a 40 track disk in an 80 track drive -
or vice versa. Look at the disk label to see what sort of disk you
have, and check this against your disk drive.

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

*I wanted to LOAD a game that I saved a week ago, but I couldn't
remember what I called it. How do I find out?* Get the program
running, then type CAT at the ':' prompt. You'll be given a list of
all the files on the disk.

*I tried to SAVE my position but got a 'Disc full' or 'Cat full'
message. What does this mean?* It means what it says - the disk is
full. You have two choices: put another (formatted) disk in the drive,
and SAVE again; or exit from GIANTKILLER and use the *DELETE facility
to delete one or more of your old files (see your Disk Drive manual
for details).

I got a 'Bad name' message. What does this mean? It means that you
tried to save your position with a name that the computer doesn't
like, eg too long (seven characters maximum)

Can you suggest a system for saving positions? My class are saving them all the time, and it gets very confusing. Yes. Suppose group A want to save their position *before* climbing the beanstalk. They could use A.BEAN, whereas group B could use B.BEAN. Thus A.TOWELS would mean 'group A, *before* tackling the towels puzzle'.

I want to back-up the disk. Am I allowed to do this, and how do I do it? The purchaser or purchasing institution may make back-up copies for use only by him or within the purchasing institution.

Can I make separate data disks for children to store their positions on? Yes, but each of these must contain the file INIT. Simply copy this onto a formatted, blank disk, using the *COPY facility. You'll still need the program disk, of course, but once you've got the program running, you can use the data disk for SAVES and LOADS. _

Can I run the program on a network? Test versions of GIANTKILLER have run happily on Econet. For those wishing to run GIANTKILLER over a network, the following notes may be useful: !BOOT selects BASIC, sets PAGE to &1900, and chains GRUN. GRUN is a loading program, and is essential to the correct functioning of the main program. It senses which machine is in use, turns off shadow memory if appropriate, loads in GK1 (a title screen), selects sex of the child and level of sound effects, and finally chains either GIANT (all BBC micros) or GIANTM (Master and Master Compact).

GIANT and GIANTM are written partly in BASIC and partly in machine code. Apart from needing access to an initialisation database (INIT), and later to disk for loads and saves of part-finished games, the programs are self-contained and need no disk access to run, thus making the program response almost immediate. Loading and saving only involve *LOAD and *SAVE, so no extra memory allocations are required.

Both versions load at &1100, and occupy almost the entire memory to &7C00 (screen memory for Mode 7). They also make use of certain other areas of the machine; but these areas perforce differ between machines - hence the two versions. GIANT uses memory in &900, &A00, and &C00 for buffers, Mode 7 graphics pictures, look-up tables, etc. &B00 is used for function key definitions, of course. Some of this memory is allocated by GRUN; other parts are unused until GIANT is running. These areas are not useable by BASIC programs on the Master, so GIANTM replaces them by &7C00, &7D00 and &7E00, with shadow memory on. GRUN can be as much higher in memory as its size will allow: &1A00 is quite satisfactory. GIANT and GIANTM *must run* at &1100. GIANT can be loaded up to &400 (ie using Mode 7 screen memory, with accompanying distracting flashes and gibberish on-screen) higher, if promptly downloaded. Unfortunately, the downloading code must itself fit somewhere. The cassette buffer on a BBC micro, or the far end of the sound buffers (end of &800) may be suitable. An alternative is to load only &300 higher, and leave &7F00 free for the downloading routine. GIANTM would present no problems since the Master has extra buffers for Econet which do not intrude on the game region.

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