

MOLIMERX LTD.

1 BUCKHURST ROAD, TOWN HALL SQUARE, BEXHILL-ON-SEA,
E. SUSSEX, ENGLAND. Tel: [0424] 220391/223636

TELEX 86736 SOTEX G



24th September, 1986.

NEWSLETTER

For various reasons (not unconnected with matters that we mention later in this (Newsletter)), we recently had occasion to look rather carefully at our method of selling to the Tandy community. Reluctantly we have come to the conclusion that there are simply not enough Tandy customers out there to justify the continuation of our Tandy catalogue, as such. We have always said however, that we would continue to support the Tandy 8 bit machines for as long as we possibly can, consequently this Newsletter will continue and hopefully, will be sent out every six to eight weeks. There will, however, not be any further updates to the catalogue. The Newsletter will consist of chat and descriptions of the new programs that we have to offer. Before deciding this, we spoke to a number of customers and they all seemed to rather like the idea. Certainly the reaction to the Newsletter has been good. There are two points that we should also mention. First of all, we have ample stocks of the full catalogue. I am afraid that this is still having to cost £5 and the only way that we have been able to maintain that is to reduce the size of print. None the less, as I say, we have plenty of them and anybody who wants one is more than welcome. The postage, incidentally, on this new size catalogue is down and is now only 50p.

It is ironic, in view of the above, that the prestigious trade paper InfoWorld announced last week that Tandy has now overtaken IBM in the United States in sales of small business machines, which is really a euphemism, I suppose, for IBM PC compatibles. In the United States therefore, Tandy are the leaders because, of course, previously IBM were selling more than everybody else. We all know how Tandy is viewed in the market place here. So, one has the silly position whereby in the States Tandy is top of the heap, in England, rightly or wrongly, few people know that Tandy even sell computers. I am not, of course, privy to the inner workings of Tandy UK but I do know that up until a few months ago, Tandy UK used to buy their products in the normal way, straight from Fort Worth. Now, however, I understand that England is supplied from Canada. The product is shipped to Canada from the U.S. and then sold to England from there. Perhaps this is simply a company efficiency improvement move, or whatever, but it does all seem to fit together. One wonders what Tandy is going to do in this country about the new Amstrad PC compatible. It has PC compatibles of its own. Will it stock the new Amstrad one as it has the past Amstrad machines? In competition to its own??

A reminder that all version updates are £10, inclusive, rather than the old price of £5 plus VAT plus shipping. Sorry, but this is simply a result of our "non existent inflation". Do not, incidentally, confuse a version update with the machine update that I mentioned in the last Newsletter.

In case the change to Newsletters away from catalogue additions is too sudden, we can supply the May and July Newsletters if customers have lost their own. For the future I would recommend that you retain them, because of course, they will contain the only notification of both news and new programs.

The 20% sale which was supposed to be effective only until "the next List" presents us with some little problem as there will not be a next list! But, at any rate, until after Christmas it will be maintained in force. So the 20% discount will continue on until the New Year.

In the May Newsletter, I mentioned that in view of the restrictions on the usage of DosTamer in the Model I/III version, we were going to publish a new Shell program to take its place. This is now ready to be shipped and a full description of it is attached hereto plus another new program from Hypersoft.

It was nice to see a number of customers at the PCW show in September. I did not mention my attendance there earlier because we had decided not to have a stand this year. Although the PCW show, to some extent, has a traditional place in the history of the Tandy computer and we ourselves have only missed having a stand there one year, it has of recent years been getting more and more difficult to find our niche between the entertainment end and the business end. As you may well know, the show is split into two. One in Olympia 2 and one in the old Olympia building. Unfortunately, there is nothing in between, which is where we would fit. The entertainment end is too noisy and the business end is too quiet! So instead of having our own stand, I went up on the Sanyo stand to show some of our software, but was pleased to have quite a large number of Tandy customers come along and say hello. It is, incidentally, surprising the large number of Tandy people who have graded up and gone to the Sanyo. I would say probably a third of our Sanyo mailing list actually contains previous Tandy customers.

The big news at the show was the introduction of the Amstrad PC compatible. I think that it is a great pity the way the press hype these things up. One of the Amstrad salesmen told me that they would not be actually delivering for about 4 to 6 weeks from the time of the show, although Dixons had got sample machines already. Not only is there that delay, but there has to be at least a couple of months for a machine to prove itself in the field. Hence, one is really looking at about three months timelag before an experienced buyer is going to seriously consider a given machine. I think that it would be far better if the press waited, at least for some of this period and then announced the new marvel when it is actually in the warehouse in quantity and some hands-on experience has accumulated.

I seem to have run out of room, so we will leave it there until the next occasion out!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.J. Harding', with a stylized, flowing script.

A.J. Harding,
Molimerx Ltd.

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LDS - A BETTER SHELL FOR THE MODEL I/III

On page 192 of the main catalogue is described the program DosTamer which is the shell program (allegedly) for the Model I/III/4. Customers will remember that we made an error in the description of this program in that it was described on the basis of the Model 4 version and it was not until after the catalogue had gone to press that we found that a number of very important features were not available on the Model I/III. We hastily rectified this in a Newsletter and promised that we would shortly be offering a replacement for Model I/III users. LDS is that replacement.

Although it is written by a different author, in fact an English author, Mr. V. Blackmore, it is in functions very similar to the Model 4 version of DosTamer and we recommend that you re-read page 192. LDS is intended for Model I/III users, with 48K ram and LDOS. It will also operate on Genie machines, except the Model 3. It will work with a single drive system, but, as usual, customers will have to state that they have only one drive so that we can put a system on the distribution disk. They would also have to show proof of purchase of LDOS. Other operating systems may, or may not work and LDS is not guaranteed with them. Model I TRSDOS does work, at least in part.

Both LDS and DosTamer are shell programs. That is to say, they form an interface between the user and the disk operating system. The intention is to make the usage of the DOS far easier than it would otherwise be. We have not been through the commands individually but as a broad statement it may be taken that anything that DosTamer can do, LDS can also do. LDS runs in two modes. Directory and Command. In the directory mode the contents of the relevant disk drive is displayed on the screen and a cursor is supplied which can be moved round the screen with the arrow keys. The file which the cursor covers becomes the active file and it is upon that file that the various directory commands may be used. A list of the commands is as follows:-

- A Set file or disk attributes.
- B Backup
- C Copy for single or tagged files.
- D Directory of current drive in full specification format.
- F Calls either Format or FED depending on whether the key is shifted.
- G Debug.
- H Help.
- I Runs a specified program.
- J Runs another specified program.
- K Kills single or tagged files.
- L Calls LDOS commands from LDOS.
- M Menu.
- O Exits from LDS.
- P Printer routines.
- Q Quick format and backup.
- R Runs the program under the cursor.
- S Loads scripsit with the file under the cursor.
- T Tags files for mass copying or deletion.
- U Updates the file from the drive specified.
- V Displays the file using ASCII or Hex, as appropriate.
- W Same as 'S'.
- X Transfer files as with 'C' but deletes the original.
- Y Displays the current top of memory value.
- Z Changes the system drive.

- 0-7 Displays the directory of the drive specified.
- ? Displays the file two sectors at a time.
- @ Prints the current contents of the screen.

In the monitor command mode a menu is displayed which can contain any customised command that you wish. These may be executed from LDS and the return will be to LDS. Menues are made by the user. They may be created by any word processor that outputs straight ASCII or can be made with the LDOS BUILD command.

As LDS is so similar to DosTamer, comparisons are bound to be made. Our estimation is that, in that LDS has been specifically written for one disk operating system, namely LDOS, it is, in fact, better than DosTamer. Furthermore, the manual that comes with it is better than the one supplied with DosTamer. However, no doubt many people will take issue, so perhaps we should not continue that comparison any further!

In summary, if you have a Model 4 then you have no need of LDS. But if you have a Model I or III, some people will find it indispensable.

LDS.....£45.00 + VAT = £51.75

CROSS-ZAP - HYPERCROSS PLUS ZAPPING FOR MS-DOS MACHINES

Two of the most popular programs on the market are HyperCross and HyperZap. Now from the same author comes Cross-Zap. HyperCross is described on pages 177 and 190 of the main catalogue. Its function is to transport programs and data from a Tandy machine to a large number of alien formats. This it does on the Tandy machine. Cross-Zap has two differences. First of all it does not run on a Tandy machine in the sense of the Model I, III or 4. It runs on an MS-DOS machine such as the IBM PC and all true compatibles, plus the Tandy 1000, 1000 EX (needs DMA) 1000 SX, 1200 and 3000, all with 256K memory. Also, it supports as "alien" formats TRS-80 8 bit disk operating systems. More of this in a minute. The second difference is that a Cross-Zap, as its title implies, is not just a transporting program, it has certain features of HyperZap built in. It is also able to translate (as compared to transport) Basic programs on the fly. The formats supported by Cross-Zap are:-

Model I Mixed Density

DOSPLUS 3.4	DoubleDOS	LDOS(SOLE)	MultiDOS	NEWDOS 80 V2	TRSDOS 2.7/8
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Model I/III Double Density

DOSPLUS 3.5	LDOS 5.1
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Model III

DOSPLUS 3.4	MultiDOS	NEWDOS 80	TRSDOS 1.3
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Model 4/4P

MultiDOS	DOSPLUS 4	TRSDOS 6
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All formats are supported in double sided 35,40 and 80 tracks where appropriate. For 80 track formats, of course, an 80 track drive is required on the MS-DOS machine. As MS-DOS only reads double density, obviously all of the source disks must be written in that density. Consequently, Model I disks are only supported if they have been written in double density.

In addition to the transporting feature of Cross-Zap, you are also able to format TRS-80 disks in any format supported although the mixed density Model I types are excepted from this. Mass copying is supported by the use of Wildcards. ASCII and word processor text files will be converted so that they are in the correct format for the PC. The reverse is also true in that the files from the PC

can be copied back onto TRS-80 disks. The disk zap, fix and copy features of Cross-Zap are, perhaps, the most exciting features in any program ever offered to support TRS-80 and MS-DOS disk formats. Among the many things that you can do are: remove passwords, rename, delete and un-delete files. For the first time when you zap a disk the program tells you what you are looking at. For instance if you are inspecting a directory entry you will be told what each byte means as you move your cursor over it. This makes repair and modification extremely easy, because you see the results of the change as you make it. Also of particular note is the fact that the manual explains TRS-80 and MS-DOS disk formats for all the different DOS versions. As far as we know, this is the first time that such a wealth of information has been contained in one place.

One final word. This program is state of the art material. It is extremely good and is in fact so new that we will not be shipping for three or four weeks! We would like to emphasise, as this is a Tandy list, however, that Cross-Zap runs on MS-DOS machines. In that sense it is the precise opposite of HyperCross.

Cross-Zap.....£65.00 + VAT = £74.75