The Dispatch Disk

Southern Districts
Commodore Users Club inc.
News Paper.

February 88.

COMMITTEE - 1987/88.

President   : Ken Pilkington   16 Anselm St.   Christie Downs.
              phone 382 7119
Secretary   : Mike Griffin   11 Dudley Cresc.   Marino.
              phone 298 8114
Treasurer   : Graham Hawes   16 Nannigai Dve.   Hallett Cove.
              phone 381 3813
Assisting   : Sam Hancock   4 Elsie St.   Christie Downs.
              phone 384 4231
              John Hancock   2 Pat Cres.   Morphett Vale.
              phone 381 7973
              Julie Collins   12 Resolute Cres. Hallett Cove.
              phone 381 7202
              Michael Knill   5 Valleyside Dr. Crafers.
              phone 339 4959

Librarian   : John Hancock - see above.
              Library open 7:00 pm - 7:30 pm each general
              meeting.

Newsletter : Rob Price   66 Bolton Court   Flagstaff Hill
              phone 270 5694

==

Next meeting : MONDAY 28th March at 7:30 pm.

Location   : Salvation Army Hall Elizabeth Rd. Morphett Vale.
Subject   :

              April:
==

==

HARDWARE REVIEW - C128D/CR COMPUTER

Those who have been watching the advertisements for computers may have seen the C128D for $695. This is in fact the C128CR computer and is different to the C128D computer in a number of ways.

First the improvements. The new computer has a smaller number of integrated circuits on a single board as opposed to two boards on the older machine and has a metal case. This means that the computer does not generte as much heat. For this reason this computer does not need a fan which makes it a quieter machine. The C128CR has a lower profile having dispensed with the keyboard and cord space underneath.

Now for the bad news. There is a new SID chip. This is the circuit which makes all of the noise, eg. music, sound effects and voice synthesis. The number of the old sid chip is 6851 and the new chip is an 8551. The new device is alright with sound effects and music but has problems with synthesised speech. The speech is much quieter than on the old device but the music and sound effects are at the same level. This means that if you are playing Word Wizard for example and the volume is turned up to hear the speech then the sound effects and music will be far too loud. I have been told on good authority that the new SID chip may be replaced with the old chip but Commodore denies that this is possible. The C128CR has the same incompatability problems that the C128D had with the pocket series. This may be overcome by performing an upgrade on the operating system. Arnfield Computer Services at Magill will do this at cost for $70. I have seen what he does an believe me he replaces a lot of Integrated circuits.

There have been unconfirmed reports that after the present stocks of 1571 disk drives have been sold that these will no longer be available. I cosider this situation deplorable. Anyone wishing to seriously use the CP/M operating system requires a second disk drive. If this is to be a 1541 as it will be if the 1571 is no longer available then the disk capacity will be halved and the speed of the second drive will be slower by up to a factor of twelve. This computer under CP/M is slow enough without making it worse. Without the availability of a second 1571 disk drive there is no point in suppling CP/M since it will be virtually unusable.

Although Commodore have made a number of improvements it seems to involved some ill conceived decisions. Whether they keep Commodore's head in the black for future generations will only be told by time.

HINT FOR 128D AND SX64

PROBLEM:
These computers will not run Mr Nibble and continually give a drive out of alignment error with aligned drives.

SOLUTION:
This programme reconfigures the serial bus to use it for timing and is designed for external drives. To delay the timing pulses to the internal drive it is necessary to place additional capacitance onto this bus. This is done by placing an unterminated cable in the serial port. For a more permanent fix place a 0.001uF capacitor across pins 2 and 3 of the serial port. This can be done by placing it on the socket inside the machine or on a plug to be plugged into the serial port.

COMMODORE TECH TOPIC 87-004 6/8/87

PROBLEM:
When the 1901 monitor is used with the C128 in 40 column mode the top right of the screen can distort. The effect is most noticable with a white screen on a black border.

CAUSE:
The C128 video output is lower than the C64 therefore incorrect sync will cause picture distortion.
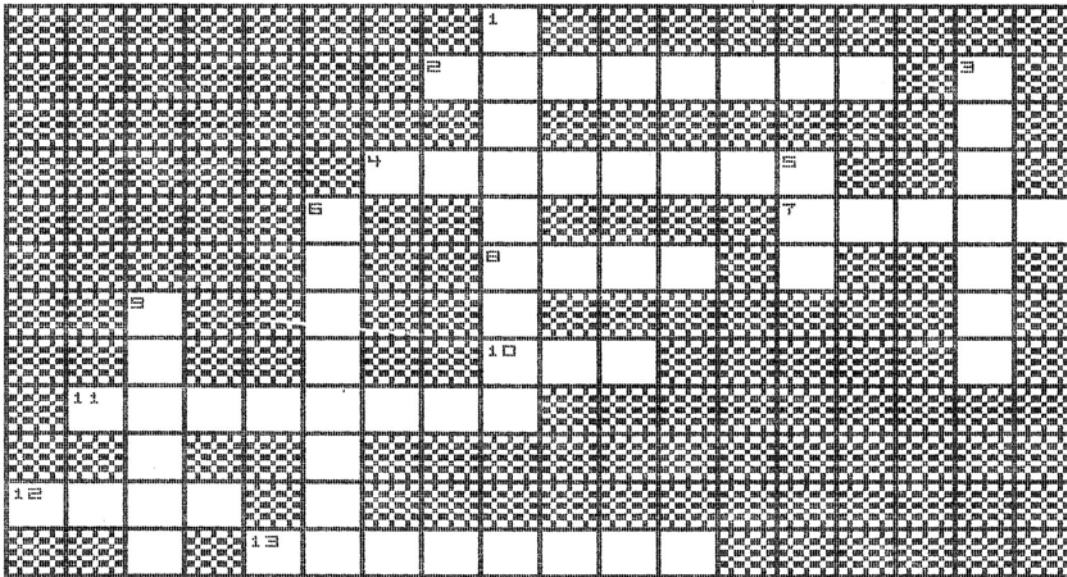
REMEDY:
Replace RV38 (immediately ajacent to luminance input) of 150 Ohms with 5k0 ohms or higher. This may cause brightness problems.

(After several trials it was found that about 270 Ohms gave the best compromise. G.D.)

INTERESTING NOTE
It seems that the above problem is symptomatic of Commodores tendency not to adhere to strict technical standards. Everything about the Commodore computers reeks of non-standardisation. Pet ASCII, Pet IEEE488 serial bus (drive and printer), Pet video output levels and Pet RS232-C all of which vary from set standards in significant ways. The standard video output to monitors is 1V p-p but Commodore not wanting to be conventional had to provide 1.5V p-p. The 150 Ohm resistor is probably Commodores way of overcoming this problem. Some television sets that accept composite video will not accept the video level from this Computer. This level will have to be reduced to use it with these television sets.

CROSSWORD #1

ACROSS CLUES

2. .... Districts Commodore
   Users Club Inc.
4. We joined the club because of it.
7. The latest Commodore computer.
8. Form of mass storage device.
10. A form of memory that can't be
    erased
11. Computer programs are called
    ....
12. Older form of mass storage.
13. Used to enter information into
    the computer.

DOWN CLUES

1. Brand of computer used by club
   members.
3. Is run in the computers memory.
5. A form of volatile memory.
6. General name for computer and
   periferals.
9. The type of disk used ind
   commodore drives.

HINT FOR 128D AND SX64

PROBLEM:

These computers will not run Mr Nibble and continually give a drive out of alignment error with aligned drives.

SOLUTION:

This programme reconfigures the serial bus to use it for timing and is designed for external drives. To delay the timing pulses to the internal drive it is necessary to place additional capacitance onto this bus. This is done by placing an unterminated cable in the serial port. For a more permanent fix place a 0.001uF capacitor across pins 2 and 3 of the serial port. This can be done by placing it on the socket inside the machine or on a plug to be plugged into the serial port.

COMMODORE TECH TOPIC 87-004 6/8/87

PROBLEM:

When the 1901 monitor is used with the C128 in 40 column mode the top right of the screen can distort. The effect is most noticable with a white screen on a black border.

CAUSE:

The C128 video output is lower than the C64 therefore incorrect sync will cause picture distortion.

REMEDY:

Replace RV38 (immediately adjacent to luminance input) of 150 Ohms with 5k0 ohms or higher. This may cause brightness problems.

(After several trials it was found that about 270 Ohms gave the best compromise. G.D.)

INTERESTING NOTE

It seems that the above problem is symptomatic of Commodores tendency not to adhere to strict technical standards. Everything about the Commodore computers reeks of non standardisation. Pet ASCII, Pet IEEE488 serial bus (drive and printer), Pet video output levels and Pet RS232-C all of which vary from set standards in significant ways. The standard video output to monitors is 1V p-p but Commodore not wanting to be conventional had to provide 1.5V p p. The 150 Ohm resistor is probably Commodores way of overcoming this problem. Some television sets that accept composite video will not accept the video level from this Computer. This level will have to be reduced to use it with these television sets.