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GEOS (8-bit operating system)

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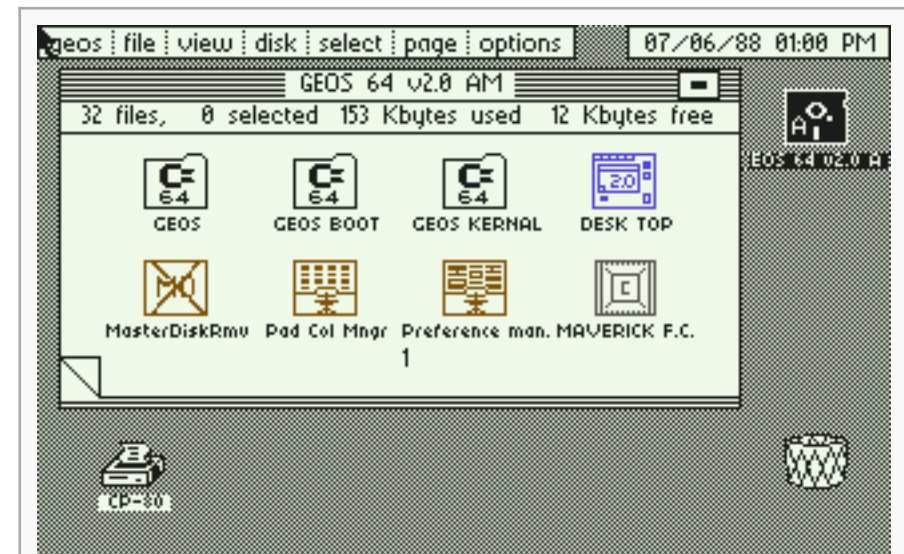
This article is about the GEOS home computer operating system. For the PC/x86 based system, see [GEOS \(16-bit operating system\)](#).

GEOS (**Graphic Environment Operating System**) is an [operating system](#) from Berkeley Softworks (later [GeoWorks](#)). Originally designed for the [Commodore 64](#) and released in 1986, it provided a [graphical user interface](#) for this popular [8-bit](#) computer.

GEOS closely resembled early versions of [Mac OS](#) and included a graphical [word processor](#) (geoWrite) and paint program (geoPaint). For many years, [Commodore](#) bundled GEOS with its redesigned and cost reduced C64, the C64C. At its peak, GEOS was the third most popular operating system in the world in terms of units shipped, trailing only [MS-DOS](#) and Mac OS.

Other GEOS-compatible software packages were available from Berkeley Softworks or from third parties, including a reasonably

GEOS



GEOS for the [Commodore 64](#). Mimicking Commodore's OS core naming/misspelling, Berkeley called GEOS' core a "[kernal](#)" (cf. [kernel](#)).

Company / developer Berkeley Softw orks
(later [GeoWorks](#))

Initial release 1986

Latest stable release GEOS 2.0

sophisticated [desktop publishing](#) application called geoPublish and a spreadsheet called geoCalc. While geoPublish was not as sophisticated as [Aldus Pagemaker](#) and geoCalc not as sophisticated as [Microsoft Excel](#), the packages provided reasonable

functionality, and [Berkeley Softworks](#) founder [Brian Dougherty](#) claimed the company ran its business [using its own software](#) on Commodore 8-bit computers for several years.

Enhanced versions of GEOS later became available for the [Commodore 128](#) and the [Apple II family](#). A lesser-known version was also released for the [Commodore Plus/4](#).

Written by a group of programmers, led by Dougherty, who cut their teeth on limited-resource [video game machines](#) such as the [Atari 2600](#), GEOS was revered for what it could accomplish on machines with 64–128 [kB](#) of [RAM](#) memory and 1–2 [MHz](#) of 8-bit processing power.

Unlike many pieces of [proprietary software](#) for the C64 and C128, GEOS took full advantage of many of the add-ons and improvements available for these systems. Commodore's [1351 mouse](#) was supported by GEOS, as were its various [RAM expansion units](#). GEOS 128 also fully supported the C128's 640×200 high-resolution [VDC](#) display mode through a compatible [RGB](#) monitor.

The C64 version of GEOS incorporated a built-in [fast loader](#), called *diskTurbo*, that significantly increased the speed of drive access on the slow [1541](#). GEOS was the first software that could use a Commodore floppy disk as [swap space](#) or [virtual memory](#).^[1] GEOS 128 could take advantage of the C128's enhanced "burst mode" in conjunction with the [1571](#) and [1581](#) drives. The Commodore version of GEOS used a [copy protection](#) scheme that rendered users disks unbootable if the software detected that the disk had been illegally duplicated.^[2]


Via Berkeley's special geoCable interface converter or other third-party interfaces to connect standard [RS-232](#) or [Centronics](#) printers to the Commodore serial bus, GEOS supported a wide variety of printers, including [HP PCL](#) printers and the [Apple LaserWriter](#). This ability to print to high-end printers was a major factor in making GEOS a desktop publishing platform.

The Apple II version of GEOS was released as [freeware](#) in August 2003. The Commodore 64/128 versions

Available [language\(s\)](#) [English](#) and [German](#)

Supported platforms [Commodore 64](#), [Commodore 128](#), [Commodore Plus/4](#), [Apple II family](#)

Default [user interface](#) [Graphical user interface](#)

followed in February 2004. The Apple II version is freely available for download from [Breadbox](#) .

The latest GEOS desktop suite for IBM PC compatibles is [Breadbox Ensemble](#). Revivals were seen in the [OmniGo](#) handhelds, [Brother](#) GeoBook line of laptop-appliances, and the [New Deal Office](#) package for PCs. Related code found its way to earlier 'Zoomer' PDAs, creating an unclear lineage to [Palm, Inc.](#)'s later work. [Nokia](#) used GEOS as a base operating system for their [Nokia Communicator](#) series, before switching to [EPOC \(Symbian\)](#).

GEOS products and applications

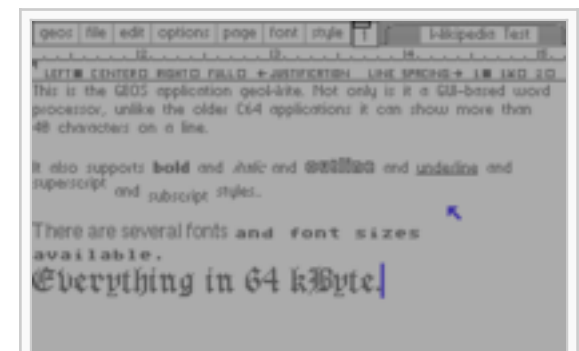
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Dozens of official and third-party applications and other products were produced for GEOS. Among the most important and popular were the following:

- geoBASIC
- geoCable
- geoCalc
- geoChart
- geoDex
- geoDraw
- geoFAX
- geoFile
- geoFont
- geoLabel
- geoPaint
- geoPrint
- geoProgrammer
- [geoPublish](#)
- geoSpell
- geoWrite
- geoWrite Workshop



geoPaint screenshot



geoWrite screenshot

References

[\[edit\]](#)

1. ^ "GEOS: A Whole New World for your Commodore" [🔗](#).
2. ^ "Info magazine Issue 14" [🔗](#).

Notes

- Farr, Michael (1987). *The Official GEOS Programmer's Reference Guide. For Commodore 64/64C/128. Includes versions 1.0, 1.1, and 1.2.* Bantam Books/Berkeley Softworks. [ISBN 0-553-34404-8](#).
- Tornsdorf, Manfred; Kerkoh, Rüdiger (1986). *GEOS Inside and Out. An introduction to GEOS, its applications and internals.* Abacus/Data Becker. [ISBN 0-916439-81-X](#).

External links

[\[edit\]](#)

- [The Commodore GEOS FAQ v1.5.0](#) [🔗](#) – By Bo Zimmermann
- [Full Commodore GEOS download \(not for redistribution or sale\)](#) [🔗](#) – At the website [cbmfiles.com](#) [🔗](#) - Courtesy of Click Here Software Co.
- [GEOS: The Graphical Operating System](#) [🔗](#) A lengthy review of GEOS and its history
- [geosDS](#) [🔗](#) – Run GEOS for Commodore 64 on your Nintendo DS
- [Breadbox](#) [🔗](#) Home of the GEOS operating system
- [Commodore16.com](#) [🔗](#) Commodore 16/Plus 4 GEOS page

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