artisan basic

# INTRODUCTION

ARTISAN BASIC is an extension of MSX BASIC. It is targeted at MSX1 machines with 64Kb memory and a disk system.

The idea for development came after competing in MSX BASIC competition.

<https://www.msxblog.es/concurso-msx-basic-9o-edicion/>

I have always felt that the capabilities of the machine could have been better exploited under BASIC.

The main areas that ARTISAN extension is focusing on are:

* Extended memory support
* Bitmap operations
* Animation support
* Sound player
* Helper functions

Extension loads itself in page 1 at address #4000 and provides several new commands. Following sections will describe main functionality groups and details about each new command are given later. Refer to the table of contents.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Date | Description |
| 0.8 |  | Initial version |

# EXTENDED MEMORY SUPPORT

Standard MSX BASIC allows access to 32Kb of memory. In 64Kb systems there is another 32Kb hidden beneath ROM in pages 0 and 1. ARTISAN basic allows memory to be copied to and from this upper 32Kb. Additionally copying to and from VRAM can come from and to this upper 32Kb. Commands from other sections that take memory buffers as parameters can read data from this area of memory. There are also a few commands that allow copying data from and to VRAM.

Commands included are:

* BOXMEMCPY
* BOXMEMVRM
* FILRAM
* FILVRM
* MEMCPY
* MEMVRM
* VRMMEM

Since ARTISAN BASIC code also resides in this upper 32Kb, not all of it is free for use by programs. Memory map is given below:

Chart

Description automatically generated

ARTISAN BASIC does not occupy any memory below &H8000 allowing BASIC programs to have the same amount of free memory for code and variables as without the extension.

# BITMAP OPERATIONS

Several functions are provided to allow working with software sprites and tiling. Software sprites are defined by their data and mask that gets applied to background. Tiling functions allow placing data in a memory buffer or in video memory in a sequential fashion, when you want to apply one pattern over a larger area.

Commands included are:

* BLIT
* TILEMEM
* TILEVRM

# ANIMATION SUPPORT

This section allows the creation of animation definitions that execute regularly based on VDP interrupt. Animation definitions allow changing of sprite pattern number, pattern data or changing character data.

To enable sprite animations, sprite handling has been revamped. Instead of PUT SPRITE commands one needs to define an array where sprite data is kept. This is transferred to VRAM on each interrupt.

Additionally grouping of sprites is supported which allow simultaneous moves and animation.

Commands in this section are grouped into several sections:

* Basic sprite handling system
  + SPRDISABLE
  + SPRENABLE
  + SPRSET
* Group of sprites handling
  + SPRGRPMOV
* Animation definitions
  + ANIMITEMPAT
  + ANIMITEMPTR
  + ANIMDEF
  + ANIMSPRITE
  + [ANIMCHAR](#_ANIMCHAR)
  + AUTOSGAMDEF
* Animation control
  + ANIMSTART
  + ANIMSTOP
  + ANIMSTEP
  + AUTOSGAMSTART
  + AUTOSGAMSTOP
  + SGAM
* Animation memory buffers
  + MAXANIMDEFS
  + MAXANIMITEMS
  + MAXANIMSPRS
  + MAXAUTOSGAMS

## New sprite control system

The use of sprites is modified in ARTISAN basic in the following ways:

* Sprite attributes (location, pattern and color) are kept in an integer BASIC array of size (3,31)
* Values from the array are passed to VRAM during vertical blank if indicated by a specified integer variable
* Sprite control system is activated by SPRENABLE command
* When the system is active one should not run any commands that modify VRAM because of possible collision with sprite update
* When the system is active no new variables can be declared as this will cause corruption of the sprite control system

## Animation data memory handling

Defining animations requires some memory usage. This is located directly after the ARTISAN basic code in the segment &H4000-&h7FFF. That is why free memory in this segment depends on how many animations are defined. It is necessary to declare the maximum amount of each type of animation information before the use of definition commands. There are 4 types of definitions:

* Animation item – defines a single state
  + Sprite pattern, color and duration
  + Sprite/character pattern definition pointer and duration
* Animation definition – list of animation items to run
* Sprite/Character animation – link between which sprite/character to animate and with which animation definition
* Automatic Sprite Group Animation and Movement – automatic animation and movement between defined bounds of a sprite group

## BASIC program overall structure

The layout of the program that uses the sprite control system and animations is as follows:

* Declaration of all variables
* Declaration of sprite attributes array and the sprite update variable
  + SU%=0:DIM SA%(3,31)
* Reset of memory buffers for animations by defining zero size
* Resizing of memory buffers to required values
* Obtain free memory location in page 1 using MEMCPY(&H4010,VARPTR(A%),2) where A% was previously defined
* SPRENABLE (SA%,SU%,0/1)
* ON ERROR GOTO definition
* ON STOP GOSUB definition
* Main program
* On end/error/stop run:
  + Stop animations
  + SPRDISABLE

# SOUND PLAYER

ARTISAN basic includes the AKG player from ARKOS tracker

<https://www.julien-nevo.com/arkostracker/>

in version 2.01

Sound data should be exported from the Arkos tracker in binary format. Memory location can be in the first two memory pages.

Commands included in this section are:

* SNDPLYINI
* SNDPLYOFF
* SNDPLYON
* SNDSFX

# HELPER FUNCTIONS

This includes various functions that do not belong in previous sections and provide various functionality.

Commands included here are:

* GENCAL
* COLL

# ALPHABETICAL LIST OF COMMANDS

## ANIMCHAR

Format:

ANIMCHAR (byte ID, integer character\_number, byte animation\_definition\_id, byte cyclic\_flag)

Where ID is between 0 and MAXANIMSPRS value

Character\_number is 0-767

Animation\_definition\_id is between 0 and MAXANIMDEFS

Cyclic\_flag of 0 means that the animation will run one time only, other values mean a looping animation

Prerequisites:

* MAXANIMSPRS reserved memory for definition
* Animation definition prepared with ANIMDEF

Errors:

* Invalid type if incorrect type passed
* Index out of bounds if value outside of allowed range

Example:

\_ANIMCHAR(0,255,0,1)

Sample code:

* ANIMTEST.BAS
* GAME.BAS