

CET

Council for Educational Technology

copy to Paul Bond

3 Devonshire Street, London W1N 2BA Telephone: 01-636 4186 Chairman: Professor J C West, CBE Director: G Hubbard

Mel Pullen
Acorn Computers Ltd
4a Market Hill
CAMBRIDGE CB2 3NJ

CET Prestel Unit
Burleigh Centre
Wellfield Road
Hatfield
Herts AL10 0BZ

4th January 1982

Dear Mr Pullen,

As you know, our Prestel Telesoftware Format Recommendations have been accepted by Prestel and is specified as the protocol to be used in the competition recently announced to design downloaders for the ZX81 microcomputer.

We have studied your document 'Choosing a Transmitting Format for Telesoftware and Electronic Mail' in detail and have arrived at a number of amendments to our format recommendations which we believe will allow the flexibility you require for Acorn developments whilst maintaining 'downloadability' for existing machines of all software on Prestel.

At the meeting to launch the competition at Prestel Headquarters on 10th December 1981 we presented out Format Recommendations incorporating these amendments. A copy is enclosed.

Basically, the amendments specify that data following an unrecognised escape sequence (ie. one other than `||A, E, F, I, L, Z, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5` or $\frac{3}{4}$) is ignored until the escape sequence `||I` is encountered. The `||X`, then, is the terminator which we must ask you to use for all your special facilities which are heralded by the escape sequences defined in your document. Note that, if required, such fields may span block boundaries.

However, we must insist that:-

1. the LINE and BLOCK CHECKS are 3-character decimal right-justified checksums calculated as described in our Format Recommendations (Sections 3.5 & 4.5) and are never dynamically redefined.
2. the start-of-block escape sequence `||A` must NOT be followed by fields specifying block XX of YY. We suggest that this information is preceded by some other escape sequence.
3. the organisation of the file on Prestel is exactly as described in our Format Recommendations (Section 4) and is never dynamically redefined.
4. there is no dynamic redefinition of the transmission protocol.



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In essence, the envelope for telesoftware blocks on Prestel must remain unchanged and unchangeable whilst allowing a range of facilities to exist within it.

I still maintain that protocols for viewdata and teletext telesoftware should be developed independently on the basis of the capabilities of each transmission medium and that the differences which arise in such protocols should be handled by separate routines in the decoding mechanism of downloaders equipped to receive data on both channels.

This is as far as we can go without losing universal downloadability and I hope that you will accept the compromise.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Brown
Videotex Systems Development Officer