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PalmUser
 The Journal for Palm organisers and compatibles
 Issue 8

A new approach to Palm OS computing
 —The HandEra 330 comes to town...

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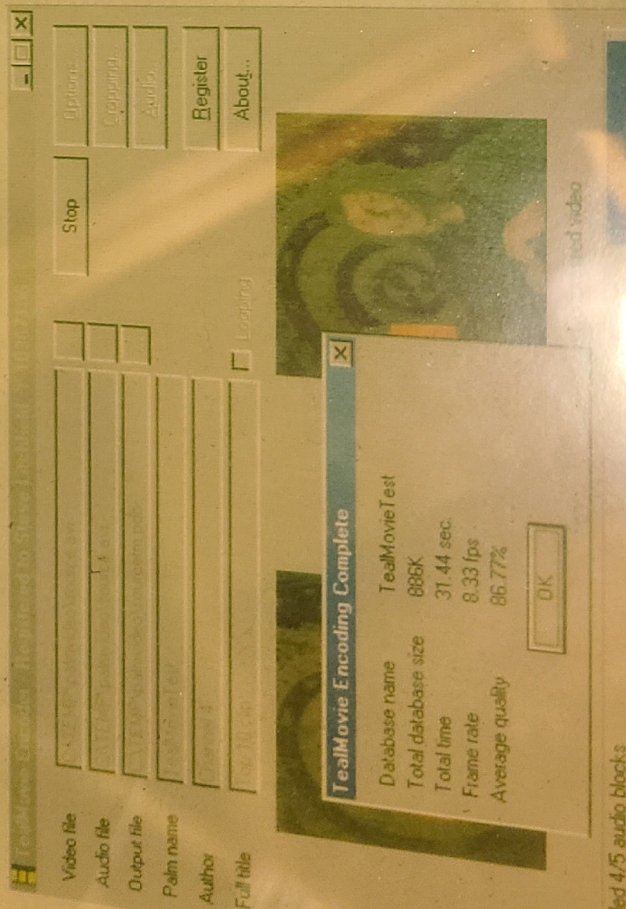
TealMovie

You have been warned. About two minutes after installing and trying TealMovie you'll find yourself wishing your handheld had a lot more memory. As the name implies, this is a video solution for Palm OS, with an intelligent and comprehensive desktop converter and a highly optimised handheld player. Even with this optimisation, a one minute video clip with sound will need up to 2MB of memory, a requirement so savage that it will focus your mind on the practical uses for the technology.

There are three other Palm OS applications which claim to support video to some degree (see the boxout on page 33), but none of them support

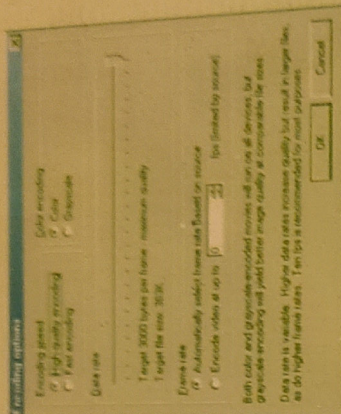
sound or come close to TealMovie in terms of configurability and performance. Given the appallingly primitive piezo-electric speaker that comprises the typical Palm organiser's sound system, you might wonder at the importance of sound support. It's a tribute to what TealMovie does with the very limited hardware that, having seen and heard what is possible, you'll almost certainly dismiss any other, mute solution.

TealMovie's creators suggest that it will be useful for "sales, marketing, training, service, and maintenance operations for a wide range of industries", although the memory requirements for serious clips and the low volume of the typical Palm speaker severely limit what can practically be done. Although I'm sure there are valid uses for 15-30 second



Encoded 4/5 audio blocks

Encoding my first TealMovie video clip

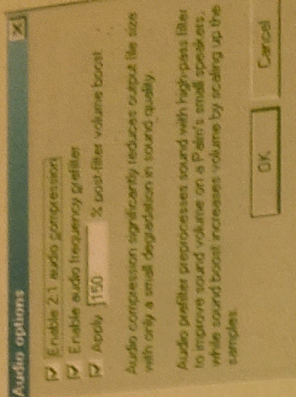


The Options dialog is both helpful and useful

video clips in business, I suspect that most people will view TealMovie as a 'fun' application, with footage of family and friends, a favourite music group or sporting moment.

Although there's a varied selection of clips for download on the TealPoint web site (and on the new PalmUser CD-ROM), anyone with an interest in computer video will probably make the supplied TealMovie Encoder their starting point. It's initially odd to see separate dialog fields for video and audio sources, but it's surprisingly common in the world of computer video to end up storing the two separately, combining and synchronizing them for output to other formats. If your source clip already has a soundtrack, there's no harm in giving the same file reference for both fields.

A superbly designed 'Options' dialog allows adjustment of encoding speed, data and frame rates—reducing the latter two can be useful when battling with the continual problem of movie size. At most, up to 3000 bytes are used



Clever stuff—and it works, too!

for each frame in the movie clip, with quality obviously reducing as you adjust this number. A 'Cropping' dialog does a good job of establishing a compromise between full-screen and 'letterbox' modes, for clips which aren't already in a square aspect ratio.

The unique 'Audio options' dialog is best left untampered with but is still worth viewing, if only to impress yourself with how much is being done by the TealMovie programmers to get the very most out of the Palm speaker.

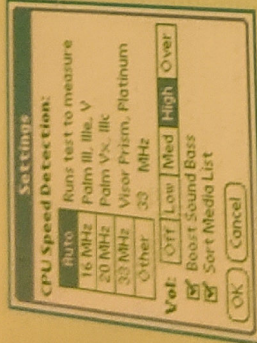
The Encoder is so far only available for Windows and only accepts native AVI and WAV file formats, although the TealMovie web page links to a variety of free video format conversion tools, for example enabling you to import QuickTime clips from a Macintosh.

Following the encoding process, you video clip exists as a standard Palm database (.pdb) file, which can be installed by HotSync in the usual way.

TealMovie on the Palm itself is well crafted to be just sufficient without adding and whistles that aren't needed.

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The Settings dialog in TealMovie on the Palm

main display presents a categorized list of movie files, with category selection working just as in the built-in Palm OS applications.

An 'Info' mode is interesting as it confirms for each file what settings were used during the encoding process. The frame rate in particular is chosen for optimum results—8fps (frames per second) on the small Palm display is surprisingly just enough to give the impression of smooth movement, although the presence of a continuous soundtrack helps the illusion along enormously.

Once a movie is off and running, tapping the Menu icon pops up a small panel of volume and movie controls. At first,



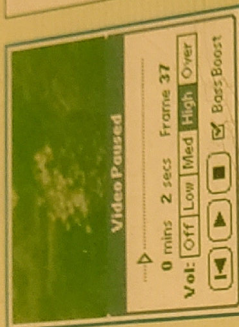
Tapping for information on an installed video clip

TealMovie's sound output appears overly 'tinny and 'noised out', but a closer repeat listen in a reasonably quiet room will surprise you. One of my test clips had elements of both spoken word and rock music, and I was able to pick out virtually every word in both sections.

Picture quality was as good as I'd hoped to expect, with particularly good colour balance on a Palm Ilk. A greyscale version of my clip viewed on a 20MHz Palm Vx was almost as impressive. On the 16MHz Palm m100 and Ilk organisers there isn't quite enough processor power to cope with the highest quality data rates, leading to picture/sound synchronization problems. Reducing the



Some selected frames as displayed within TealMovie on a Palm Ilk, showing picture quality



Popping up controls mid-movie

data rate to around 2000 bytes per frame and turning off sound compression solved the problem, albeit at the expense of slight picture degradation.

TealMovie won't let you watch 'blockbusters in bed', but it does go further than anything else so far created for Palm OS and is an attractive way to present very short video segments for your education and enjoyment.

Steve Litchfield

TealMovie

From: TealPoint Software

Contact: www.tealpoint.com

Price: \$20

Quality: ★★★★★★
Value: ★★★★★★

Alternatively...

Three other applications can play short video clips, although none feature support for sound. Each is branded as a viewer for various types of media (of which video is just one).

MG1 PhotoSuite Mobile Edition handles still images as well, with much of its functionality geared to these. In our eyes tests, video conversion was spectacularly unsuccessful, with movie size on the Palm around four times that with the TealMovie system and with space use of colour palette and depth. \$25. www.photosuite.com/palm

FireViewer 5 produces picture quality as good as TealMovie, but with movie sizes around 60% larger and with a limited, non-data choice of frame rate (5 and 25 in my case—the source rate is simplistically divided down). Covered often in the pages of PalmUser, FireViewer does of course handle other media, including images and hypertext. The viewer is free, the desktop converter utility is \$20. www.firepod.com

gMovie Player is roughly on a par with FireViewer 5, with a better choice of frame rates but (surprisingly) no support for full-screen (160 by 160) movies. Colour movies appear extremely jerky, with noticeable redrawing of every single frame. As with FireViewer, the Palm application is free but the desktop converter isn't. \$30. www.geneticmedia.com

PalmUser

The journal for Palm organisers and compatibles

Issue 8



A new approach to Palm OS computing
—The HandPlex 220 comes to town...

CPU Speed

Auto

16 MHz

20 MHz

33 MHz

Other

Vol: Off

☒ Boost

☒ Sort

OK

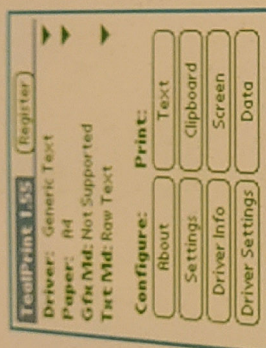
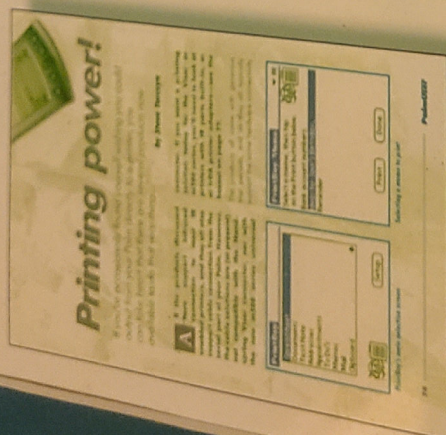
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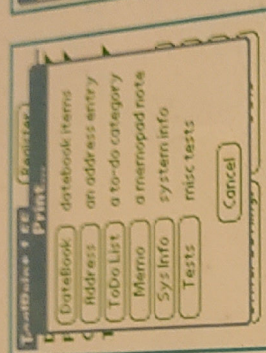


TealPrint's main display

TealPrint is from the prolific TealPoint Software, and it's no surprise that revamped products from the TealPoint stable (such as TealPhone, TealDoc, and TealPrint) are now including TealPrint compatibility. This works very nicely, as by selecting a menu option from within the original application you can choose to print either the text currently displayed or the entire document.

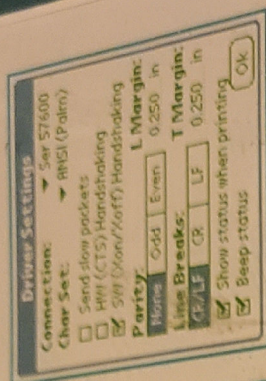
TealPrint itself will let you print scratch text, clipboard data, screen images or data (built-in applications). Expense is not supported, and neither is Mail, a surprising oversight.

Uniquely, TealPrint also supports printing to any Windows PC printer via HotSync. Although of limited use for built-in applications (since you can always print the data directly from the Palm Desktop) it does give you an alternative and is simple—if slightly delayed—means to get Palm printed output to your printer.

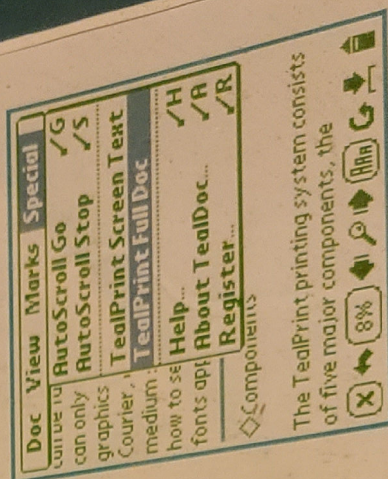


Choosing a data item within TealPrint

TealPrint supports IP-connected printers and serial cable-connected printers, and the documentation gives guidance as to the pin configuration of such cables. TealPrint also supports the same serial-to-parallel adapters as the other products, as well as the ActiSys or Extended Systems IRDA printer adapters.



Driver settings in TealPrint



Teal/Print support within TealDoc

TealMaster

This is TealPoint Software's contribution to the hack manager scene, with a display very similar to HackMaster. Additions include a column showing the size of each hack, and (optionally) display of their version numbers. Uniquely, a priority column is also provided. By setting a priority, you can ensure that hacks that trap the same Palm OS system function do so in the correct order and hacks with lower priority will receive system calls before those with higher numbers. This is much more friendly and intuitive than having to go through the tedious process of un-checking and re-checking related hacks in a specified order. Scrolling between pages is again easy to do with the hardware buttons.

If you tap on a hack while the 'Info' button is highlighted, a dialog opens showing the full name of the hack, its version and, for the technically inclined, information on which system calls it traps.

TealMaster	Off	A	B	C	D	E
☐ 3 3AlarmHack 2.0	4k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3AfterBurner Hack 1.0	10k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3ClearHack 1.0	0k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3EVEditHack 2.4	57k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3FindHack 3.5	18k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3FontHack 123-2-12	6k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3LinkerHack 1.0	30k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3McPhling 1.08	9k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3Padlock Plus 1.1	9k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3PopCalc 0.97	23k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3PopFavorites 1.4	15k	?	?	?	?	?
☐ 3 3PopTime 1.0	12k	?	?	?	?	?

Info Del Reset All on All off

TealMaster's display of hacks

Another welcome feature is the concept of 'profiles' and profile mapping, which are like X-Master's 'sets'. TealMaster supports up to five different profiles, by default named 'A' through 'E', but all removable. Each profile specifies a separate list of which hacks are activated and their relative priorities, enabling you to select the best profile for each application in which you might require slightly different behaviour from the Palm OS. A feature unique to TealMaster is that you can have profiles automatically enabled when you start any application, so opening up a word processing application, for example, can automatically enable your keyboard-supporting hacks.

For the power user, TealMaster includes a powerful tool that shows, by system call, all active Palm OS patches. It also reports on 'Stolen Patches', which are system calls that have been redirected by other, non-Hack programs (such as a keyboard or other device driver), and may therefore cause the hacks patching the same calls to behave unexpectedly.

Extension Info
Name: EVEdit
Ver: 2.4
Traps: SysHandleEvent() ExtEnQueuePenPoint() ExtProcessSoftKeyStroke() ClipBoardAddItem() ClipBoardGetItem() FldCopy() FldCut() FldPaste()

OK

See which system calls are trapped by the hack

Profile Mapping
☐ Auto-switch profile by app (also activates delete protect)
☐ Beep on profile change
Hacks Off
A B C D E
No Change
Default
o - Hacks Off
x - No Change
x - Default
x - BSMConf

OK

Profile Mapping offers plenty of control

TealMaster also prevents the Palm OS application launcher from deleting active hacks. After a reset, you have the same option as with HackMaster to choose to enable or disable hacks, and an optional timer enables TealMaster after receiving no response in 1-5 seconds. Also unique to TealMaster is a button on reset to start up TealMaster and change your active hacks or selected profile.

TealMaster's analysis and reporting tools display their reports on the screen, but can also be copied to the clipboard for pasting into Memo Pad or similar, or even sent to a printer via TealPrint.

TealMaster

From: TealPoint Software
Contact: www.tealpoint.com
Price: \$10
Quality: ★★★★★★
Value: ★★★★★★

Which hack manager to choose?

If you're a power hack-user and need the ability to switch between different hack configurations, TealMaster and X-Master are your only choices. Of the two, TealMaster's concept of hack priorities is simple, clear and well-designed, its display is the most informative, and its Profile Mapping allows hacks to be enabled automatically when switching between applications. Technical information on system patches is also better presented in TealMaster and, as with most TealPoint software, the documentation is first rate. X-Master also has an impressive amount of functionality and, being freeware, is also well worth considering.

One advantage of using the original HackMaster is that it's the single most popular Palm utility and you can be sure that all new hacks have been written and tested to work well with it, though during our tests we experienced no incompatibilities with any of the software being evaluated.