The Electron User Guide

Part no 405000
Issue no 2
Date July 1984

CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Exposure

Like all electronic equipment, the Electron should not be exposed to direct sunlight for long periods.

Servicing

All servicing should be done through an authorised dealer. There are no servicable parts inside either the Electron or the mains adapter, and opening either case will void the warranty.

The mains adapter

Note that your Electron Microcomputer does not have a separate on/off switch, so to switch it off unplug the mains adapter.

To switch the computer off briefly, you can remove the small plug on the right hand side of the case. However, the mains adapter should not be left plugged into the domestic 13A socket for long periods if the Electron is not being used.

There is a thermal fuse built into the mains adapter and if this blows, you will need to replace the adapter (please contact your local dealer). The Electron Microcomputer contains its own short circuit protection, so adapter failure is unlikely.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should the mains adapter be replaced by a normal mains plug. The mains adapter contains a transformer which reduces the mains to a safe low voltage for input to the Electron.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Wherever the letters BBC are mentioned in this book they refer to the British Broadcasting Corporation.

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First published 1983
Published by Acorn Computers Limited
Typeset by Bateman Typesetters, Cambridge

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1 What is a computer?

A computer is a general purpose electronic machine that can be instructed to do a great variety of things – play games, perform complex calculations, store and retrieve information, display graphs and so on.

You can ask a computer to do things directly – by typing commands on its keyboard – but for complex tasks, a whole series of instructions is usually written and stored in the computer's memory. The computer can be instructed to call up these instructions one by one and carry them out, very fast. (Your Electron can carry out, or 'execute', over 250,000 separate instructions every second.)

A series of instructions like this is called a *program*. Programs can be recorded onto cassette by using a suitable cassette recorder in much the same way as you might record a piece of music. The main difference is that the recording is made from a computer, and is played back into the computer again. You can buy pre-recorded programs which have been written by other people, and to start you off, several programs are provided on the Introductory Cassette which comes with your Electron.

The first part of this book describes how to set up your computer, and load and run the programs on the Introductory Cassette. For information on other programs available for the Electron (the general name for programs is 'software'), write to:

Acornsoft Limited
4a Market Hill
Cambridge CB2 3NJ

The remainder of this book (chapter 4 onwards), and the book *Start Programming with the Electron*, will tell you how to write your own programs on your Electron computer. You do not need to know this in order to use your computer, as there are many commercially available programs – but we hope that you will be interested and will want to find out more about your Electron.