TRANSFERRING SPREADSHEETS

If you have some Abacus spreadsheets you want to transfer to Excel or other PC program, and are a QPC2 user you have all the software you need to transfer a spreadsheet from the QL to a PC. However you will only be able to transfer the values and not the formulae. You will also be unable to transfer accented letters correctly without additional software.

All the Psion programs have an Export command that allows you to transfer information between them, although with Quill it is present in the Xchange version only You can also use this export command to transfer files from Abacus to a PC spreadsheet. Load your spreadsheet into Abacus then

press F3, F for Files and E for Export.

By default the export is to Quill, although you can press A to export to either Archive or Abacus or E to Easel. In your case you need to export in Quill format and thus you just press enter. You are then asked to enter the range of the spreadsheet you wish to export, and then the file name for the exported file. Abacus will normally save the exported file to your default drive and add the extension _exp, but you can override this. For example you could enter ram1_myfile_txt. Ram1 is a good device to choose as eventually you must save the exported file to a PC formatted disk, and Abacus will not allow you to do this directly, unless you are using Xchange version 3.90N.

Make sure you override the file extension _exp with one that your PC spreadsheet uses to import files. Now save the file from ram1_ to a PC formatted floppy and don't forget to change the underscore to a full stop:

e.g.
copy ram1_myfi1e_txt TO flp1_myfile.txt

(To do this you will need to use a QL system that can read and write to PC formatted disks.)

If you are just wanting to incorporate your spreadsheet in a document, you could simply import this text file into your PC wordprocessor. To import into a PC spreadsheet, you will need to know how your PC spreadsheet recognises when a file must be imported and not simply loaded. I do not possess Excel, but Lotus 123 does this when the file extensions are .TXI .PRN, .CSV .DAI .OUT and .ASC. Note that .EXP is not on this list and that is why you cannot use this extension when exporting from Abacus.

When you load your export file into Lotus123 you are asked what separator you are using to start a new column. It suggests TAB, which is what we want, and when we confirm this our QL spreadsheet appears on the PC.

Now for a little complication. Many people use spreadsheets for financial calculations and if you try to transfer these you will find your pound signs have been replaced by apostrophes. This is not a serious problem. Before you export from Abacus press F3 D for Design and M for Monetary Symbol. Now enter Ctrl+Shift+c and you will get chr$(163), which is a capital E with an acute accent. Press enter to confirm this and then export your file. If you work in Euros use CTRL + ESC to get chr$(128), a lower case a with an umlaut. If you work in dollars you should not need to make any changes.

(This help and advice item is based on a article by the author that appeared in QL Today Volume 8 Issue 2 page 8)

Colin Mckay has kindly provided the following additional help for Excel users:

EXPORTING FROM ABACUS INTO EXCEL using WINDOWS XP

The version of EXCEL is Microsoft Excel 2000 (9.0.3821 SR.1)

Open EXCEL
Select 'Data' / 'Get external data' / 'Import text file'
Move up the tree until the A drive is available.

Insert the PC-formatted floppy disk into the PC floppy drive.
File/open
Select 'All files'
Open the transferring file.

Text Import Wizard window appears.

Step 1 of 3

Choose between the offered options:
      Delimited - characters such as commas or tabs separate each field.
      Fixed width - fields are aligned in columns with spaces between each field
[I selected this first time].
   Preview panel shows the transferring data. Scroll bars enable the data to be seen.
   Select 'Next'.

Step 2 of 3 - This window replaces the step 1 window.

   Lets the user select field widths.
   The fields are separated by column break lines. There are options:
      Create }
      Delete } a break line
      Move }
   Preview panel shows the transferring data, and the column break lines.
   Select 'Next'. [I made no changes]

Step 3 of 3 - This window replaces the step 2 window.

      Lets the user select each column and set its data format. Choose between
the offered options:
      General (converts all data to text).
      Text.
      Date (there is a sub-window to select the data format).
      Do not import the column.
   Highlight each column in turn, and select a data format.
   Select 'Finish'.

Save the file as 'name.xls'

[My transferring file consisted of columns:
   Item no. Description Date Cheque no. Amount
I found that once the file had been transferred into EXCEL steps 2 and 3 could be readily reformatted using normal EXCEL commands.]

Alternatives when in step 1 of 3, 'Delimited' is selected. [My second transfer, which was independent of the first time].

Select 'tab'

In step 2 of 3 select 'Tab'.

In step 3 of 3 the 'Data preview' window is highlighted overall, and is unchangeable.

In the Import Data window select 'New worksheet'.

The result is that the entire transferred spreadsheet appears in column A.

Select 'space'

In step 2 of 3 select 'Space'.

In step 3 of 3 the 'Data preview window can be used as described above when 'Fixed width' was selected to apply a 'format cells' to each column.

The result is that if the spreadsheet had a title in cell A1, that appears in cell A1 of the transferred spreadsheet. The remainder of the data appears in columns B rightwards, despite it appeared in column A rightwards in the original sheet. Moreover data which was in columns H2:I11 in the original sheet, also appeared in column B in the transferred sheet. Probably this was to do with separators?

In step 2 of 3 select Tab, Space, or other, the effect of the selection can be seen in the preview window.