



PostMaster

Users' Manual

[c] 1990 by
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Table of Contents

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
Installation1
Running PostMaster3
The Main Menu4
Posters . . . . .	.5
Letterheads . . . . .	.6
Labels . . . . .	.7
Printing Graphics Libraries . . . . .	.8
The Graphics Editor . . . . .	.8
Text Editing and Entry . . . . .	.9
Filenames and PostMaster . . . . .	.10
Printers and PostMaster . . . . .	.12
Drivers and Filters . . . . .	.12
Form Sizes . . . . .	.13
Notes from the Author . . . . .	.13

Welcome to PostMaster!

The PostMaster system offers you the ability to create useful Posters, Letterhead paper, and various sizes of Labels with ease using detailed on-screen graphics information. Most of the programs' functions operate in a 'Point and Shoot' manner; you simply use the arrow keys to highlight or display your selections and press the <ENTER> key to tell PostMaster that you like what you see. The keys available for your use at any given time are generally displayed in a prompt area at the bottom of the screen. The simplicity of this 'user interface' is one of the strong features of PostMaster.

Minimum system requirements for PostMaster are:

- . TRS-80 Model 4 or 4P or Tandy Model 4D
- . TRSDOS 6 or LS-DOS 6
- . High-resolution graphics board.
- . 64K RAM
- . Two disk/diskette drives (total 360k or more)
- . 120-DPI (Double-Density) graphics-capable printer

Terms used in this manual:

LS-DOS and TRSDOS 6 are considered equal for the purposes of this manual. Both are referred to as "DOS". Specific keys on your keyboard are represented by enclosure within greater-than and less-than symbols, thus the enter key is represented as "<ENTER>" and function key 1 as "<F1>". Any commands that you should type in from your keyboard are presented in **Bold Type**.

ADDENDA
To The PostMaster User's Manual

Dated July 10, 1990

INSTALLATION PROCEDURE:

Page 1: After performing the **BACKUP :0 :1 (X)** command, your computer will prompt you to insert your system disk. Return your DOS disk to drive 0 and press <ENTER>. Under LS-DOS 6.3 or higher, type the command:

DATECONV :1

and press <ENTER> To correct the dating on your new copy. Information on DATECONV can be found in your LS-DOS manual.

Page 2: Replace the command **BACKUP /SYS:0 :1 (S)** with the two commands:

BACKUP SYS0/SYS:0 :1 (S)

BACKUP /SYS:0 :1 (S,NEW)

Page 3: Change the backup command from **BACKUP :s :d (NEW)** to:

BACKUP :s :d (NEW,INV)

SPECIFYING DATA DRIVES: Pages 5, 6, 7, 8.

When specifying drives to read parameter, icon, or map files, selecting a drive that does not contain the appropriate type of file may result in a screen full of 'garbage'. No harm will be done; just press the <BREAK> key to go back to the drive number prompt and try again.

ADDITIONAL GRAPHICS FILES - Page 11

Over sixty icon files are currently available for use with PostMaster. When a drive is selected, PostMaster displays a maximum of 45 filenames; if more are present on a single drive, they will not be displayed and therefore will be inaccessible. Since icon files average 18K per file this problem should not occur on drives of less than 800K; however, when obtaining large numbers of additional icon files be sure to check that no more than 45 are on any one drive.

DRIVERS AND FILTERS - Page 12

A problem has been reported while using certain hardware printer spoolers. Some hardware spoolers provide built-in, automatic translation of print data. Others accept control sequences to invoke functions provided by the spooler. Anything that intercepts or translates printer data can render your PostMaster printouts useless. In this case, turn off the hardware spooler and allow the data to pass through.

Postmaster Installation

PostMaster is supplied on two single-sided, double-density, 40 track diskettes; the standard for model 4 TRS-80's. Good procedures dictate that you make copies of any program and run from a "working copy"; besides, DOS is not included with the PostMaster system and must be installed on a diskette if you are going to run it from a floppy drive. A minimum of 360k of disk space is required for the PostMaster system.

To Install PostMaster:

These instructions assume at least a beginners' familiarity with DOS commands and drive numbers. If in doubt, consult your DOS manual.

Minimum configuration: Two 180k single-sided drives.

Boot up your computer according to the instructions in your computer manual. Place a new, unused diskette in drive 1 and type the command:

FORMAT :1 (CYL=40)

Press the <ENTER> key at each prompt. When the FORMAT program is completed (DOS Ready is again displayed), replace the FORMatted diskette in drive 1 with another new, unused diskette and repeat the above procedure.

Now type the command:

BACKUP :0 :1 (X)

When you are prompted to place the Source Diskette in Drive 0, insert the PostMaster Program Disk 1 in drive 0 and press the <ENTER> key.

When BACKUP is finished, return your DOS (boot) diskette to drive 0 and type the command:

BACKUP /SYS:0 :1 (S)

followed by the <ENTER> key. This will install DOS on the diskette in drive 1. Remove the diskette from drive 1 and label it "PostMaster Disk 1". Place the second FORMatted diskette in drive 1 and type the command:

BACKUP :0 :1 (X)

When you are prompted to place the Source Diskette in Drive 0, insert the PostMaster Graphics Disk 2 in drive 0 and press the <ENTER> key. When the BACKUP program is finished remove the PostMaster Graphics Disk 2 from drive 0, replacing it with the copy of disk 1, and place your original PostMaster Disks in a safe place. If something happens to your copies, the originals will be needed to make another set of working diskettes. Label the diskette in Drive 1 as "Postmaster Disk 2" and return it to drive 1. You are now ready to run the program.

Large Capacity Diskette Storage

Boot up your computer according to the instructions in your DOS manual. Place a new, unused diskette in drive 1. If you have diskette drives providing more than 360k storage on a diskette, it is assumed you are familiar with the appropriate command parameters for formatting your diskette to their maximum capacity; adjust the following command as required by your system. For 360k drives (standard on the Model 4D), type the following command:

FORMAT :1 (SIDES=2,CYL=40,DDEW)

And press the <ENTER> key. Respond to any prompts by pressing the <ENTER> key. When the FORMAT procedure is completed and DOS Ready is again displayed, type the command:

BACKUP /SYS:0 :1 (S)

And press the <ENTER> key. This will install DOS on the newly formatted diskette. Now type the command:

BACKUP BACKUP/CMD:0 :1 (I)

This will install the BACKUP program on the new diskette. Remove your boot diskette from drive 0 and put it away. Label the new diskette "PostMaster Disk" and place it in drive 0. Now place the PostMaster Program Disk 1 from the distribution package in drive 1 and type the command:

BACKUP :1 :0 (NEW,INV)

And press the <ENTER> key. This will install the PostMaster programs on your new diskette. Remove the PostMaster Program Disk 1 from drive 1 and replace it with the PostMaster Graphics Disk 2. Repeat the above procedure by holding down the <CTRL> key and pressing the <R> key, or retype the command:

BACKUP :1 :0 (NEW,INV)

To install the graphics files on your working disk. Put the original PostMaster diskettes in a safe place in case something happens to your working copy. You are now ready to run the program.

Hard Disk Drives

WARNING Read the discussion in this manual concerning file names BEFORE installing PostMaster on a hard disk drive. Proceeding without doing so may endanger files stored on your hard disk. The author of PostMaster assumes no responsibility or liability for damage arising from such installation.

To install on a hard disk drive: place the PostMaster Program Disk 1 in your floppy drive and type the command:

BACKUP :s :d (NEW)

(where ":s" is the drive containing the PostMaster disk and ":d" is the drive you wish to install PostMaster on). When BACKUP is finished, repeat the procedure with the PostMaster Graphics Disk 2. You are now ready to run the program.

Running PostMaster

If you have installed PostMaster on two diskettes, place the one labeled 'PostMaster Disk 1' in drive 0 and the one labeled 'PostMaster Disk 2' in drive 1. If you have installed PostMaster on a single diskette, place it in drive 0. Type the Command:

PM

and press the <ENTER> key. The opening screen will be displayed shortly in high resolution, and PostMaster will load the configuration file. After this file has been loaded, an <ENTER> key will be displayed at the bottom of the screen. Press the <ENTER> key to continue.

General notes: You can press the <BREAK> key just about anywhere in the PostMaster program to get out of what you're currently doing, or go back to the previous step. However, if the <BREAK> key has been disabled from DOS Ready by use of the "SYSTEM (BREAK=NO)" command or an equivalent, this key may not work properly. If this seems to be the case, try returning to DOS Ready and issuing the command: **SYSTEM (BREAK)** and pressing the <ENTER> key.

*** IMPORTANT *** When you choose a border, icon, or font from a menu, PostMaster makes note of your selection but does not actually store the graphic information until you select a "Print" function from one of the print menus. This means that the data files (/FON, /ICN, /BOR) corresponding to your choices must be present on the system when "Print" is selected, otherwise an error message will be displayed and the operation aborted. Use care when swapping diskettes while PostMaster is running.

Most everything in PostMaster except Text Editing is accomplished by highlighting a selection using the arrow keys and pressing the <ENTER> key to select the highlighted item or function. The valid keys that you can use are displayed graphically at the bottom of the screen.

The Main Menu

The Main Menu appears after the configuration file has been loaded and you have pressed the <ENTER> key in response to the initial prompt. A column of functions is listed on the left side of the screen, with a graphic corresponding to the highlighted item displayed on the right side. Notice that there are several keys represented on the bottom of the screen in an enclosed area. This "Key Box" will appear throughout the operation of the program to indicate which keys are valid, and the functions associated with them. In the case of the Main Menu, the arrow keys are used to move the highlight box to the function of your choice, and the <ENTER> key to select that function. The first time you start PostMaster, you should move the highlight box to the "Select Printer" option and select a printer driver appropriate for your printer. Refer to Page 12 for more information on printers and printer selection

IMPORTANT Make sure there is no write-protect tab on the diskette in drive 0 when you select a printer; the configuration file is on drive 0, and will be updated by the printer selector program. You may replace the write-protect tab after selecting and testing the appropriate printer driver.

Posters

When you select the "Design" option from the Poster main menu, the screen will change and you are presented with the opportunity to select a border pattern. At the prompt for the drive number, press the number corresponding to the drive that contains your Graphics Disk 2 files. A menu will appear shortly with an example of the type of pattern the selection represents. Use the arrow keys to highlight the one you want and press the <ENTER> key to select it.

The next step is selection of Graphics Icons. As with the border selection, you will be prompted for a drive number. The drive you request will be scanned for icon files and the filenames displayed for your selection. Highlight the file you wish to use and press <ENTER> to select it. PostMaster will then read the file and display the names within it for you to select, also displaying the icon whose name is highlighted for reference. Once you have selected an icon, you will be prompted for the size to be used in the finished poster. "Large" fills the entire poster and is generally used with little or no text, or with text overlay. "Medium" allows up to six icons in a poster, and "Small" up to twenty four. If the size is specified as Medium or Small, you are presented with an opportunity to place the icon wherever you wish within the poster. Use the left- and right-arrows to move the marker, the <ENTER> key to select a position for your icon, and the <F1> key to indicate when you are satisfied with the placement. The Graphics Icon selection sequence will be repeated for a second icon in case you want to use two. Sizes of the two icons need not be the same, but any icons or text that ends up placed in the same position of the poster will be overlaid.

You will now be presented with an opportunity to select a Font style. If you choose text, a text editing screen will then appear allowing you to type in the text you want on the finished poster. Refer to Page 9 for details on Text Editing. Pressing the <BREAK> key during any of the above steps will cause the program to move to the previous step; font/text to icon selection, and icon selection to border selection.

Next the print menu will appear, allowing you to print the finished poster (a representative display will be shown first), save your selections to disk for later loading from the Poster main menu, or return to either of the Poster main menu or the PostMaster main menu.

Letterheads

Upon selecting "Design" from the Letterhead main menu, the screen will present you with the opportunity to select a Graphics Icon. Highlight the file you wish to use and press <ENTER> to select it. PostMaster will then read the file and display the names for you to select, also displaying the icon whose name is highlighted for reference. Press the <ENTER> key to select the icon you want, and PostMaster will then prompt you for the desired placement; left side, right side, or both. If you place the first icon on only one side, you will then be able to select a second icon for the remaining side.

You will now be presented with an opportunity to select a Font style. Only the top line of text that you type will be converted to the Font style you select; the rest will be converted to the 'Editor Font' you see during text editing.

Finally the print menu will appear, allowing you to view and print the finished graphic, save your selections to disk for later loading from the Letterhead main menu, or return to either of the Letterhead main menu or the PostMaster main menu.

By printing several pages at one time you can keep a supply of impressive letterhead paper to use with your favorite word processor for correspondence. The graphics printed by the Letterhead module take up the top one inch of the paper, leaving the rest of the page for your letter.

Labels

When designing Large Labels, the screen will present you with the opportunity to select a border pattern. At the prompt for the drive number, press the key corresponding to the drive that contains your Graphics Disk 2 files. A menu will appear shortly with an example of the type of pattern the selection represents. Use the arrow keys to highlight the one you want and press the <ENTER> key to select it. Selecting a border style greatly enhances the looks of the finished label, but slightly decreases the space available for text, as the various elements of labels are not overlaid. Borders are not available on small labels due to space limitations of the form.

The next step is selection of a Graphics Icon. As with the border selection, you will be prompted for a drive number. The drive you request will be scanned for icon files (files ending with the /ICN extension) and the filenames displayed for your selection. Highlight the file you wish to use and press <ENTER> to select it. PostMaster will then read the file and display the names for you to select, also displaying the icon whose name is highlighted for reference. Note that selection of a Graphics icon decreases the space available for text.

You will now be presented with an opportunity to select a Font style. Only the top line of text that you type will be converted to the Font style you select; the rest will be converted to the 'Editor Font' you see during text editing.

Next the print menu will appear, allowing you to view and print the finished label, save your selections to disk for later loading from the label main menu, or return to either of the label main menu or the PostMaster main menu.

Printing Graphics Libraries

When you select this function, you are immediately asked for a drive on which your icon files are stored. Press the key corresponding to the drive containing your icon files and these files will be presented for selection. When you press the <ENTER> key printing will begin immediately. A standard 8 1/2" by 11" page will hold the printouts from two icon libraries nicely if the printer is aligned so that printing will begin at the topmost line of the paper. You can interrupt printing by pressing the <BREAK> key. This function provides you with a handy reference of the contents of your icon files so you won't have to search through dozens of pictures in several files to find the one you want

The Graphics Editor

Here's your chance to really let your creative 'juices' flow! This function permits you to develop your own graphics icons for use with PostMaster. When you enter the Graphics Editor, a large box will be displayed on the left half of the screen, various keys and their accompanying text in the Keybox, and explanations of various key functions not listed in the Keybox on the right.

The keys supported by PostMaster in the Graphics Editor are:

KEY	FUNCTION
=====	=====
<BREAK>	Return to the Main Menu
<ENTER>	Print the icon you are working on
<F1>	Save the icon to a safety buffer
<F2>	Invert (reverse the state of all points)
<F3>	Restore from the safety buffer
<SHIFT><F1>	Load an icon from an Icon Library File
<SHIFT><F2>	Erase the working (not safety) buffer
<SHIFT><F3>	Save your finished work to a User Library
<ARROWS>	Move around in the work area
<SPACEBAR>	Toggle a point on/off
<D>	Start drawing in white/green/etc.
<E>	Start erasing in black
<S>	Skip over points without changing them
<H>	Flip the displayed picture horizontally
<V>	Flip the displayed picture vertically

As you can see, you have a wide range of tools to develop an icon of your own. While you are working in the double-sized area on the left of the screen, a normal-sized image is displayed on the upper right. This and the print function allow you to view the end result of your efforts. Try inverting an image before you print it to see which way looks best on paper.

PostMaster Text Editing & Entry

The PostMaster text handling interface is a highly specialized module that performs thousands of operations each time you press a key. For this reason, you will notice that text entry is noticeably slower than your favorite word processor, especially near the end of a line of text. Enabling type-ahead with the **SYSTEM (TYPE)** command from DOS Ready overcomes this effect to a large extent.

Special keys assigned to the text handling mode are:

KEY	FUNCTION
=====	=====
<BREAK>	Select a font from a Font Map File
<ENTER>	Terminate the text entry/editing mode
<LEFT ARROW>	Backspace & rubout the last character
<RIGHT ARROW>	Treated the same as the <SPACEBAR>
<UP ARROW>	Move up a line *
<DOWN ARROW>	Move down a line *
<F1>	Left-align the text
<F2>	Center the text
<F3>	Right-align the text
<SHIFT><F1>	Insert a blank line at the cursor**
<SHIFT><F2>	Change to the next font in the Font Map
<SHIFT><F3>	Delete the line at the cursor**

* Wraps to the top line from the bottom or vice versa.

** Moves all lines below the current line down/up one line.

These special functions are provided to make the job of entering textual data in the fields as easy as possible, and the keys and their functions are displayed at all times in the Keybox. With a short familiarization period, you'll be typing away in PostMaster as if it were second nature.

After selecting a font style within any of the various modules, PostMaster will present you with a screen consisting of one or more lines and the heading "Text Edit/Entry" at the top of the screen. The current line will be bordered on the left with a highlighted box indicating the font style for that line (blank for Editor Font), and on the right by a highlighted box indicating whether the text is to be left or right aligned, or centered. As indicated in the Keybox, these parameters can be changed with the function keys. Type the text you wish to print on each appropriate line, using the up- and down-arrow keys to move from one line to another. Note that the program will not accept more text on a line once the maximum width for a font has been reached. If this occurs, try changing the font style (<SHIFT><F2>) or backspacing and re-wording the text. When you have finished typing in the text you wish to print, press the <ENTER> key to display the Print Options menu.

Filenames and PostMaster

The filenames and extensions are generally fixed; you cannot rename files (except as noted below) and expect PostMaster to work with them. In addition, the contents of the files used with PostMaster are of a highly structured nature. This means that you should never attempt to force PostMaster to use a file that is not specifically supplied for, or generated by the PostMaster series of programs. To do so invites problems that may require pressing the reset button and rebooting your computer. While this sounds ominous at first, you shouldn't have to worry unless you fail to take proper steps in installing and running PostMaster. Generally, the only time such a problem will arise is when you install PostMaster on disk(ette)s that already contain other programs and files, and the names of these existing files match those used by PostMaster. While every attempt to make PostMaster filenames unique has been taken to avoid potential problems, a few minutes taken to prevent such problems from arising is well-spent.

The files supplied within the PostMaster system are:

FILENAME	WHAT IT IS:
=====	=====
PM/CMD	The main module of the PostMaster program
POSTMAST/CNF	The PostMaster Configuration file
POSTMAST/OVx	The various PostMaster overlays (x=1 to 7)
POSTMAST/PCT	The Printer Driver data file
PMBORDER/MAP	The Border Selection data file
PMFONTS/MAP	The Font Selection data file

In addition, several files are supplied that are designated by extension (the part following the slash):

EXTENSION	TYPE OF FILE:
=====	=====
/FON	Font data files
/ICN	Graphics icon (picture) data files
/BOR	Border data files

By checking the existing contents of your disk(ette) prior to installing PostMaster, you can tell if there will be any potential conflict. A general summary would be that you should NOT have any files name PM/CMD, PMBORDER/MAP, PMFONTS/MAP, or files starting with the name "POSTMAST", or ending with extensions of /FON, /ICN, or /BOR on the disk(ette)s you wish to install PostMaster on. Refer to your DOS manual for the proper use of the DIR command to check for the present of such filenames (Remember to check for invisible files as well as visible!)

Also, PostMaster saves various data files under your command. These files are USERICON/ICN for any graphics icons you create, and files with extensions of /POS, /LHD, /SLB, and /MLB for Poster, Letterhead, Large Label, and Small Label parameters, respectively. In the case of the last four, you will be notified if there is an existing file with the same name, and you will have a chance to change your mind. USERICON/ICN may be renamed to any legal filename you desire once it is full as long as the extension (/ICN) remains the same. In this case, a new USERICON/ICN file will be created the next time you develop and save a graphics icon (space permitting). PM/CMD may also be renamed as you wish, as long as the /CMD extension remains the same. If you rename PM/CMD, the new name will be the command used for starting PostMaster.

Since the files containing the Font and Border selections have fixed names (PMFONTS/MAP and PMBORDER/MAP), you may wonder if there is any means to add more fonts and borders to your graphics libraries. The answer is a resounding yes! The only restriction is that only one of each of these files may be located on a particular disk(ette). Additional /MAP files may be selected by specifying the drive number on which they reside as long as this restriction is respected. This means that you may obtain additional graphics files as they become available and select from them simply by inserting a different diskette in a drive. Note that /FON, /BOR, and /ICN files corresponding to your selection must be available to the system when you select the print option from a print menu. These files, however, may be installed on any drive with no restrictions; the above rules apply only to /MAP files. Additional graphics files are available from The File Cabinet, MCTRUG, and various BBS systems.

Printers and PostMaster

Postmaster is capable of supporting nearly any printer capable of high-density graphics. The standard for this term is generally considered to be 120 dots per inch across the page (960 dots on 8-inch paper) by 72 dots per inch vertically. Minor deviations from this can be and currently are supported, but each manufacturer of printers has their own idea of what 'standard' should mean; this makes printer drivers a science of its' own! If your printer manual states that it has the capability to print the required density or something close, but your specific printer is not listed in the printer selections, check your manual. Many printers have Epson, IBM, or Tandy DMP compatible print modes. Try one of these. If you still cannot get printouts as expected, check your DIP switches. These are small switches that your printer checks when it is first turned on and tell it how to respond to various codes. Locations and settings are explained in your printer manual. PostMaster expects that all printers be set to the factory-supplied settings, with the exception of the TRS-80 standard of automatic line feed, which is probably set correctly if you are not using a special printer driver to emulate the IBM style of Line Feed/Carriage Returns (LF/CR). In general, if you can turn your computer on and print text with no problems, the LF/CR combination is correct.

If you still have problems, contact me; I will be happy to work with you to get PostMaster printing to your satisfaction.

Drivers and Filters

PostMaster is carefully designed to use only documented DOS calls. No hardware is directly addressed by the program except the High Resolution board, for which TRSDOS 6 does not provide supporting routines. While it is entirely probable that PostMaster would work quite well with keyboard filters and drivers, the value of such an approach would be questionable at best. Of more interest is the fact that printer filters and drivers effect the final output of PostMaster. If you have a printer driver installed that (for example) intercepts tab characters and expands them to several spaces, seemingly random gaps would appear in the finished graphic when it was printed on the paper. It is generally best to remove filters and drivers before starting PostMaster. On the other hand, since only DOS calls are used, you can route the printer output to a disk file with the `ROUTE *PR filename/ext:d` (see your DOS manual), print from PostMaster, return to DOS and issue the `RESET *PR` command. At this point, you will have created a disk file that you can use to print your graphic without using PostMaster with the DOS command `COPY filename/ext:d *PR`. The approach used in printing from PostMaster also means that serial printers can be used, if they provide the required graphics support, and your printer driver does not pre-process the print data.

Also, Postmaster requires almost all of the 64K required for operation. Since filters and drivers take up a little memory each time one is installed, you could cause memory conflicts by installing more than one or two.

Form Sizes

PostMaster uses 8 1/2" x 11" (standard size) paper for Posters, Letterhead, and Art Library Listings. This is the size of form used with all printers with or without tractor feed. Removal of tractor strips on 9 1/2" wide paper results in this size, and laser printers use this size almost exclusively.

As supplied in the standard configuration, PostMaster prints Large Labels using 4" x 1 7/16" forms that are spaced 1 1/2" from form to form, and 3 1/2" x 15/16" forms with 1" form to form spacing for Small Labels. Compatible sizes are available for laser printers, but the standard version of PostMaster only prints 1-wide labels in either size. Laser printer owners can print one side of a sheet of labels at a time, but passing a sheet of labels through such a printer twice may not be advisable.

Notes from the Author

As supplied, PostMaster will work on both the MicroLabs Grafyx Solution and the Radio Shack High Resolution board. However, due to hardware differences you may experience some 'hashing' on the Radio Shack board. If this occurs and you find it distracting, you can correct the program for this hardware. After following the installation instructions provided at the beginning of this manual, make sure PATCH/CMD is available on your system (it is an invisible TRSDOS/LS-DOS file) and type the following command:

PATCH PM USING PM

then press the <ENTER> key. The /FIX file is included on the PostMaster distribution disk 1. This operation will remove all 'hashing' on the Radio Shack board, but will prevent proper operation on the Micro-Labs board. DO NOT APPLY THIS PATCH TO YOUR DISTRIBUTION DISK!

