

J.A.M. – Job Application Manager

By Michael Adler and K. Bahar

Published by Hallmark Software, Germany, February 1987. Available in the UK from Eidersoft and TK Computerware. Permission granted to release as Freeware 20/06/16. Originally sold for DM59.00 (£19.95)

Description (from Hallmark Software adverts):

J.A.M. is a front end desk-top manager program using an icon environment. J.A.M. has its own internal ramdisk which does not need to be formatted. J.A.M. has its own job scheduler, you can multitask the Psion suite (Quill etc) without any additional software. Notepad and job controls are standard. Customise your own JAM to suit your needs. Mouse compatible. Features Icon environment, System Internal Dynamic Ramdisk, Desk-Top functions, Job Manager, the Psion suite can be multitasked without any additional software.

J.A.M. was reviewed in QL World September 1987:

From all appearances, the QL user has a particularly large number of front-end systems available, each of which offers similar features with varying degrees of user friendliness. Application Manager is another such system.

An entirely software-based program, the start-up menu offers the options of pressing <F1> to start, <F2> to set the clock – an important procedure to those using date-stamping as part of their record keeping – or <F3> to run the configuration program.

Selecting <F1> EXECs JAM followed by a screen message that JAM is called from SuperBasic by typing “JAM”.

Aimed primarily at simplifying files and current job handling, the screen is a mixture of three pull-down menus from which most of its options are chosen; and a column of five icons to the left of the screen for selecting a drive from a range of two discs, two microdrives and one RAM disc.

Selecting one of the drive icons opens a window in which up to 24 icons are displayed, showing the file names and, where standard filename extensions have been used, icons indicating the type of file.

A screen pointer and the space bar, in the manner of ICE, is used to select most of the system options. At the top of the screen is a menu bar titled, from left to right, “JOBS”, “FILES”, “OPTIONS” and “EXIT”, returning you to SuperBasic.

Moving the cursor to “JOBS” in the option bar at the top left of the screen and pressing space produces a pull-down menu with a range of options for controlling jobs held in memory.

Selecting any of the five sub-options produces sub-menus from which specific jobs may be viewed or altered in terms of release, suspension – with a further sub-menu for selecting time-out – priority or stopping.

The “FILES” sub-menu provides information concerning successively-selected files such as Info, Copy, View, Delete, Rename, Start and Extras.

“Extras” provides two options. Files may be displayed as names/sector counts or as icons/truncated names; a second option, any one of the nine filename extensions may be used as a wildcard option. If, for example, “_bas” is chosen, all the files with that extension will be displayed in the directory window.

The “OPTIONS” menu provides access to Memory information, Notes, a traditional-format Calendar, the inevitable Calculator and Set-up.

“Set-up” allows you to alter the rate of cursor movement, either temporarily or permanently. This window was labelled “Mouse Control”, so I can only assume that this was reserved for a future upgrade.

One of the features I liked is that the configuration routine allows you to set up many of the defaults to your own requirements. Only five slots are available for drive names but they may be renamed to suit particular applications such as fdk, more RAM discs or Winchester. Up to three printer port names are supported and may be renamed according to the hardware attached to the system.

As supplied, files are indicated as icons on default. That may be changed to show files as names instead. The last configuration option asks if you would like to change any of the supplied file extensions from _bas, _cde, _dbf, _exe, _doc, _lis, _grf, _dat and _scr to any alternative three-character extension you may use. Once re-configured, the new drive names and extensions are presented in the display on default.

A surprising omission from the system, especially in the light of developments with other utilities such as QRAM, Taskmaster and Qkick is that JAM does not support any form of Hotkey; the only means of activating it is either from Basic, on the command line, or from within a program. Although it is reasonably priced, I felt that users would find most of the slightly more expensive utilities much easier to justify, and almost all include a greater range of features.