

Build the PIXIE Graphic Display

Adding one chip to the Elf provides complete video interface and animated graphics capability for less than \$25.

If you own an Elf microcomputer (see POPULAR ELECTRONICS August 1976) or are planning to build one soon, the addition of a single IC and a handful of support components, and a change in the crystal frequency, can give you Pixie graphics. The entire graphics system is built into the new CDP 1861 LSI chip that sells for less than \$20 from RCA parts distributors. (A complete kit is available; see Parts List.) The two other IC's in the optional add-on system are for a crystal oscillator that allows the graphics IC to generate the correct TV horizontal and vertical sync pulses.

The photo at the top of this page illustrates what can be done with the original 256 bytes of memory in the Elf when the Pixie graphics system is added. In this article, we will show you how to install and program the Pixie system to produce this type of graphics.

Some Details. The unique Pixie graphics system employs the direct memory access (DMA) capability built into the 1802 microprocessor in the Elf



The basic Elf project orginally published in the August 1976 issue of POPULAR ELECTRONICS is shown at left with Pixie components added. Elf II is a complete kit including a pc board, hexadecimal keypad, Pixie graphics components and expansion bus (see Parts List).

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1						1	-
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Fig. 1. Memory addresses of bytes mapped onto TV screen in sample program.

to work in conjunction with the new graphics IC. This allows you to display any 256-byte segment of memory on a CRT monitor or TV receiver. The output of the new chip is a 1-volt composite video/sync signal.

The selected segment of memory appears on-screen as an array of small squares that represent individual memory bits. If a memory bit is a 1, the appropriate square will be white, while if a bit is a 0, the square will be dark. Changing the bit pattern within the memory will change the pattern that appears onscreen. You can store several different bit patterns (pictures) in memory and,

PIXIE ANIMATION PROGRAM

BY EDWARD C. DEVEAUX

THE PROGRAM given here can be used with the Pixie version of the Elf microcomputer to create animation graphics using only the original 256 bytes of memory. The interrupt routine uses the same timing as described in previous Elf articles. However, a counter has been added to this routine, and we load the refresh address into R0 from R4. The main line of the program has been completely rewritten and contains shift, roll, and INPUT switch read routines.

The shift routine shifts 16 lines of the display to the right one bit at a time; bits shifted off the rightmost byle are shifted back onto the display in the

Label	м	Bytes	Comments
Start	0000	90 B1 B2	R1.1,R2.1=00
	0003	B3 B4	R3.0,R4.0=00
	0005	F8 2D A3	R3.0 = (main)
	0008	F8 3F A2	R2.0 = (stack)
	000B	F8 11 A1	R1.0=(interrupt)
	000E	D3	P=3 (go to main)
Return	000F	72	restore D, R2+1
	0010	70	restore XP,R2+1
nterrupt	0011	2278	R2-1, save XP (a M2
	0013	22 52	R2-1, save D @ M2
	0015	C4 C4 C4	no-op (9 cycles)
	0018	F8 00 B0	
	001B	F8 00 A0	R0=0000(refresh ptr)
Refresh	001E	80 E2	D=R0.0
			8 DMA cycles (R0+8)
	0020	E2 20 A0	R0-1,R0.0=D
			8 DMA cycles (R0+8)
	0023	E2 20 A0	R0-1,R0.0=D
			8 DMA cycles (R0+8)
	0026	E2 20 A0	R0-1,R0.0=D
			8 DMA cycles (R0+8)
	0029	3C 1E	go to refresh (EF1=0)
	002B	30 0F	go to return (EF1 = 1)
Main	002D	E2 69	X = 2, lurn TV on
	002F	3F 2F	wait for IN pressed
	0031	6C A4	set MX,D,R4.0 = toggle
	0033	37 33	wait for IN released
	0035	3F 35	wait for IN pressed
	0037	6C	set MX,D=toggles
	0038	54 14	set M4 = D, R4 + 1
	003A	30 33	go to M33

LOC	COSMAC CODE	LINKO	SOURCE LINE
		1	AN 1802 ANIMATION PROGRAM by E. DEVEAUX
		2	
78		3	BEGSFT=#78 ADDRESS OF FIRST LINE SHIFTED.
		4	···
		5	THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES VARIABLE SPEED
		6	ANIMATION OF THE IMAGE LOCATED AT #78 to
		7	#F7 IN MEMORY.
		8	SPEED CONTROL IS PROVIDED BY INPUT SWITCHES.
00	90	9	GHI ROZERO HIGH ORDER OF
01	81	10	PHI R1
02	82	11	PHI R7
03	83	12	PHT R3
04	84	13	PHI RA
05	44	16	PTO PA ADDPFCC
04	2016	15	IDI A ((INTODA))
00	11	16	DIO DI
00	2012	17	IDI + O(CTION)
09	1013	10	LDI AJU(SIAUK)
0.B	A2	10	PLU RZ
00	FODI	13	LDI A.O(MAIN)
OE	AJ	20	PLO R3
OF	D3	21	SEP R3GO TO MAIN LINE
10	01020300	22	0C#01020300STACK AREA
13		23	STACK ==-1
		24	** where the second second is second as a second se
		25	THIS PROGRAM USES A MODIFIED VERSION
		26	OF THE INTERRUPT ROUTINE THAT APPEARED
		27	IN COSMAC ELF PART 4.
		28	**
		29	A SHIFT ROUTINE HAS BEEN ADDED THAT MOVES THE
		30	STARSHIF FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ACROSS THE CRT.
	1000	31	
14	72	32	RETURN: LDXA
15	70	33	RETCYCLES
16	22	35	INTRPTIDEC R2 2
17	78	36	SAV 4 R5 COUNTS REFRESH
18	22	37	DEC R26 CYCLES, USED TO
19	52	38	STR R2 8 DETERMINE WHEN TO
1A	15	39	INC R5 10 SHIFT /ROLL.
18	C4	40	NOP13
10	94	41	GHI R4 15 R4 TO RO

using software, display them successively onscreen to produce animation effects. Low-resolution alphanumerics can also be created.

Since the basic Elf has only 256 bytes of memory, we will show how to display the entire memory on the screen. The memory is mapped as shown in Fig. 1, in an array of 64 spots wide (eight bytes with eight bits/byte) by 32 spots high to make a total of 256 bytes.

The byte at M(0000) is displayed at the upper-left of the screen; each row on the screen is equivalent to eight memory bytes. Byte M(00FF) appears at the bottom-right of the screen.

Circuit Operation. The entire schematic diagram for the Pixie graphics display system is shown in Fig. 2A. It consists of five components: the 1861 chip, a phono jack for the video output, and three resistors. The circuit shown in Fig. 2B may be used to replace the original crystal used in the Elf microcomputer. This is necessary because, to use the graphics display, the original crystal frequency must be changed to approximately 1.760640 MHz to generate the correct TV horizontal and vertical sync pulses. Crystals of this frequency may be expensive. The Fig. 28 circuit uses a

high-order position of the first byte on the line.

The 32 lines of the display can be moved up one line by incrementing the starting refresh address by eight between refresh cycles. Decrementing register 4 (R4) allows the display to be rolled down. Hence, varying the frequency of shifts or rolls varies the animation speed of the displayed image.

Control of the speed is via the Elf's conventional INPUT switches. Setting all switches to zero and depressing the INPUT pushbutton causes a hex 00 to be read into location 13 (stack), in which case, there will be no movement of the displayed image. Loading any nonzero bit through the INPUT switches will animate the image. Any bits loaded are compared to the bits in the low-order byte of register 5 (R5). A shift or roll routine is initiated whenever there is a match between the bits of the low-order byte of R5 and the bits in the byte read into location 13. Register 5 is used to count the refresh cycles and is incremented by one every interrupt cycle.



CLOCK (1802, PIN 39)

VIDEO

Fig. 2. Video display chip connections are shown at (A), Optional circuit to replace original Elf crystal is at (B).

All resistors 1/4-watt, 10% tolerance:

- R1, R6-10,000 ohms
- R2-2000 ohms
- R3-1000 ohms
- R4.R5-470 ohms
- XTAL-3.58-MHz crystal

Mise.—Printed circuit or perforated board; IC sockets (one 24-pin, two 14-pin); spacers; machine hardware; hookup wire solder; etc.

Note: The following are available from Netronics, 333 Litchfield Rd., New Millord, CN 06776: kit including all of above Pixie components except those under "Misc." at \$24.95; complete Elf II kit (basic Elf plus Pixie components and hexadecimal keyboard), including pc board, keyboard support IC's and expansion bus at \$99.95, plus \$3.00 shipping. Connecticut residents, add 7% sales tax.

C1-330-pF dise capacitor IC1-CDP 1861 video IC (RCA) IC2-74L(0) low-power quad 2-input NAND gate IC IC3-7474 dual-D flip-flop IC J1-Phono jack

(4)

RUN

TPA

TPB

INT

SCO

00

DI

06

DMA OUT

ICI COPIBGI

SYNC

VIDEC

10

-NO

FEI

RI

iox

R2 2K

.

3

2

21

SCI 22

(3

14

02 15

03_16

04 17

05-18

19

07 20

"PIXIE" PARTS LIST

1D	BO	42 F	IH	RO		7 REFRESH ADDRESS
1E	84	43 0	LO	R4		19
IF	AO	44 1	LO	RO		21
		45				
20	80	46 0	LO	80		23
21	80	47 (0.13	RO		25
22	80	AB PETPEEU.	GLO	PA		27
23	52	40	SEY	82	**	70 B DWA CVCI ES
23	D.L	50	564	n.z.	••	23 0 bin cices
24	53	51	CEY	87		
24	20	50	DEC	RO		
20	20	52	DEG	PO		B DWA OVOLES
20	AU	33	PLU	RU	**	6 DEA CICLES
		24				
21	EZ	22	SEA	RZ		
28	20	20	DEC	RO		
29	AU	2/	PLO	RO		8 DMA CYCLES
-	54	58		-		
24	E2	59	SEX	R2		
2B	20	60	DEC	RO		and the succession
2C	AO	61	PLO	RO		8 DMA CYCLES
		62				
2D	3C22	63	BNI	REFRESH		ON EF1 REFRESH
2F	3014	64	BR	RETURN		IS OVER.
31	£2	65 MAINISE	¢	R2		RX=2
32	69	66	INP	1		TELL 1861 TO
		67				TURN ON CRT.
		68 SFREAD READS	INPU	UT SWITCH	EST	O CONTROL
		69 SPEED OF SHIL	TS/I	ROLLS.		
		70 INPUT SWITCH	15 1	STORED AT	ST.	ACK M(R2).
		71				
		72 INITIAL VALUE	E OF	STACK 1S	ZE	RO AND THERE IS
		73 NO MOVEHENT	OF ST	TAR SHIP	UNT	IL A NON ZERO BIT
		74 IS INPUT.				
33	3F38	75 SFREAD B	14	CKSHIF		IF NO INPUT GO SEE
35	3735	76 WTREAD B		WTREAD		IF TIME TO SHIFT.
37	60	77 11	TP	4		READ INTO STACK.
		78				
BE	85	79 CKSHIFIGI	0.1	RS		GHI R5 VARY/SPEED
39	82	80 AI	D			OF STAR SHIP.
34	3233	81 82	z	SFREAD		SHIFT/ROLL BIT MATCH.
30	F800	82 []	10	A. ICRESS	PT)	BR ROLL 3061
36	89	83 PI	TH	89	/	. BOLL NO SHIFT.
		11				

readily available 3.58-MHz color-TV crystal and frequency divider to generate 1.789773 MHz, which is close enough for the 1861 chip to perform properly.

The 1861 chip uses the same clock as the 1802 μ P chip to trigger internal counters to provide the TV-like composite sync at pin 6. The graphics display is directly refreshed from the memory 60 times each second, accomplished by an interrupt request sent to the 1802 at the same rate.

When the 1802 receives the interrupt request, it temporarily stops the program it. is executing and immediately branches to the interrupt routine previously stored in memory. This branch occurs when P is automatically set to 1 and X is set to 2. The interrupt routine program counter is always R1, which must be set to the address of the interrupt routine before the 1861 is activated and starts sending interrupts to the 1802. A pulse from NO is sent to pin 10 of the 1861, permitting this chip to start sending interrupts. A 69 instruction can be used to generate the 1861 activation pulse. The 1861 is always turned off

when the Elf is stopped with the RUN switch down.

In the program shown in Table I, R1 is set to the address of the interrupt routine at M(0011), R2 is set to the address of the work area (or stack) used subsequently for byte storage, R3 is set to the main program starting at M(002D), and setting P=3 causes a branch to M(002D) with R3 as the program counter. The main program permits entry of the bytes at any time via the Elf's toggle switches. This permits you to see what is happening to the CRT screen as memory bytes are changed. The program loops on itself until an interrupt signal is generated by the 1861, activated by the 69 instruction at M(002E).

Exactly 29 machine cycles after the initiation of the interrupt routine, the 1861 requests eight sequential memory bytes by pulling down the DMA-OUT (pin-2) request line for eight bytes (eight machine cycles). This automatically causes eight memory bytes, addressed by R0, to be sequentially fetched and transferred to the 1861 via the data bus. Note that the C4 instructions at M(0015) are special no-op instructions that re-

TABLE II-SPACESHIP PROGRAM

м	1	-	Byte	Se	que	nce	_	
								1.2
0040	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
0048	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
0050	7B	DE	DB	DE	00	00	00	00
0058	4A	50	DA	52	00	00	00	00
0060	42	5E	AB	DO	00	00	00	00
0068	4A	42	8A	52	00	00	00	00
0070	7B	DE	8A	5E	00	00	00	00
0078	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
0080	00	00	00	00	00	00	07	E0
8800	00	00	00	00	FF	FF	FF	FF
0090	00	06	00	01	00	00	00	01
0098	00	7F	E0	01	00	00	00	02
00A00	7F	CO	3F	E0	FC	FF	FF	FE
00A8	40	OF	00	10	04	80	00	00
00B0	7F	CO	3F	EO	04	80	00	00
00B8	00	3F	DO	40	04	80	00	00
00C0	00	OF	08	20	04	80	7A	1E
00C8	00	00	07	90	04	80	42	10
00D0	00	00	18	7F	FC	FO	72	1C
00D8	00	00	30	00	00	10	42	10
00E0	00	00	73	FC	00	10	7B	DO
00E8	00	00	30	00	3F	FO	00	00
00F0	00	00	18	0F	CO	00	00	00
00F8	00	00	07	FO	00	00	00	00

37	FR78	84	LD	1 4.0	(BEGSFT)
41	49	85	PL	0 R9	
42	F810	86	LD	I 16	TO SHIFT.
44	46	87	PI	0 86	SHIPT 16 LINES.
45	99	88	NOT LNE GH	1 89	
46	BA	89	PH	T RA	SAVE ADDRESS OF 14P
67	89	90	GL	0 89	ON LINE IN BA
68		91	PI	O RA	From Marine and Ide
40	2807	92	in	1 7	RT-BYTES TO SWIFT-1.
45	+7	03	11	0 97	TRA-BILLS TO SHITT-IT
40	00	04	10	B PO	
40	209	05		1 09	CAUE LOT BYTE ON
40	50	06	rn	L NO	THE TH DO T
42	/0	90	эл	RC	LINE IN RO.I
4F	19	97	NXTBYT: INC	29	POINT R9 TO NEXT BYTE
50	09	98	LDN	R9	LOAD NEXT BYTE.
51	76	99	SHRC	-	SHIFT RIGHT.
52	59	100	STR	R9	STORE BYTE
53	27	101	DEC	R7	
54	87	102	GLO	R7	CHECK IF ALL BYTES
55	3A4F	103	BNZ	NXTBYT	SHIFTED.
57	98	104	GHI	R8	PUT BIT 0 of 8TH
58	76	105	SHRC		BYT ON BIT 7 OF
59	5A	106	STR	RA	1ST BYT ON LINE.
SA	19	107	INC	89	R9=BYTE O NXT LINE.
5B	26	108	DEC	R6	
5C	86	109	GLO	R6	CHECK IF 16 LINES
50	3445	110	BNZ	NXTLNE	SHIFTED.
SF	3033	111	BR	STREAD	SKP 38 ROLL AND SHIFT
61	84	112	ROLLIGLO	R4	INCREMENT R4 ONE LINE
62	PC08	113	ADI	8	ROLL SCREEN UP.
64	A4	114	PLO	R4	
65	94	115	GHL	R4	CHANGE LINNO 116 TO
66	F800	116	LDI	00	ADCI O 7COO IF MORE
68	B4	117	PHI	R4	THAN 256 BYTES.
69	3233	118	BZ	SFREAD	
68	84	119	GLO	R4	
6C	84	120	PHI	R4	
6D	3033	121	BR	SFREAD	
6P	00	122	DC	#00	
		123 .	ENTER IMAGE	TO BE S	HIFTED IN LOCATIONS
		124 .	X'78' - X'F7	•	and the second sec
		125	ESID.		

The numbers in the program flow chart (right) refer to the line numbers in the program. The program can be set up to shift or roll, or shift and roll. The program is loaded into locations 78 through F7. (Try using the program for the starship shown in Table II of the Pixie article.) Only the data loaded into 78 through F7 is shifted, but the entire area from 00 through FF is rolled.

Loading the program exactly as it is listed here will enable the shift routine only. Loading a 38 (SKP instruction) in location 5F (line 111) will enable both shift and roll routines. Loading 30 61 (BR ROLL) in locations 3C and 3D (line 82) will enable only the roll routine.

After loading and running the program, animation of the display will begin after any nonzero byte is loaded via the INPUT switches and operation of the INPUT pushbutton. By varying the INPUT bit pattern, you can control the speed of the animation.

If you have never seen a stack in "motion" when a program is running, take a look at displayed location 13. Then vary the speed.



Fig. 3. Diagram showing how to create your own display. This one is for parts of five lines of Spaceship Program.

quire three cycles for each execution. These are used only to provide the delay required between the beginning of the interrupt routine and the first eight-byte DMA request generated by the 1861 display circuits.

Each of the eight display refresh bytes requested by the 1861 is internally converted to a bit serial form and used to provide the luminance (brightness) pulses that come out of the 1861 at pin 7. The actual raster display consists of 262 horizontal lines for each frame, and there are 60 frames per second. Each display spot is four raster lines high, which means that each eight-byte display row must be repeated four times. With the interrupt routine, R0 is initially set to M(0000), which means that the first DMA request causes the eight bytes from M(0000) to M(0007) to be fetched and displayed. The time of each raster line is exactly 14 machine cycles to permit the transfer of eight bytes (eight cycles) plus the execution of three twocycle instructions during each raster line time. Following the eight DMA cycles required to refresh the first eight bytes, R0



is restored to its original value so that it remains pointing at the same eight bytes.

The E2 20 A0 instructions at M(0020), M(0023), and M(0026) are used to occupy six machine cycles between the DMA requests and to restore R0 to its initial value before incrementing it by eight during the eight-byte DMA request. The 20 instruction decrements R0.1 back to its initial value if a 256-byte page boundary was crossed during the preceding eight DMA cycles.

After the first group of eight bytes has been displayed for four raster line times, R0 is permitted to advance to the next group of eight bytes to be displayed. This process is continued until 32 groups of eight bytes each (256 total) have been displayed. At this time, the circuits in the 1861 chip cause line EF1=1 (at pin 9) and the interrupt routine terminates.

Other Considerations. The raster refresh involves the display of 32 groups of eight bytes, and each row of eight bytes is repeated on four raster line scans. This means that the display refresh ties up the 1802 μ P for slightly more than 128 raster lines (32 × 4). Since there are 262 raster lines per frame, the μ P spends about 50% of its time performing the display-refresh function.

Since the 1802 and 1861 clocks must remain synchronized, none of the threecycle instructions described in the 1802's user's manual should be used in programs that run concurrently with this display. The only exception is the use of the C4 instruction in the interrupt routine.

The sample program given in Table I was designed to run in expanded-memory systems as well as in the basic 256byte Elf. In the expanded system, just change the bytes at M(0019) and M(001C) so that R0 initially points to any 256-byte segment of the memory you wish to display on the raster. You can write any other main program to run concurrently with this interrupt routine.

The 1861 chip can also be used to display any number of memory bytes from eight to 1024 by rewriting the interrupt routine. For example, change the byte at M(0024) from 20 to 80, and you will see 512 bytes displayed on the CRT screen as 64 spots horizontally by 64 spots vertically. If you have only 256 bytes of memory in your system, you will see the same 256 bytes repeated twice on the screen. When displaying 512 bytes, each spot represents half the height of those displayed when 256 bytes are displayed.

One of the main advantages of mapping main memory directly into the monitor or TV raster is the ability to manipulate the display using the normal instruction set. In systems that employ an external frame buffer for refresh, specialized instructions are required to change buffer contents. The buffer memory also costs more money. With the refresh buffer approach toward animation, you must store two picture patterns in memory and alternately transfer them to the buffer memory. Using the Pixie graphics display described here, you store the same two-picture patterns in memory but you need only change the initial value of R0 to alternately display them. Not only do you save the cost of a refresh buffer, you can greatly simplify the programming.

Construction. The Pixie circuit can be mounted on the original Elf board by relocating the crystal and two capacitors to the center of the board. Now, the 1861 IC goes on the upper left of the board, the resistors on the bottom of the board, and the output jack on the rear apron of the chassis.

Remove the crystal from the Elf and wire the Fig. 2B frequency divider to pin 1 of the 1802 μ P. Then interconnect the two boards exactly as shown in Fig. 2A and B, including the power lines. Jack *J1* can be mounted on a small metal bracket and secured to the add-on board with No. 4 machine hardware. Also, mount *R1* and *R2* on the add-on board via "flea" clips because they may have to be changed for different-value resistors to suit the modulation requirements of the particular monitor you are using.

Sample Display Program. To test the Pixie, load the program given in Table I, starting at location M(0000). When this program is run, a random spot pattern should be displayed on-screen. At this time, you may have to alter the values of *R1* and *R2* to produce a tight sync lock and the desired modulation level of the spots. These are only level-adjust resistors and play no role in the actual sync or video production. The displayed pattern represents whatever is stored in the Elf's memory. The top eight rows represent the program given in Table I.

You can familiarize yourself with the new graphics ability of your computer if you visualize a grid of 64 boxes wide by 32 boxes deep, assuming a 256-byte memory. Bear in mind that the operating program given in Table I occupies the top eight lines. Since the program ends at memory location M(003B), load 00 into memory location M(003F) to complete that line.

Now, to display the spacecraft shown in the lead photo, load the programs given in Tables I and II in that order, starting the Table II program at memory location M(0040). Reset and switch to RUN.

If you wish to create your own display, Fig. 3 illustrates how to arrive at the correct hex digits. (In this case, the example used is for a small area of the program in Table II.) Use graph paper to "draw" your picture, shading in the "spots" you want to be white on the CRT screen. Then transfer the line bit pattern into the eight hex bytes per line as shown in Fig. 3.

Conclusion. The Pixie system described here adds video graphics to your Elf microcomputer at very low cost. So far, we have described how the Pixie system can be used to put simple, stationary images on-screen. Accompanying this article is a program that will put the graphics in motion. \diamond



Electronic "Bell" for a TVT-II

Lets you know when you are near the end of a line on a TV typewriter.

BY DENNIS J. DEUTSCH

Here is an add-on circuit for the computer hobbyist that will give his setup the effect of a bell ringing near the end of a line as it does on a typewriter. The circuit, as shown in the diagram, is for use with the Southwest Technical Products CT-1024 TVT-II terminal.

The CT-1024 produces 32 characters per line, for which access is required to bits 1, 2, 4, 8, and 16 on the CT-1024. These are located at IC35 and IC42.

The circuit as shown is set up to produce the tone on character 27. (Bit 4 is inverted in the 7404 IC so that it is "NOT'ed".) The character number trap consists of an 8-input NAND gate in the 7430 and the single inverter (which can be a single transistor if desired). If you want to stay at character 27, eliminate the inverter and bit 4. Once the character is counted, the resulting pulse turns on the 74121 oneshot for a short period of time. The timing values of the one-shot can be altered by changing the circuit's time constant. The one-shot triggers a 555 timer used as a tone generator to drive a small 8-ohm speaker. To alter the tone, change the value of the capacitor between pin 6 of the 555 and ground. \diamondsuit

