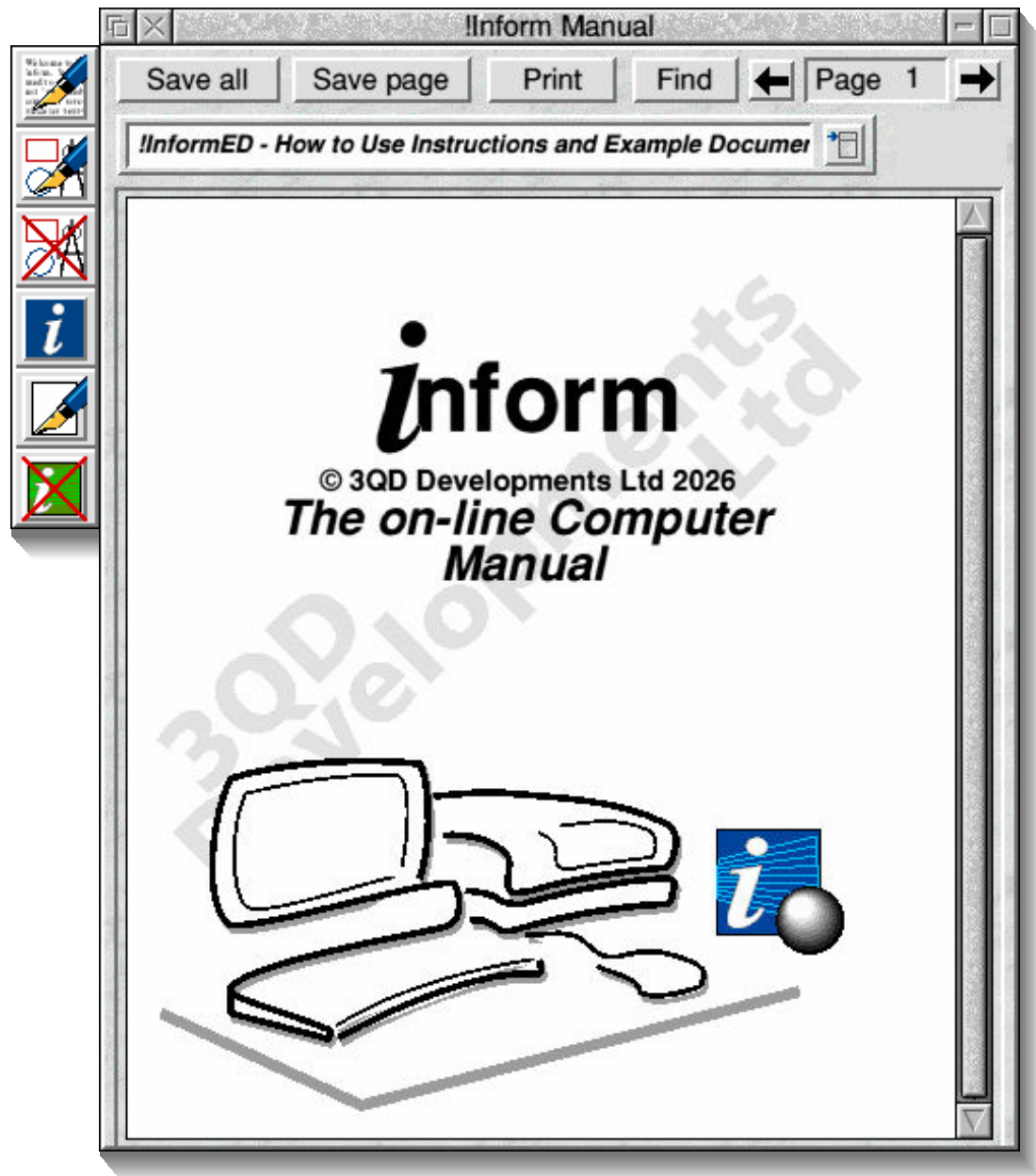




InformED

on screen manual editor

iSV
Products

3QD
DEVELOPMENTS LTD

APDL

!InformED and !Inform

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This document last edited on 29/09/26



If you have found this application and this manual useful please consider making a donation to help cover the costs of cataloguing, documenting, updating and hosting the APDL applications. Scanning the QR code will take you to our donations page.

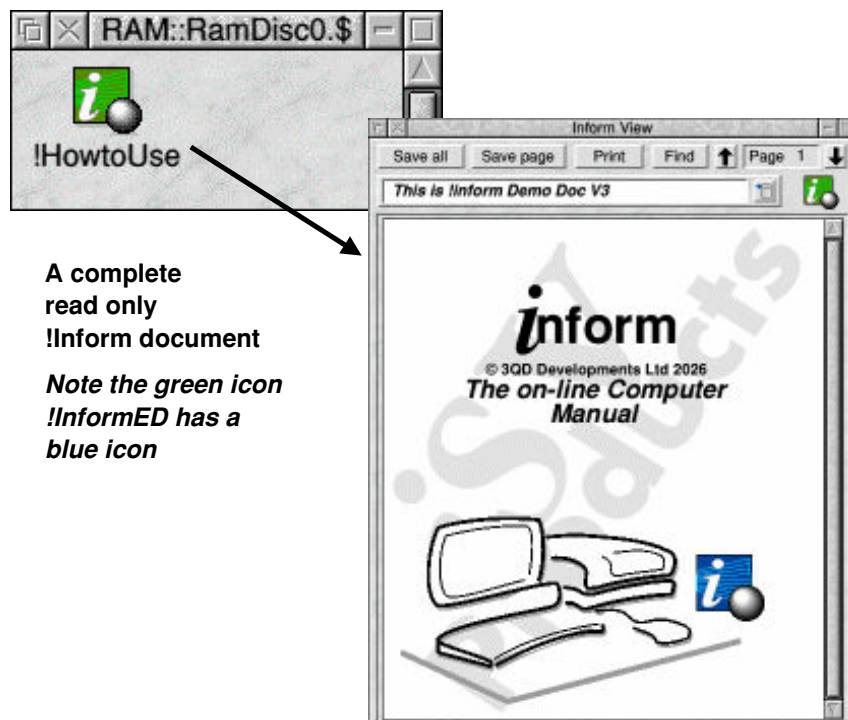
InformED

Welcome to !InformED Version 3

These instructions are for version 3.x of !InformED.

!InformED is a computer based manual system developed by iSV Products, APDL and 3QD Developments Ltd. It can be used to easily combine text & graphics into one on screen 'book' with simple controls to move pages, print pages and search for words or phrases. It was originally developed in the time of disc based distribution for software so it includes lossless compression to squeeze down the text and graphics as much as possible.

It is not "multimedia" - it is a full colour illustrated book on your computer screen.



A complete
read only
!Inform document
*Note the green icon
!InformED has a
blue icon*

So what can !InformED do?

!InformED makes documents, called Inform documents, that can display whatever text you wish on screen and also display graphics using drawfiles. Any content that can be included in drawfiles, for example sprites or JPEGs, can be displayed. Inform documents are ideal for use across a network as they only load the files that are needed for each page and each file is compressed.

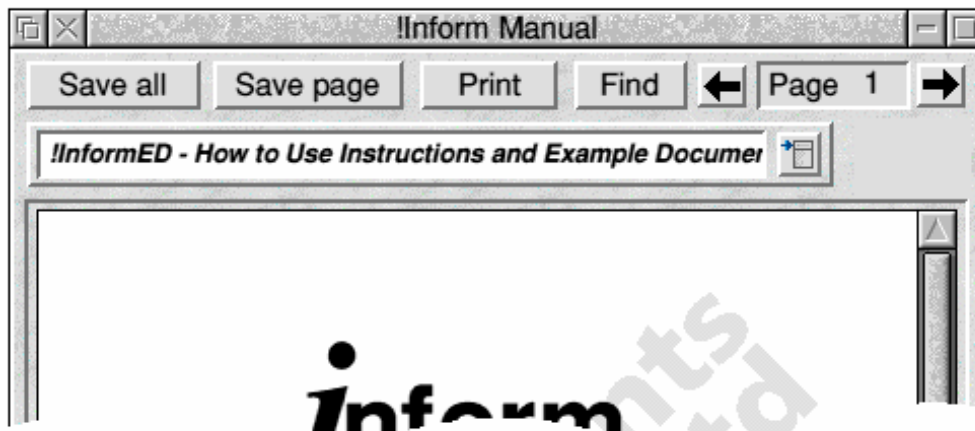
Inform documents are based on the original iSV Manual application that was included with iSV Products applications from 1992 onwards. Many users enquired about the manual and wanted to use the format themselves, now with !informED they can.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Geoff Preston at Acorn User Magazine for suggesting improvements to the original manual, these improvements turned into !InformED.

Using Inform documents

Inform documents are very easy to use. At the top of the screen is a set of buttons which control the application. There is no need to use any menus if you do not wish to.



The buttons along the top have the following functions:

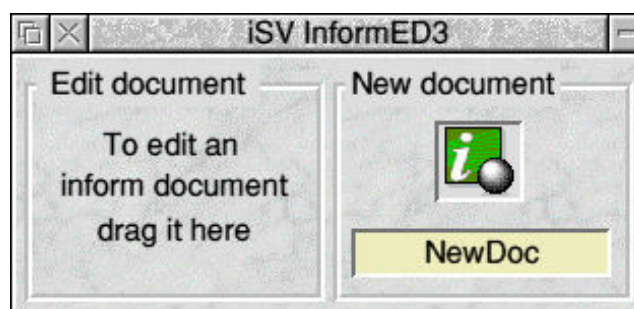
- Save all - Opens a save dialogue box allowing you to save all of the text into another program.
- Save page - This will open a save dialogue box but will only save the text from the current page.
- Print - This will allow you to print out a WYSIWYG copy of the Inform document.
- Find - This will find a specified piece of text and jump to the page that contains that text.
- Page - This will show the current page number. Inform documents currently support up to 99 pages. Either side of the page number are two buttons. The left button goes back a page and the right button goes forward a page.

Page Heading

This shows the heading of the current page. At it's right hand end is a menu button. Clicking on this will open a menu of all page headings, just click on the page you want to view.

Making your own document

Making your own Inform documents is easy. The most important thing to remember is that Inform documents have a green icon but the !InformED editor has a blue icon. All you have to do is load the !InformED application and a window like this will open.



Type in the name of your new document into the yellow icon and drag the file icon to a filer window.

An inform window will now open. To add the text to this new document simply drag a text file and drop it into the inform window. To add a drawing to a page simply drop the drawfile on the page you want. You can drag files from a filer window or directly from !Edit !Draw or any other appropriate application without needing to save them to disc first.

The text will be split up into multiple pages, as many pages as are required to display all the text. Instructions for page formatting the text are later in the manual. Unlike text Drawfiles are always local to the current page. For example if you wanted a background behind all your pages you would need to manually drag the background drawfile into each page.

Editing a Document

Along the left hand side of the InformEd window is a tool box with six icons. These icons control the InformED OLE editing facilities.

Edit Text

If you click on the top icon then the text of your manual will appear in !Edit. Make any changes you want and click on save. The manual will redraw and you can see your changed text inside Inform.

You will see that the !Edit window displays the same outline font, page width and font size that !Inform uses. This makes it much easier to edit your text formatting to match the !InformED styles.

Edit Drawing

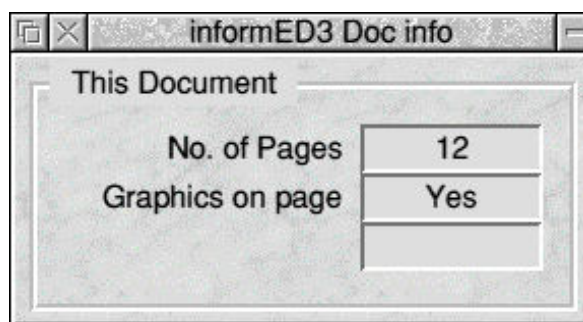
The next icon works the same way except that it will load the current page graphics into !Draw. Just like the text make any changes you need and then click on 'Save' from the !Draw menu. The !InformED window will now redraw with your edited graphics.

Delete Drawing

The third icon deletes the drawing from a page. Do not worry if you press this by accident as inform will pop up a confirmation window before deleting the graphics.

Info

Opens a window with a page count and tells you of the current page has a drawfile.



Insert Page

Will insert a new blank page after the current page. This blank page will have no text or graphics. Page numbers for the other pages will be incremented as appropriate.

End Editing

The last icon ends the editing of the current document. It compresses all the document files and then closes the editing window.

With just these six tools and a copy of Acorns !Edit & !Draw you can quickly make inform documents.

Text Formatting

Inform will choose the font style for you with no extra commands required. All you have to do is put a leading space in front of your text:

- No leading space - (Regular)
- One leading space - (Bold)
- Two leading spaces - (Italic)
- Three leading spaces - (Bold Italic)
- Further leading spaces just behave like normal space characters

The first line of a page of text will automatically be used as the page title.

Page Breaks

If !inform finds a blank line then it will assume that this marks the end of a page. You can still include a blank line of text in your document, just include a single non-breaking space at the start of each line you want to be blank. This is entered by holding down the ALT key and pressing SPACE and looks the same as a normal space character (ie. invisible).

If text flows off the end of one page then Inform will simply display it on the next page. Inform will automatically give the next page the same heading as the last.

OLE linking

Inform ED carries out all of its editing using OLE links with Draw and Edit (or any other text editor). Any time an OLE file is saved out from either of these packages Inform will detect the change and update accordingly.

OLE editing applications

On using the OLE links Inform will use whichever applications that are set as default. So for example if !Zap is set as your default text editor !InformED will OLE text files to !Zap. Although !Zap may not display the text in the same font, size and page width that !InformED uses.

The OLE linking has been tested with a wide variety of applications however best results are usually obtained by using Draw and especially Edit.

OLE draw files

We recommend that you only OLE one draw file at a time using the current version of !InformED. Whilst you can edit every single drawfile in an Inform document at the same time if you wish !InformED may not immediately show your changes when you save a drawfile and you may need to jump to another page and then go back to the first page to see your changes.

Your finished document

When you have finished editing a document simply click on the bottom tool in the toolbox and the !InformED window will close. A complete stand alone document reader will now be saved to your disc, this document will have the name you provided at the start. This can be used to read the generated document at any time without having to use the !InformED application. All a user has to do is double click on the document and it will appear on screen. Due to the automatic compression Inform documents take up as little disc space as possible.

Commonly asked questions

My computer crashed while editing a document and when I try and run my document I get a checksum error. How can I fix this?

Just load the document into !InformEd in the normal way then once loaded click on the End Editing button on the toolbar. The saved document will now work correctly.

Can I use Artworks files in my documents?

You cannot use Artworks files directly but you can export your work from Artworks in Draw format. This drawfile can then be used instead.

Can I use any font I like?

Yes, but with restrictions. You cannot change the default font used by the text in an !Inform document because the document needs to be readable on any machine and so only the built in ROMFonts, for example Homerton and Trinity, are used. You can use any font in a drawfile but for the page to render correctly the user will need the same font in their !Fonts directory.

If you want to use a different font in a drawfile we recommend saving your file, then select all and use 'Convert to path' to turn all the fonts into drawings. Then drag this altered file into the !InformED window. If needed you will still be able to edit the text in the drawfile you saved before using 'Convert to path'. Just remember to use 'Convert to path' again before importing the drawfile into !InformED again.

Using 'Convert to path' means that your text will display on any machine without the user needed to have the particular font in their !Fonts folder.

Can I use sprites in a document?

Yes, but they need to be inside a drawfile.

Can I use JPEGs in a document?

Yes, but like sprites they need to be inside a drawfile. Open a new drawfile from the !Draw icon and drop the JPEG into the window. Now save the !Draw file and this can be imported into !InformED. Note that 'non baseline' JPEGs that RISC OS doesn't understand and that !Draw cannot display won't display in Inform documents.

What about other file formats?

Inform documents can display anything that !Draw can, for example !TableCalc tables can be used however files such as word processor or DTP documents can't.

Can I rename my document?

Yes, just rename it in the filer as you would any other file. You will however notice that after being renamed the icon will disappear. This is easily resolved. Hold down SHIFT to open the document's files then double click on !Sprites22. Rename the sprite that has the old document name, for example !MyDoc, to the new name. Make sure you include the pling (exclamation mark) at the start of the new file name. Save !Sprites22, close the !Paint window and double click on the !Boot file inside the Inform document.

Provided the new document name and the sprite name in the !Sprites22 file match the document will now have its icon back.

I've OLE edited a drawfile, saved but the !InformEd page hasn't updated, why?

You have multiple OLE instances for more than one drawfile. Just move to the next page then come back again and the changes will be shown, they haven't been lost.

Distributing read only documents

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Not all products will run on all versions of RISC OS, check the product information page for details.

Other Products list last updated 29/2/26