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Apple IIGS: Tabbing In Applesoft BASIC

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An Applesoft "PRINT TAB" statement, such as:

```
PRINT TAB(10);"A"; TAB(20);"B"; TAB(30);"C"
```

works on the Apple IIe and ImageWriter II, provided that you precede it with a Tab Enable statement. For example

```
PRINT CHR$(9);"T E"
```

However, the PRINT TAB statement (shown above) on an Apple IIGS and an ImageWriter II results in spacing 10 or 20 spaces rather than tabbing to those columns. When using PRINT TAB for screen formatting, there is no such problem.

The reason for this is that, when printing hardcopy, PRINT TAB appears to be tabbing the specified spaces from last character. For example:

```
50 PRINT TAB (20);"Column 20";TAB (40);"Column 40"
```

causes the first tab to be placed at column 20, but the second tab is placed at column 68. Here's why. The first tab statement puts the cursor at column 20. Because the Tab Enable statement defines each tab as 9-characters wide, the tab extends from column 20 to column 28 (one character at column 20 with the remaining 8 characters pushing the last character out to column 28). When the TAB 40 statement executes, 40 spaces are added to the last cursor location (column 28), placing the cursor at column 68.

There are two ways to handle this problem on the Apple IIGS. The first way is use the HTAB statement to format columns correctly:

```
40 HTAB 40:PRINT "Column 40":HTAB 60: PRINT "Column 60"
```

Old Apple II manuals state that this is not possible, but HTAB works correctly on the Apple IIGS, both on the screen and on the printer.

Overall, TAB and HTAB work as expected on the screen. When TAB and HTAB are used for printing, three factors must be considered:

- The type of Apple II.
- The interface card through which printing takes place.
- The active printer.

Each of these variables affect the TAB and HTAB commands when used in printing.

The second way to handle this is with the "A" command. Page 92 of the "Apple IIGS Firmware Reference Manual" states that the "A" command ('A'pplesoft Tabbing) duplicates the function of the "T" command of the Super Serial Card. Issuing this command makes the TAB command work as you would expect when using a printer.

Note: The command name ("A") was changed to avoid a conflict between "T"erminal mode and "T"abbing.

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