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Embossing to a Viewplus® Tiger Embosser

There are basically two embosser technologies. A “conventional” embosser is a character-oriented embossing printer that receives a stream of ASCII-braille characters (one per cell) and knows how to emboss them. Some embossers of this type can do embosser graphics as literary cells whose dots are squeezed close together. The Viewplus line of embossers has models that can emulate the conventional behavior, but the normal approach is to emboss a tactile “image” usually on a fixed grid of twenty dot positions per inch. For the image embosser, an image of each page is printed to the embosser printer with black dots everywhere where a dimple is to be raised. This kind of embosser will dimple any area that would print in black ink on a conventional printer, but note that the typical paper size is not conventional (braille paper is often 11½ x 11).

On Windows, every printer has a “printer driver”... device-specific software that converts generalized abstract “drawing” to the datastream that will cause the inking (or embossing) of that actual output on paper. For conventional embossers, the printer driver used is supplied by Braille2000 (why? because in years past most embosser manufacturers did not supply any driver). When using a Viewplus “Tiger” embosser printer, the printer drive is supplied by Viewplus.

With the typical Tiger embosser, dots can occur only at fixed positions on a grid of possible dot position at 1/20th of an inch intervals (in both the horizontal and vertical directions). Each literary braille cell falls in a rectangle that is 5x8 positions on the grid. There is one blank spot between dots 1 and 4 (horizontal internal gap) and dots 1 and 2 (vertical internal gap), and two blank spots between dot 4 of one cell and dot 1 of the next cell. There are two blank spots between dot 3 of one cell and dot 1 of the cell on the line below. Each cell is thus 5/20” wide (a quarter of an inch) and 8/20” line to line (0.4” line spacing). This is approximately normal literary braille dimensions as defined by NLS Standard 800. (Tiger dots are smaller in diameter than the dots produced by a conventional embosser.)

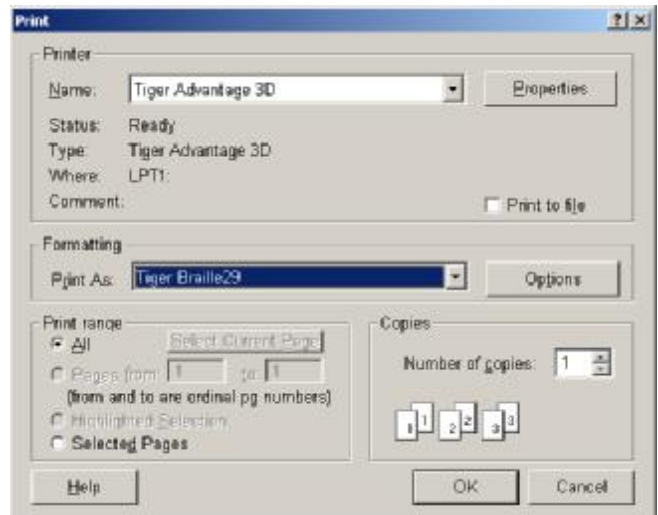
Because the Tiger line of embossers take images, an easy way to “draw” literary braille dots is to write to the page using a simbraille font. That will do the job, but for the best result, the size (scale) of the font needs to be “just right” so the dots in the inked braille cells land exactly on the 1/20th inch grid points (else “smearing” may result). Viewplus provides such a font that is scaled to fit the grid perfectly. It is called “Braille29” and is meant to be drawn with a point size of 29. (Note that a few Tiger models use a different grid spacing and come with their own custom simbraille font.) Braille2000 knows how to print an image to a Tiger embosser using its custom simbraille font.

Braille2000 uses the “Emboss” command to output to conventional embossers, via its own printer driver. It uses the “Print” command to output image data to a conventional printer (for proofreading) and to a Tiger embosser for tactile hardcopy braille. There is a special page style (“Print As” in the print dialog box) you need to use to prepare the output for a Tiger embosser (i.e., a drawing technique that uses the custom Viewplus simbraille font).

Embossing to a Viewplus Tiger type of embosser

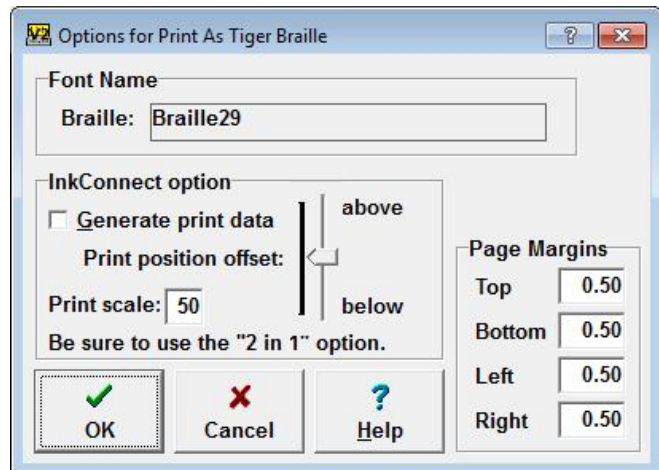
To use your Tiger embosser with Braille2000, install the embosser as indicated by the installation instructions that came with the embosser. Be sure to install the “Tiger fonts” on your system. The Tiger embosser will appear as a printer in the system Devices and Printers folder, and you can test the device by printing to it from WORD or Wordpad (but remember that black items are dimpled on the paper rather than inked).

In Braille2000, click the Print button. The print dialog box will appear. Change the Print As selection to “Tiger Braille29”. The choice for Tiger printing derives from the availability of the custom Viewplus Tiger font: if there is no “Tiger Braille” choice for Print As, it means that the required font has not been installed—you must install the Viewplus software. (For a Tiger embosser with some other grid spacing, the correct choice may show a different size number, such as “Tiger Braille17”.)



Configuration of the output is handled by two buttons: Options and Properties. The Options settings are controls on how Braille2000 prepares the page image. It is via Options you can adjust the page margins. The Properties settings are those of the Viewplus printer driver and will vary depending on the embosser model you have.

The Options dialog contains settings for Page Margins (in inches). The margin is the amount of space at the edge of the paper that comprises a border around the embossed area. The default values (half an inch) are generally appropriate. You can move the embossed area left or right by adjusting the values of the Left and Right margin amounts.



A few Tiger models (the Elite and the Premier embossers) have an add-on option known as InkConnect. This is an after-embossing ink jet printer that will add inked text to the embossed pages. Braille2000 can generate ink-print data for that feature. Put a checkmark at “Generate print data” and then be sure to use the embossers “2 in 1” print option (see below). You can adjust “Print scale” to change the size of the print (relative to the braille size): 50 denotes 50 percent. The position of the print lines, relative to the braille lines, can be adjusted using the slider. The middle position ink-prints right on top of the braille. Move the slider up to raise the print position, down to lower the print position.

The “2 in 1” option of the embosser (only when the InkConnect option is installed), overprints page pairs, the first of which is tactile and the second of which is inked. When “Generate print data” is active, Braille2000 outputs such page pairs (thus, this setting is not appropriate unless you have the

InkConnect feature on your embosser). You access the “2 in 1” embosser setting via the Properties button.

Shown here is the Properties dialog for the Viewplus Elite 200 (the properties dialog comes from the Viewplus print driver, not Braille2000). Click the Tiger tab and then put a checkmark at the “2 In 1” option in the Advanced section. Then click OK.

