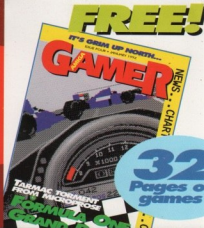


AMIGA

COMPUTING

Issue 44 • January 1992 • £2.99



INSIDE: Presentation Master • KCS Sequencer • Home Accounts 2

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AMIGA

COMPUTING

JANUARY 1992

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PUBLICATIONS

For more than three years *Amiga Computing* has been the leading magazine for Amiga enthusiasts. As a key member of the European magazine group, *Amiga Computing* promises to inform, educate and entertain its readers each month with the most dedicated coverage of the Amiga available.

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Computer Trade Weekly

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500 PLUS POINTS

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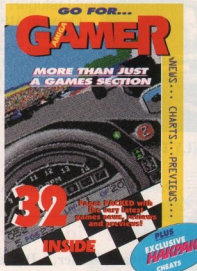


Image created by Henri Bujko of Alternative Image using Real 3D 1.4 - the program on offer in this month's Amiga Computing art competition

COVERDISK

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A stunning, modern interpretation of the coin-op legend. Defenda captures all the urgency of the original and adds a certain something of its own!



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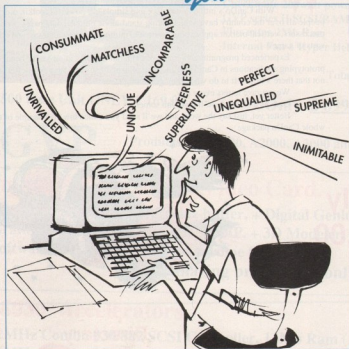
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ARNOR

AMIGA COMPUTING NEWSLINE

Amiga console beater coming

TOP SECRET plans for a cut-down A500 to compete against games consoles have been leaked to *Amiga Computing* from reliable sources in the States.

Commodore talked about the machine behind closed doors at a developer's conference in Denver, Colorado, in September. Visitors were forced to sign a non-disclosure agreement to prevent information being passed on to the press.

The Amiga 300 will keep most of the A500's specifications but is likely to enable games players to buy an Amiga for less than £200. It will use the current operating system and will continue to be based on the 68000 processor.

The A300 is to be housed in a smaller case and the numerical keyboard and side expansion port will be dropped. Those who will miss the numerical keyboard most are spreadsheet users and

By John Butters

programmers. The expansion port is used for adding peripherals such as hard drives and scanners but manufacturers claim they will be able to develop small drives that plug into the trapdoor on the computer's belly.

It will be ready for shipping during 1992 but the company are likely to wait until the growth of consoles and PCs affects entry-level Amiga sales before releasing it.

When asked about the A300, Commodore's Andrew Ball simply replied: "I don't know what you're talking about."

Another employee at the Maidenhead office said: "I can't talk about the computer until it's officially announced - I don't know when that will be."

Other companies in the home computer market are also making plans for the predicted console boom. Atari, for example, are trying to reposition their machines as home computers capable of more than games.



Consoles could become a major threat to home computers. As more people turn to machines such as Nintendo's Entertainment System (above), Commodore are taking no chances and are developing their own console beater - a cut-down A500



CDTV uses a price fall of £100 which Commodore say is a result of the machine becoming established in the general consumer market

CDTV price tumbles

THE price of Commodore's CDTV has been slashed by £100 just in time for the Christmas selling period. It now sells at £499.

Commodore prevented mail order companies from advertising the product at the reduced price before the High Street by giving a late announcement. This gave shops a brief period to sell exclusively at the cheaper price.

"Now that we have proof that CDTV established in the general consumer market we are able to adjust the price to reflect this," commented Commodore boss Stephen Franklin.

"Like all revolutionary products - take the video recorder - CDTV has passed through the critical acceptance threshold and we can pass the benefits on to the consumer and retailer."

Plus memory

THE first memory upgrade for the new A500P has been developed by American firm ICD and is set to go on sale shortly in the UK from Power Computing (0234 843388).

AdRAM 510 Plus doubles the memory of the computer to two megabytes and plugs straight into its trapdoor. At the time of going to press no prices were available, but at the recent Amiga show in Cologne it sold for DM199 (about £66).

Power are also working on their own memory upgrade for the A500P. Two megabytes of extra memory will be included on the board.

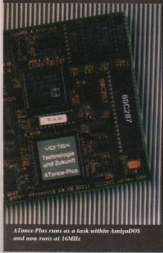
AMIGA COMPUTING NEWSLINE

Faster PC on A500

PEOPLE wanting to run PC software on their A500s can now buy the latest version of Vortex's ATonce.

It has double the processing power of the earlier board, with a clock speed of 16MHz, 512K RAM upgrade and a socket for a maths co-processor to increase the performance of programs which carry out many calculations such as computer aided design software AutoCAD.

With a Norton SI rating of 16.2, ATonce Plus costs £229 from Silica Systems (081-309 1111).



ATonce Plus runs as a task within AmigaDOS and now runs at 16MHz

Artistic upgrade

PREMIER 24-bit paint package TV Paint has been upgraded and made compatible with G2 Systems' VD2001 graphics board.

Among the many new features in version 1.4 of TV Paint are oriented or centred colour ranges, giving either a user-defined direction of a colour range or a spread of colours arranged as concentric circles.

Brush Wrapping enables brushes to be wrapped on to filled shapes. Either or both of the X and Y dimensions can be selected.

Using a temporary file for storage, a user-defined part of the screen can be altered and saved to allow editing on another portion of the file, enabling files larger than the screen to be edited.

An anti-aliasing function has been added to most of the drawing options to give line anti-aliasing when used with the single pixel-sized brush or filled shape option.

TV Paint costs £940 from Amiga Centre Scotland (031-557 4242), and G2 Systems (0252 737151) sell VD2001 for £2,056.

Boost for Barney

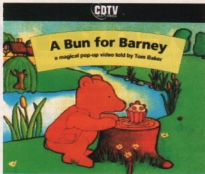
CDTV title A Bun for Barney has just picked up an award for Best Consumer Title at the recent British Interactive Media Association Awards in London.

A Bun for Barney is an animated story aimed at three-to-eight-year-olds in which a small bear discovers that the world is full of bouncers ready to rip the cherries from his iced bun.

The pop-up world contains animations, surprise word and number games and hidden nursery rhymes which children can explore by clicking on different parts of the screen.

Collecting the award for the Multimedia Corporation, Graham Bartram said: "We're delighted - we always knew Barney was a winner."

A Bun for Barney costs £29.95 from the Multimedia Corporation on 071-722 7595.



A Bun for Barney is a story aimed at three to eight-year-olds that has just won a coveted award

Patching makes perfect music

TWO new music utility packages are heading to the Amiga from American firm Blue Ribbon SoundWorks (010 1 404 377 1514).

The PatchMeister is a Midi patch librarian with features including a full array of point and click bank editing options, an unlimited number of banks and libraries and an attachment of comments and server key.

It has flexible Midi set-up options including snapshots, setup files and SysEx attachments and enables the Amiga keyboard to simulate a piano keyboard. PatchMeister can

be used as a standalone program or can be incorporated into Bars and Pipes Professional.

Midi interface Triple Play Plus has been designed to accommodate Bars and Pipes Professional. It features three separately-addressable Midi outs enabling 48 simultaneous Midi channels and includes a Midi in and Midi thru.

Owners of Bars and Pipes Professional will also receive special Midi Out Tools so they can use the interface from within the package. It will cost \$189. In the UK call Zone Distribution on 081-766 6564.

Saddam on the loose

AMIGA users are in danger of their machines becoming infected with one of the worst types of computer virus after Saddam was let loose on coverdisks from Amiga User International's December 1991 issue.

As we went to press, three weeks after AUI went on sale, staff at the magazine were still denying that their disk was contaminated, and refusing to say how many copies had been distributed.

Managing editor, Andrew Jacobson, said that complaints were coming from people checking his disk with a rogue virus checker, the version of Virus Checker given away on Amiga Computing's CoverDisk in November. Later he

said that if a virus had sneaked on to the disk, it was inactive because it did not write itself to other disks. Unlike most strains, Saddam waits until the disk validator has been read before becoming active.

"We have assured ourselves that there is no danger there," said Jacobson. "I don't think this is a problem of great note because there's such a small number of people involved."

"As an inactive virus it isn't particularly dangerous and furthermore I would say that anybody with sense checks any disk that comes in these days."

AUI claim all their coverdisks are virus checked before being sent for duplication and

that they would replace any disks damaged as a result of readers using their coverdisk.

Our technical editor Steve Kennedy examined three copies of the disk, all from different newsgroups. As soon the disk validator had been read, Saddam came to life and spread on to other disks.

The best known antidote is version 5.26 or above of Virus Checker, which can detect and kill the virus.

In case you missed it on our November 1991 CoverDisk, readers can get hold of it free by sending a sae to: Saddam Virus Alert, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

Drive price dives

THE price of Great Valley Products' 52 megabyte HD+ hard drive for the A500 has been slashed to £399.

"In independent tests the GVP HD+ could only be criticized for its price," said a GVP spokesman. "We've now turned the table, making it not only cheaper than before, but considerably lower than similar capacity competitors."

The official distributors in the UK are Silica Systems on 081-309 1111.

Some things are worth waiting for ...

HiSoft Devpac 3

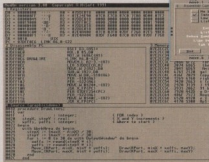
Devpac Version 3 is here at last. The two earlier versions of HiSoft Devpac for the Amiga set a standard in 68000 assembly language programming which was hard to surpass, but we think that we've done it. This new package has had a complete face-lift, from the editor through to the debugger; in fact so many features have been added and improved that we feel confident in the claim that Devpac 3 is the ultimate assembly language development system on the Amiga ... for now!

The Editor

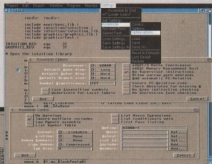
A new multi-window editor with bookmarks, mouse block-marking, macros, complete window flexibility (including multi-views on one file), extensive user configuration and full integration with the other Devpac programs. The editor makes use of Workbench 2 or 1.3 automatically.

The Assembler

Improved and extended, the Devpac 3 assembler is now at least 40% faster than its predecessor (without pre-assembly), supports the full 68010 range of processors including the maths co-processors and has a tremendous number of switchable optimisations. With the ability to pre-assemble files for inclusion, it can now claim to be the fastest assembler on the Amiga.



the debugger supplied with both packages



Devpac 3 gives complete control over the assembly process

The Debugger

Devpac 3 is provided with a versatile debugger/disassembler for bug hunting and ease of learning. You can have as many views on your program as you like, including its source code; then set breakpoints, single-step instructions etc., even at a source code level. Again, there is support for all the new processors and the floating point chips.

Devpac 3 comes complete with all the necessary include files, a linker, many examples and a clear, helpful manual.

HighSpeed Pascal



error detection is fully interactive

HiSoft Devpac 3 (£69.95) and HighSpeed Pascal (£99.95) should be in your local computer shop soon. If you have difficulty locating a copy, you can order directly from HiSoft using Access/Mastercard, Visa, UK debit card (Switch etc.) or a cheque/postal order. Mention this magazine when ordering to receive a free T-Shirt or mouse mat (offer subject to availability).

At last, a new Pascal compiler for your Amiga: HighSpeed Pascal. Compiling at close to 20 000 lines per minute on a humble A500 and with a fully integrated environment (based on the new HiSoft multi-window editor), HighSpeed Pascal is the answer to your programming prayers.

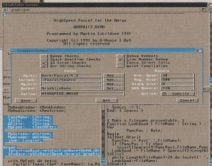
The compiler is very close to the standard set by Turbo Pascal 5 on the PC and enables you to port programs directly from the PC or ST - even the BGI unit is provided for graphic compatibility. You can compile separate units, link with assembler or use the inline assembler provided and we also supply a special version of our 68010 debugger which allows you to debug Pascal programs at a source code level.

The full Pascal language is supported including such worthy additions as structured constants, flexible string handling and absolute variables.

HighSpeed Pascal comes complete with all the necessary files for working with the Amiga's operating system, a host of examples and a professional, ring-bound manual.

HiSoft Devpac 3 and HighSpeed Pascal are just two of the products that we supply for your Amiga. Other titles include ProFight, HiSoft BASIC, Extended, SAS/Lance C 3 and HiSoft C. For more details contact us at: HiSoft, The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5DE, UK.

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HighSpeed Pascal is remarkably friendly and easy-to-use

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Full list is sent with orders.



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To order



Want telephone our sales hotline number - 04024 38438 Sun to 19pm. Quote your full name and address, your Access / Visa / Creditcard number, along with your requirements. Include your daytime telephone number. Or, send your personal / building society cheque / bankers draft with full details, by our mail order address: Unit 4, 11a Station Lane, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6JL. All prices are inclusive of VAT.

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"The Amiga was made for AMOS"

*K. Sumpter, AMOS user in Swindon



AMOS - The Creator is like nothing you've ever seen before on the Amiga. For the very first time you'll feel really in control of your computer, and able to harness its awesome power to impress yourself and your friends.

AMOS is not a false promise. When AMOS first came out, many Amiga users were sceptical that AMOS could do all that was promised - but these people are now ardent fans. There are now 45,000 AMOS users, and AMOS is still the biggest-selling productivity package for the Amiga, and can be found on the shelves of virtually every good software retailer.

It's so easy to create AMOS programs that almost every public domain library in this magazine now has AMOS titles in its collection. These include graphics demos, music demos, disc magazines, arcade-style games, puzzle games, databases, educational software - and lots more.

Many commercial software packages are also written in AMOS. In fact most educational publishers use AMOS, especially ourselves with the best-selling Fun School 3 and 4.



AMOS was the perfect choice to create Fun School 4 - the results are first class!

AMOS has also proved to be perfect for producing CDTV packages: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, The Holy Bible, Mind Run 1 and II plus many others - all created using AMOS because of its versatility and ease of use.

What is AMOS?

AMOS is a powerful, easy-to-use programming language based around BASIC - the language which is taught in schools and colleges. AMOS contains more than 500 different English-like commands such as MUSIC, VOLUME, SAMPLE,

GET FONT, ELLIPSE, RAINBOW, MENU BAR and CLOSE WORKBENCH - so you can create any result you want both quickly and easily.

AMOS comes with a clearly-written 300-page manual and more than 80 example programs. These will guide you towards creating your first program, making AMOS the ideal introduction to programming on your Amiga.

What AMOS owners have said:

"It's the best piece of software I've bought for the Amiga. Worth twice the price!"

- S Sweet, Herne Bay

"Without doubt the very best Basic available on the Amiga."

- Paul Feazey, Oxford

Unleash your creativity with AMOS
- for just £49.99



Now you can double the speed of your AMOS creations with the AMOS Compiler - in fact, some commands are up to five times faster! And using it couldn't be simpler - just two mouse clicks and you're away. The AMOS Compiler also includes a cruncher which will compress your programs to half their size - which has enabled AMOS users to get their work on magazine cover discs and earn them money.



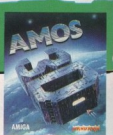
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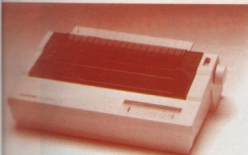
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Creditcard order hotline - Tel. 051-357 2961.

Alternatively send a cheque with your choice of products clearly indicated to EuroPress Direct, FREEPOST, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 3EB.

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SOFTWARE



Brother are selling new dot matrix printers with a one-year on-site warranty

Call out for printer duo

TWO new dot matrix printers from Brother are covered by a manufacturer's one year on site warranty, an unusual feature for dot matrices.

The 9-pin 1309 and 24-pin 1324 models have multiple paper paths, paper parking and push and pull tractors. They can handle multi-part forms and have 8K buffers.

The Brother 1309, costing £174, has a print speed of 216 characters per second in draft mode and 45cps when printing in near letter quality mode. The 1324 also has a draft mode print speed of 216cps and in letter quality mode the £229 printer operates at 72cps. Both are Epson compatible.

More information from Action Computer Supplies (0800 333 333).

New Scala shown

IMPROVEMENTS to presentations, multimedia and video software Scala were shown recently at the Amiga '91 show in Cologne.

New transitions found in version two of Digital Vision's package include stretching pictures on to the screen, flipping, flowing, rolling and pushing. Messages can also scroll horizontally across the screen.

Slide Sorter gives users the ability to visualise scripts they are working on by miniaturising the pictures in presentations, enabling them to be shuffled about.

Previously silent, it now has support for sound and music which can be timed with every transition, button press, animation or as stand-alone events.

Animation now operates directly from disk as it is played, making it possible to run sequences much larger than the size of memory. Due for release in February from Silica Systems (081-309 1111) its price remains to be fixed.

Scala's expensive sister, InfoChannel, has also been revised. Running on a satellite computer version 3.1 can repeat presentations automatically on many machines and has a new diary enabling sequences to be stored until any future date and time.

This specialist product is only available from Digital Vision who can be contacted in the UK on 0920 444294.

DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING WE DON'T?

Although Amiga Computing has scores of contacts in the Amiga world, we need you. If you have some hot news ring John Butters on the news desk now on 0625 878888 or fax to 0625 879966. All information supplied will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

PEOPLE who give information leading to the conviction of software pirates have been promised a reward from industry watchdog ELSA (European Leisure Software Publishers Association).

The pledge comes after Salford-based Pick 'n' Choose were fined £19,600 and had to forfeit goods worth £16,500 as a result of a concerned computer user helping Trading Standards officers take the firm to court.

Mr Wallace from Fulwood, Lancashire, was rewarded with £500 after he provided evidence including a test buy of pirated software.

ELSPA say the case created greater understanding about software piracy among Trading Standards officers which, they say, is a major step forward for the anti-piracy campaign conducted by FAST and ELSA.

"We are pleased to pay Mr Wallace the reward, which is fully justified given the co-operation and help he provided in obtaining the conviction," ELSA's General Secretary Roger Bennett said.

"Anyone supplying information about piracy to ELSA can claim a reward on conviction of the offender, but obtaining evidence is the key." Readers with information about software thieves can telephone ELSA on 0386 830642 and FAST on 0642 660377.

Rewards for pirate evidence

Amiga sales up in Germany

NEARLY 180 firms from around the globe had stands at the Köln Messe for the recent Amiga '91 show and organiser AMI Shows forecast 60,000 visitors were going to pass through the four halls during the three days.

Commodore had little to excite British visitors but it was the first opportunity for most Germans to see the A500 Plus, which had just started shipping.

For existing Amiga owners an English operating system upgrade was on sale for DM199 (about £70). Kickstart version 2 ROMs were bundled with a copy of Wordkensch 2.04 on disk and a manual.

At a press conference on the trade day Commodore Germany's boss Helmut Jost appeared to be more than satisfied with his company's recent performance.

He claimed that Amiga sales in Germany had jumped by more than 90 per cent in the last year and that by the end of 1991 there

would be one million Amigas in the country.

In common with the English division, Jost predicts a massive growth in multimedia in the near future and was selling the Amiga as the most suitable computer for that role.

CDTV featured quite heavily at Cologne and Commodore expected 80 titles would be available for the machine by the end of 1991, most heading from the UK.

A card to give CDTV four million colours and ability to display 22 pictures per second is to be launched soon and the manufacturer forecasts total German sales of little more than 4,000 will increase to 20,000 by the end of the year.

AMI Shows were pleased about the attendance of several English games houses which included Gremlin Graphics, Psygnosis and Virgin Games.

From the serious side of the market there were Rombo, Gasteliner and Pandal Marketing.

AMIGA COMPUTING NEWSLINE

16-Bit Show outgrows Novotel

VISITORS to 1992's first Amiga show, which was to have been held at the Hammersmith Novotel, will be given more space to move around as Westminster Exhibitions (081-569 9768) change the venue for their 5th International 16-Bit Computer Show to the Wembley Exhibition Halls.

Westminster boss Tim Collins commented: "The move to Wembley will give us enough space to avoid the problem of overcrowding and develop the audience further."

"The extra space will also enable us to invite more exhibitors to join us and further the variety of products on display for visitors to try out." He predicts that many firms from overseas will be exhibiting.

Previously the Royal Horticultural Halls and the Novotel have been used for the growing event. If you are planning a visit reserve a date in your diary between February 14 and 16.

Amiga CD-ROM drive on display

DESPITE Commodore failing to have their A690 CD-ROM drive ready in time for the Cologne show, electronics giant Toshiba had their internal and external answer on display.

The XM-3301 drives were available for A500 or A2000s and eventually will be sold in the UK through Highland Electronics (0444 245021). Since, then the UK division have displayed an early version of their drive.

Speed for A3000

G-FORCE is the name of Great Valley Products' latest accelerator, this time a 68040 board for the A3000.

Operating at 28MHz, it can accommodate up to eight megabytes of 32-bit memory and once Motorola chips running at 33MHz become available, G-Force can be upgraded to increase its performance from 22 to 23.3 MIPS.

Unpopulated it costs £2,199 from Silica Systems (081-309 1111).

AMIGA COMPUTING NEWSLINE



Fun School leaps forward

A CHESHIRE hospital was presented with copies of Fun School 4 recently, at the launch of the latest edition of the award-winning education series from Europress Software (0625 859333).

Freddy the Frog, the main character from the software, leapt into the children's ward at Macclesfield General Hospital to hand over the software.

An Amiga was also donated to the school for sick children after Europress learnt they were the only hospital in Cheshire without computers.

"The first question new children ask when they come into the school room is have you got a computer?" said hospital teacher Alex Westbrook.

"Our budget would not stretch to one but now we have the computer and lots of software that's interesting and educational which is marvellous."



Dog learns new ticks

RECORD chain HMV are to stock Amiga software in three of their largest stores. Shops in Reading, Southend and London's Oxford Street will be the first to take computer products on board.

The company says if the scheme is successful other branches will follow.

A500 beats sales forecast

THE A500 outstripped 1991 sales expectations and software sales for the machine are showing continued growth in market share, Commodore have announced.

The computer giant says that Amiga software is now outselling PC software, its nearest rival, by more than 30 per cent and that by the end of 1991 sales will have topped 280,000 for the calendar year.

A survey carried out by leading distributor Leisuresoft for 16-bit software shows the Amiga with a 58 per cent share, the PC with 25 per cent, and the ST with 17 per cent. This compares to 55 per cent, 20 per cent and 25 per cent respectively at the same point last year.

"It's the number one product for the Christmas market," said Commodore's national sales director. "Indeed the Amiga 500 has been outperforming its expectation throughout the whole of 1991."

"The strength of hardware and software sales are testimony to the Amiga's great popularity with the

consumer. We only have to look at market indicators to see that the Amiga 500 continues to remain the aspirational product with the broadest and best range of software."



Once again the entry-level Amiga has beaten sales forecasts and Commodore believe the computer is on course to repeat the success of the 8-bit C64



Disks in short supply

A WORLDWIDE shortage of 3.5in floppy disks is leading to price increases of about 2p per disk for firms ordering in bulk. Various excuses for the short supply are circulating the industry. One rumour is that a large disk manufacturer in the Far East has ceased trading and another suggestion is that firms are producing the higher-priced high density versions.

Despite the price rises most firms are able to absorb the extra cost. "We can absorb the increase because we are used to a couple of pence variation," said the head of one company.

"As long as it doesn't go up any more, we can keep prices stable," he added.

Presentations for A500

A NEW multimedia sequencer for creating presentations and education and entertainment applications is being aimed at A500 owners.

Developer Gold Disk say MediaShow allows users to harness the Amiga's power to play animations, graphics, music and sound.

It loads approaching segments of the animation from disk while playing, giving long and continuous play. Other features include a built-in video titler and a variety of built-in wipes, fades, transitions and dissolves.

A timeline user-interface avoids the need for codes and programming and it supports files from paint, 3D rendering and animation programs. Call Silica Systems on 081-309 1111.

Christmas campaign

COMMODORE is spending a £5.5 million on its Christmas advertising campaign for the A500, CDTV and ageing C64.

It features separate press and TV advertisements for each of the products and the Amiga segment carries the line "Brighter by far". Press adverts appear in consumer and specialist titles.

The computer's television advert follows the story of a boy's depression as he sits in his room on a wet and dreary afternoon and the transformation brought about by his Amiga.

Creative director at agency Evans Hunt Scott Eurocom said: "The Amiga is the best selling home computer and with CDTV we're helping create a totally new market. It's great to have such good products to work on."

Commodore's marketing manager, Dawn Levack, said: "This campaign reflects our position as market leader. It is bold, confident and lets the products speak for themselves."

Amiga flying high

GERMAN software house Thalion (010 49 5244 4080) have announced a line up of new flight simulators for the Amiga.

This follows on from the much-awaited A320 Airbus which is expected to be on sale in December and will be followed by a helicopter program based on the small Bolkow 105 in March.

As with the fixed-wing aircraft, it will require pilots to use real navigation charts.

Operating an airline will be the aim of the third package, also due for a March release. The twin-engined Piper Seneca plane has to be flown on specific routes and users will have to remember to set time aside for regular maintenance work.

In Tails of the Golden Goose, the winter Dakota transport plane is flown in South America, including operations out of up-country airstrips.

Again, an airline has to be built and the package has an emphasis on simulation rather than gameplay.

Thalion spokesman Tony King says the setting for the program enables people to make a decision on whether they want to fly legal flights or make extra money by carrying arms and drugs.

However, DC3 fans will have to wait until next September before they can buy the package. Prices are yet to be fixed.

Viewing postponed

DUE to pressure on space, we have held over the regular Gallery feature from this issue of Amiga Computing. It will return in all its full-colour, bitmapped glory in the February issue, so keep sending in those great works of art!

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AMIGA COMPUTING NEWSLINE



Monsieur Mangetout will be adding a computer to his diet at the Computer Shopper Show at the beginning of December

Man to eat computer

FRENCHMAN Michel Lotto will be making a meal out of the Computer Shopper Show, where he will attempt to eat a whole computer during the four-day event.

Better known as Monsieur Mangetout, he plans to add the micro to his diet which already includes bicycles, a supermarket trolley, television sets, chandeliers and, when really hungry, light aircraft.

The Computer Shopper Show will be at the Wembley Exhibition Halls on December 5 to 8.

Amiga insurance

INSURANCE is being offered to Amiga owners whose set-ups are worth more than £1,200.

For a yearly fee of about 11 per cent of the equipment's value, Aquarian Public Domain (0703 685006) guarantee a quick response to system failures or loss by more than 50 firms nationwide.

Replacing or repairing software and hardware, the scheme also covers damage caused by viruses.

Progressive running fast

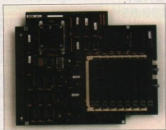
DENVER-based Progressive Peripherals and Software have released ProRAM 3000, a memory expansion for adding between four and 64 megabytes of 32-bit RAM to the A3000.

It installs into the computer's Zorro III slot allowing 24-bit animations with hundreds of frames to be stored, rendered or played back directly. Unpopulated it costs \$349.95.

Mercury is PPS's latest accelerator due for imminent release. It can be populated with up to 32 megabytes of memory and run with either the Motorola 28MHz or 33MHz 68040 chip. Used in conjunction with ProRAM 3000, it enables an A3000 to have more than 100 megabytes of RAM. Price to be finalised.

Also being developed by the company is Zeus, an A2000 board which can be used with 28 or 33MHz 68040 processors. Up to 64 megabytes of memory can be added and a SCSI II interface will transfer data at 10 megabytes per second when used with a SCSI II hard drive.

Power Computing (0234 843388) have taken on distribution of Progressive's products in the UK.



Mercury is an A3000 accelerator capable of being populated with up to 32 megabytes of RAM. It uses a 68040 processor running at 28MHz but can be upgraded to 33MHz when chips become available

A2000 in video system

BUYING video production equipment has become more straightforward with the release of the Commodore Amiga 2000 Personal Video Producer (PVP), an integrated video production system.

Amiga 2000 PVP combines an A2000, 40 megabyte hard disk, A2300 Video Genlock card, Scala software, Deluxe Paint III and a cable.

Said Commodore's Multimedia Director Barry Thurston: "We've taken away all the hard work by pre-installing an A2300 video genlock card and video caption, titling and graphics software."

"The PVP means that slick and professional videos with high quality time displays and special effects are within everyone's grasp. Commodore continue to maintain their position as the prime supplier of professional media solutions."

Price: £1,299.



Using Accodata's latest stand, printer users are able to view their work as it is being printed

Teachers get Amiga lessons

TEACHERS needing to buy computers for their school are to be given advice in a new Commodore catalogue which describes Amiga and CDTV solutions for many classes.

Subjects covered include maths, computer and business studies, English and media studies, design and technology, music, art and design, science and specialist areas.

The Maidenhead-based giant have also formed a network of education dealers to help teachers choose the correct setup and a team of consultants are at hand to visit schools to discuss individual requirements.

"The purpose of the Schools Catalogue is to present solutions to those teachers who don't know about and understand information technology," said Commodore's Caroline Steele. Copies of the catalogue can be obtained by telephoning her at Commodore on 0628 770088.

A new angle on printers

THE latest printer stand from Accodata (0732 885555) has been set at an angle to enable users to check information and work on the printer while documents are being printed. Printer View Stand accepts up to 80 column models and has a paper catch tray. Price: £69.99.

DIARY DATES

7 to 9 February 1992
5th International 16-bit
Computer Show
Organiser: Westminster
Exhibitions

(081-549 3444)
Venue: Wembley Exhibition Halls
The first post-Christmas show for Amiga owners, and a new venue for this growing event.

7 to 10 April 1992
Which Computer? Show
Organiser: Reed

(081-948 9600)
Venue: National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham
One of the country's top shows, but heavily biased towards the PC.

12 to 14 April 1992
European Computer Trade Show
Organiser: Blenheim Online

(081-868 4466)
Venue: Business Design Centre, London
A trade-only show where many of the year's releases can be previewed.

28 to 31 May 1992
Spring Computer Shopper Show
Organiser: Blenheim PEL

(081-868 4466)
Venue: Olympia, London
Promised to attract many Amiga exhibitors.

OVERSEAS EVENTS

24 to 26 January 1992
Bemex Computer '92
Organiser: Interexpo & Media

(010 31 40 464601)
Venue: Eindhoven Trade Fair Building
Very similar to the UK's Computer Shopper Show

3 to 5 April 1992
Amiga Berlin
Organiser: AMI Shows Europe

(010 49 8092 24086)
Venue: Kohn Berlin
The first German Amiga show of the year. Two giant halls will be packed with the latest products.

8 to 11 October 1992
Amiga Köln
Organiser: AMI Shows Europe

(010 49 8092 24086)
Venue: Kohn Messe
A chance to catch up on the year's developments in the active Amiga world.

● If your company is organising a show relevant to the Amiga and it's not listed, let us know so we can include the information in the diary.

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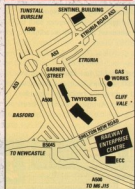
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The Amiga 500 is probably the most popular home computer of all time in Britain – let's forget the Specie for a moment – and one of the most popular worldwide. In terms of relevancy in the mass market, then, the A500 is a much more serious contender than the more expensive and less common A2000 and A3000. When, therefore, Commodore takes the A500 and gives it a course of radical bodybuilding and plastic surgery, the market better watch out.

Since rumours started to circulate last year about a possible UK release of an A500 with one meg and a Fatter Agnus built in, there was enough excitement to raise even Roger Moore's cardboard eyebrows, even though this upgrade would have been of fairly minor proportions. Pundits spoke of a projected A600, and a UK version of the 500 Professional then selling in the US. What we eventually got, after all the speculation, was a major step forward for the A500.

Skin deeper

The improvements can be summed up in one deceptively bland sounding sentence. WorkBench 2.04, Kickstart release 2, the Enhanced Chip Set, and 1Mb of chip RAM on board. So much, so boring. I mean, who but fact fans gives a damn for all that techie tripe?

Think again. The improvements offered by the Plus, both hardware and software, are solid and practical. When I boot up my Plus in the morning and cast an eye over the 1.3 machine sitting next to my desk, it takes a cold shower and several delfty applied blows with a chilled teaspoon to bring me back to my senses. Let's start with the software.

Two up

WorkBench 2 has been around on A3000 machines for over a year now, and users of the cripplingly expensive high-end Amiga have long been

delighting in its extra features. Now, however, purchasers of seemingly innocuous Cartoon Classics bundles can enjoy on their 500 Plus what has to be one of the world's best operating systems for machines in the Amiga bracket.

At first glance, the improvements over 1.3 can often be small and well hidden enough to make you think 2.04 is no more than a cosmetic upgrade.

Cosmetic

There are few major changes, as WorkBench was already fairly well developed, but if you look under the surface there is a huge list of tweaks and twiddles which, when taken together, render the system a great deal more friendly and powerful.

The most obvious, yet least appealing, change to WorkBench is the use of

the purportedly more professional-looking screen colours. Gone is the familiar blue-orange-white-black to be replaced with a very sombre grey-blue-black-white. For some reason, the colour numbers for white and black have also been reversed, so that black icons created on a 1.3 machines appear white on the Plus.

I soon tired of the dreary colour scheme and reverted to the old palette, though by doing so I had to reverse black and white again. Doing this has the advantage of making old icons appear in their proper colours, and the old combination in any case makes for much greater flexibility when designing icons. You try and produce a flesh tone from blue and grey!

The next change to strike the eye is the new set of screen gadgets. The shrink gadget is now a single toggle button which, when clicked, instantly shrinks or expands a window to its minimum and maximum sizes and the forward/backward button now shoves a window all the way backwards or forwards with one click.

The new gadgets make WorkBench operations faster and smoother by doing away with many of the dragging,

Get serious

The A500 now has more plus points than ever – Stevie Kennedy reports

resizing, and clicking operations you'd previously have had to carry out. Even WorkBench itself is in its own window.

Called backdrop mode, it allows you to shrink WorkBench down to a little box in the corner of the screen, or discard it altogether by clicking on its close gadget.

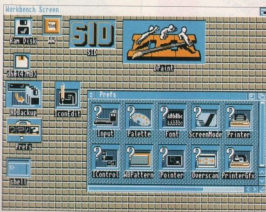
I found backdrop mode fairly useless and clutterous, and quickly turned it off before saving prefs to ensure that the machine wouldn't boot up in it again. It's useful if you want to retrieve the memory otherwise used by WorkBench, but most users won't have to resort to it.

When you hold down the right mouse button and try out the new menus, you're in for a few more surprises. The two new features which will prove most useful are Leave Out and New Drawer.

Leave Out has been begging to be included in the Amiga's WorkBench since the machine was first released. The option enables you to select an icon from a disk or drawer window, then choose to leave it out on the WorkBench screen in the same way that Macs leave icons sitting on the desktop. The icon will reappear in its new location even after a reboot, thus saving the user a lot of opening windows and drawers.

Only the icon is left on the

...refined to the point where you could make designer earrings out of it

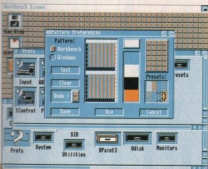


A Workbench screen with icons left out ready to be used

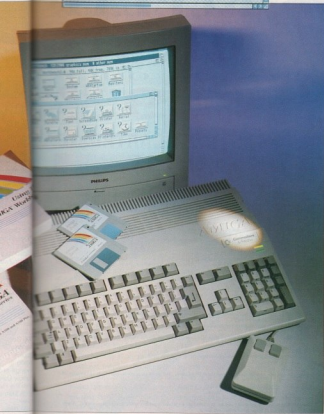
Workbench screen – the program itself remains in the drawer and WorkBench remembers where it is. This means that programs using special files, such as prefs or config files which have to be in the same directory as the program, continue to run from a left out icon.

The Leave Out (and its partner Put Away) options will largely do away with the need for those PD menu programs currently so popular with hard drive users. Leave all your favourite applications on the WorkBench screen, and you'll cut down dramatically on the time wasted clicking on drawers and so forth.

New Drawer is another handy addition. In WorkBench 1.3, users had to



WorkBench 2.04's pattern editor is great fun



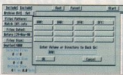
have the useless Empty Drawer icon cluttering up their disk somewhere so they could duplicate and rename it for any new directory they'd created with the MakeDir command. Now all you need to do is select New Drawer and provide a name for the new icon to be displayed onscreen.

What a drag!

To tidy up your 1.3 WorkBench screen, you are forced to use extended selection when you wish to move more than one icon at a time. This involves holding down the Shift key and clicking on every icon. WorkBench 2.04 does away with extended selection by offering a

crop of enhanced screen management facilities.

The one you'll all want to try right away is the drag option. By clicking with the left mouse button and dragging a box around a group of icons, you can select the whole lot at once, then hold down the Shift key and move



There's even a hard disk backup utility, designed by EST software

Panic mongers

There are more than a few interest groups around in the business world, and sheep-like flocks of industry pundits, who seem to thrive on gloom and disaster. For these reasons, the initial compatibility problems suffered by the A500 Plus have sometimes been inflated out of proportion since the machine's release.

TRUE: The ECS chips and Kickstart ROM are different enough to render some software incompatible.

FALSE: The problem is so bad that Commodore are "recalling" stocks of the new machine.

TRUE: Many older games won't work with the machine, and in particular those which now constitute the budget game lists.

FALSE: A high proportion of new software won't work with the machine.

TRUE: All major UK software houses are reasonably satisfied with the compatibility of their existing titles, are recording some which have problems, and are ensuring that all future releases will work perfectly on the Plus.

The failure rate for games software, as estimated by the National Association of Specialist Computer Retailers (NASCR) is 35 to 48 per cent. How they arrived at such a figure is uncertain. They tested a whopping 500 titles, so one must assume they are being unnecessarily pessimistic to allow a 6.5 per cent error either way.

Our own tests, carried out on the first forty titles, old and new which we came across in the Magic Cupboard, suggest a failure rate towards the bottom of the NASCR range, and perhaps slightly lower. As we only tested forty games, we can't offer a definite figure, but the problem certainly seems less serious than you'd think judging from the number of people in the industry wailing and gnashing their teeth.

The compatibility problem will not affect serious users of the new machine - we've yet to find a major utility which won't work on it - nor those who intend to buy the latest games. It will be a problem for those who buy an A500 Plus for a youngster and plan to keep the little gadget happy with a regular supply of budget software. Parents and relatives in this category are advised to ask specifically for an old A500.

Some software companies have plans to put stickers on the packaging of new games to indicate the product's A500 Plus compatibility, but it won't be long before these are redundant. Prospective A500 buyers and those wishing to upgrade should keep in mind that the Plus will be completely replacing the old A500 (at the same price!) from January onwards, and that all new games released from December this year should work perfectly.

The games we tested and which worked: Kick Off 2 (Anco), Terminator 2 (Ocean), Fort Apache (Impressions), Turrican (Rainbow Arts), Armalyte (Thalamus), F16 Combat Pilot (D.I.), Tetris (Infogrames), Oblitus (Pygnosis), Licence to Kill (Domark), Bionic Commando (Software Creations), Footballer of the Year 2 (Gremlin), Platoon (Ocean), Alien Breed (Team 17), Jimmy White's Snooker (Virgin), Batman (Ocean), Cruise for a Corps (US Gold), Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (Lucasfilm), Altered Beast (The Hit Squad), Head Over Heels (The Hit Squad), Beast Busters (Activision), Barbarian (Palace), World Class Leaderboard (Kixx), James Pond 2 - Robocod (Millennium), Starflight 2 (Electronic Arts), Formula 1 Grand Prix (Microprose), Lord of the Rings (Electronic Arts).

The games we tested and which didn't work: Treasure Island Dizzy (Code Masters), Outrun Europa (US Gold), Heroes of the Lance (S.S.I.), Hydra (Domark), Shadow Sorcerer (S.S.I.), Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters (Domark), Robocod (Ocean), Ghostbusters 2 (Ocean), Power Drift (The Hit Squad), The Final Battle (P.S.S.), Disc (Loricel).

them as a group. The menus contain a couple of other enhancements. For example, you can use Select Contents to highlight every icon in the currently active window, then use Clean Up, Snapshot (icons and window or just the window's size and location), or the new View By option to change the way the window is organised.

The latter, in conjunction with Show All Files, will enable users to view the contents of those elusive system directories such as C:, DEVs: and so on without opening a shell and resorting to DIR or UST. By double clicking on any hitherto invisible file (and Show All Files gives them each a default icon), a requester is summoned containing the

name of the file you just clicked on and a command line.

Let's say you want to view your startup sequence. With the Show All Files selected, you can spot the file in the S: director's window.

Double click on it to bring up the command line with startup-sequence already entered. Now simply type ED with a space in front of the name startup-sequence, and your command is carried out as if you had opened shell and typed.

ED S:Startup-sequence

This facility will give shellphobic users a window into the Amiga's internals

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Show ram as text

NEW **SHOW FROZEN PICTURE**
Show frozen picture

NEW **PLAY**
Play

NEW **WRITE STRING TO MEMORY**
Write String to memory

NEW **JUMP TO SPECIFIC ADDRESS**
Jump to specific address

NEW **SHOW RAM AS TEXT**
Show ram as text

NEW **SHOW FROZEN PICTURE**
Show frozen picture

NEW **PLAY**
Play

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► and could encourage more to dive into WorkBench's powerful engine room. If they don't find this easy enough, they can always use the new Execute Command menu option, which will allow shell commands to be issued directly from WorkBench.

Mother of pearl

The CLI is the real jewel at the heart of AmigaDOS, and was greatly enhanced for release 1.3 to be renamed "shell". In WorkBench 2.04, although it was difficult to see how it could be improved further, the shell has been refined to the point where you could happily make designer earnings out of it.

The first thing you'll notice is that it now has a close gadget, so you need never use FNDCU again.

The real differences, though, are more practical than this. You can, for

Really obese Agnus

The Enhanced Chip Set (ECS) consists at the moment of Super Agnus (chip number 8375 or 83728) and Super Denise (chip number 837384). Don't confuse the Fatter Agnus with the Super Agnus. Fatter allows one meg of chip RAM, but Super Agnus the wonder chip as fitted in the 500 Plus will handle anything up to 2 meg, which is four times the limit of the original AS00.

The ECS chips should soon be available as an upgrade option to owners of older machines. Fitting them involves opening the machine and prising out the old chips, but if you don't fancy the hassle or have a machine still inside its warranty period, Commodore will be offering an official upgrade service whereby, for a small consideration, their engineers will fit the chips.

The price of the ECS should be in the region of £80 to £100. To use it properly, you'll also need WorkBench 2.04 and the new Kickstart ROM, which should set you back a further £35 for the pair.

instance, cut text from one shell window and paste it into another.

The text goes across complete with line feeds, so you have to be careful to avoid issuing a string of commands which make no sense. There are also

several new key combinations you can use when editing a command line, though most will be of use only to those who use a shell a great deal.

The shell itself is no longer a device you'll need to mount. Its simply referred to as CON:, and the equivalent of 1.3's Shell-Seg handler is incorporated into Kickstart 2.04. There's no need, therefore, to make the shell handler resident or to mount the device.

Once you've opened your shell and started to get down to the nitty-gritty with AmigaDOS, the sheer number of improvements and enhancements begins to make your head spin. For starters, there are the new commands.

The new boys

These are few, but very handy. UNSETENV and UNALIAS, for example, enable the removal of old environment variables and aliases which may no longer be appropriate.

Rather than quit out of your shell, alter its shell-startup file, and restart without the old aliases, you can remove them painlessly.

SETFONT allows the user to choose the screen font in which his or her shell will be displayed. This is ideal for those using interlaced displays, where Topaz 8 becomes uncomfortably small, and even better for those whose vision is impaired in some way.

In conjunction with WorkBench's options to change icon, screen, and system fonts, the SETFONT command makes the Amiga a much more pleasurable tool for people in those groups to use.

Localised

A wonderful new feature for AmigaDOS programmers is the shell's ability to set and use local environment variables. The global kind are still controlled through GETENV and SETENV, but each shell process window can now have its own local variables controlled through SET and GET.

In addition, the way variables are manipulated has been greatly improved by their easy use in commands such as ECHO and EVAL. Where in the past the programmer would have had to use a

lot of redirection to shove variable values back and forth, he or she can now refer to them directly using a dollar sign. It is possible, therefore, to use lines such as:

ECHO "Your name is \$name"

where "name" is the variable whose contents you'd like to print. Similarly, EVAL can directly address an environment variable, making calculations within AmigaDOS programs a great deal easier to code.

And more!

The existing AmigaDOS commands, not wanting to be left out, have been given a whole new lease of life in WorkBench 2.04. Not only have many been given additional parameters to enhance their usefulness, but most can also take advantage of the shell's new multi-argument command parsing feature.

This means that instead of deleting ►

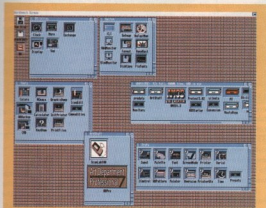
Outline fonts

One of the biggest recent talking points concerning WorkBench 2.04 has been its support for Compugraphic(tm) outline fonts. These are scalable fonts, unlike the Amiga's original bitmapped fonts, which can be used in any size without appearing jagged or rough around the edges.

The AS00 Plus is supplied with a total of three scalable fonts (Times, Triumvirate, and Letter Gothic), though more could be added with the purchase of CG-Fonts disks. Their inclusion will enable Amiga users to output much higher quality text to their dot matrix printers, and will provide a standard for software houses to follow when implementing the Compugraphic system in their own packages.

At the moment there is little documentation on WorkBench's CG fonts, and the manuals, with which I was a little disappointed, don't mention them at all. Third party manuals, among them the official AmigaDOS Manual (third edition), are silent on the matter, so one suspects that they were taken by surprise by the last minute addition of scalable fonts.

Either way, Compugraphic font support is an exciting and important feature of the new operating system and it remains to be seen how software companies take advantage of the feature. It was surprised to find no Notepad utility present on the WorkBench 2.04 Extras disk we received. An updated Notepad in combination with CG fonts would be a superb tool with which to generate letters or memos.



SuperHires gives you an enormous screen size of 1280 x 512 pixels

Screen scene

The new screen modes available under WorkBench 2.04 and the Enhanced Chip Set boost the Amiga's serious potential by adding several new very high resolution modes. Any of these would be ideal for business uses such as DTP and CAD, especially the Productivity modes.

Productivity is an all-new high resolution mode which will work only with a multisync monitor. However, it does not require a flicker fixer in its non-interlaced mode, and in this it is almost as good as the old Hires interlaced. This makes low-end DTP cheaper by at least £125 (the price of the cheapest and lowest spec flicker fixer), which should boost considerably the Amiga's potential in these areas.

A500 Plus display modes

Graphics Display mode	Monitor Required	Standard Screen Size (Pixels)	Maximum Number of Colours
Lowres	normal	320x256	32
Hires	normal	640x256	16
Hires interlaced	normal	640x512	16
SuperHires	normal	1280x256	4
SuperHires interlaced	normal	1280x512	4
Productivity	multisync	640x480	4
Productivity interlaced	multisync	640x960	4
A2024/10Hz	A2024	1008x1024	4 grey scales
A2024/15Hz	A2024	1008/1024	4 grey scales

Hardware incompatibility?

The spectre of games software incompatibility has been widely debated in industry circles since the Plus was released, but few have so far looked at the problems of hardware incompatibility. Although this won't be as big a problem, it is substantial enough to warrant discussion.

All existing floppy drives, printers, monitors, and external hard drives should be 100 per cent compatible with the Plus. Where problems will be encountered is in the fitting of new equipment to the tadpole and inside the A500 casing.

The popular 1.5Mb RAM boards which connect to the Gary chip, unless redesigned, are incompatible, as is the ICD AdRAM board and the KCS Powerboard PC emulator. The latter is being redesigned to work with the Plus as I type this, and a new version should be available in December. Likewise, most peripherals manufacturers can be expected to issue RAM boards altered to work with the Plus.

Capacitor too tall!

The reorganised motherboard with its slightly different layout will also cause problems. We know for a fact that most accelerator boards which plug in piggy-back-style to the 68000 slot will physically not fit because capacitor C307 is now 4mm taller than before and the boards can't be properly seated in the 68000 socket because of the obstruction!

Again, the cheap 68000 dual clock speed 14MHz board, will not work. Although working with only certain A500 motherboards in the first place, the board must be connected to a resistor which no longer exists, and will be completely incompatible with the Plus.

We haven't been able to test the various internal hard drives and flicker fixers now available, but as the operating system has been thoroughly rewritten the former could have problems, and the latter may find the new Denise less talkative than the original chip. As I said, we haven't been able to test these in the office, but potential buyers should make sure of compatibility before buying any internal add-ons for the A500 Plus.

- three files one at a time, the user can simply type:

```
DELETE FILE1 FILE2 FILE3
```

and get rid of the lot in one go. Multiple arguments can also be used with ASSIGN statements to enable a logical device to access more than one directory.

For example, users of hard drives containing several fonts directories could utilise an ASSIGN such as:

```
ASSIGN FONTS: SYS:FONTS DMT:CGFonts  
H02:PSFonts
```

When a program looked for a font in

the FONTS: directory, it would then search the three directories in the order specified by the ASSIGN until it found the one it was looking for.

Wildcard support has also been added to many commands to make them more flexible. CD, for example, can be used with the "match any string" wildcard (*) to change to a directory with a long name you can't

be bothered typing. This means that the command:

```
CD DFI:UT1\POWER
```

would match DFI:UTILITIES/POWER-PACKER4.0. This is, I'm sure you'll agree, a quicker way to move about.

Wildcards themselves have been given a change with the introduction of the NOT wildcard. Using the ~ character, the user can set a wildcard to match everything except a certain file or files. One possible use for this is in the setting of special aliases. The statement:

```
ALIAS DIRS "dir [!~] *.info"
```

would create a new command to list a drive's contents minus all the .info files.

Also new for the CD command is the ability to change directory without actually using CD! To switch to the LIBS: directory, you'd merely type LIBS: and hit Return. To go back up a directory using the backslash, the process is even easier, as you now have only to hit one key - \ - and return to flip up a directory level.

Internal affairs

To speed up AmigaDOS operations even more, Commodore have at last taken the step of making a number of common commands internal. A total of 33 AmigaDOS commands are now coded into the Kickstart ROM and are executed much faster than if they had to be read in off a disk each time they were used.

If you already have an A500 Plus and have booted this month's CoverDisk, you'll have noticed how quickly the ECHO statements in the startup

sequence are executed. The welcoming messages blip to the screen many times faster on a Plus because each line uses an ECHO statement which has to be accessed from the CoverDisk every time it is executed on an old A500.

Although it won't be feasible to produce CoverDisks using the Fast File System (FFS) until the 500 Plus becomes the machine owned by a large majority of users, its use would be a boon to disk compilers everywhere. WorkBench 2.04 will now allow the FORMAT command to initialise a floppy disk using FFS, which makes the disk faster in operation and enables the cramming of more data onto it.

A floppy formatted with the Old File System (OFS), used on all Amiga floppies up until release 2, will have approximately 835K of free space. If formatted with the FFS option, however, it offers 879K, a gain of 44K over OFS disks. In addition, disk operations are speeded up.

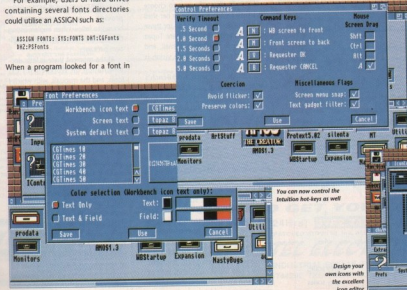
To copy a 370K file to an OFS disk takes 41 seconds. On the same disk reformatted in FFS it takes 36 seconds, and when a full disk is listed or its directory scanned, the benefits of FFS are similarly apparent. The downside is that FFS disks will be unintelligible to an older A500, and that FFS boot blocks are not recognised by virus checkers. However, if you're formatting disks for your own machine only, the FFS option should be used every time.

Conclusion

WorkBench 2.04 and Kickstart 2.04 represent a massive improvement in the A500's capabilities. Taken with the Enhanced Chip Set, offering better hardware, more chip memory, and new screen modes, the machine is far superior to its predecessor, the original A500.

Those who use the Amiga purely for games will find little to excite them in the new product, but those who put their Amigas to more productive uses are advised to buy the upgrade kits as soon as they are available, even if it does so would involve selling a member of the family. You can't stand in the way of progress, grannie!

Initial compatibility problems aside, Commodore has to be on a real winner with this excellent machine.

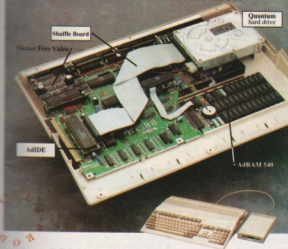


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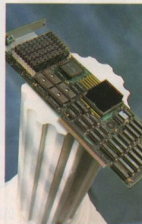
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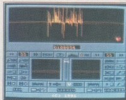
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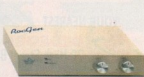
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KCS 3.5 is the somewhat less than catchy title of a package challenging for the Amiga's musical throne. It not only has the essential sequencer but a whole range of extras, all of which work together to form a formidable partnership that the opposition is going to find very difficult to beat.

Along with the release of the system comes what is surely the most aggressive marketing campaign yet to hit the Amiga. Not only are the company offering cheap upgrades for existing users but they've also targeted the rest of the industry, by announcing enormous discounts for those of us willing to trade in old packages, no matter what the title.

As you might expect this hasn't won them a lot of friends, but for the average punter with a now derelict copy of MusicX lurking in a disk box it has to be good news.

As you're probably aware, KCS/Dr.T's aren't new to the music business, being long established on the ST and Amiga. As a result you may ask what's so special about what is essentially an upgrade.

In short, it's the scale of enhancement that makes it special. Not only has the sequencing software been improved but huge advances have been made in the system management, with new data sharing and control software allowing numerous elements to be combined.

What's on offer...

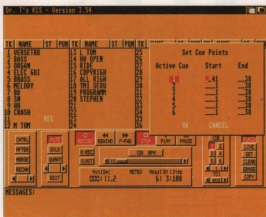
First and foremost comes the KCS 3.5 sequencing package itself. It has all the whistles and bells that you'd expect from a package with a £279 price tag. But on top of its sequencing features comes the ability to work as a platform for the MPE (Multi Program Environment) which we'll look at later.

The sequencer itself boasts two primary modes. The first is the linear or tape deck format which we all know and love, the second being a more flexible Open mode which allows all manner of looping, chaining and multiple sequence combination.

As you might expect, passing data between the two is a simple process and as a result inspirational composition is a good deal easier than with some of its competitors. The usual array of editing functions are on hand within both modes, plus some user friendly options such as muting and definable punch points – all of which can be accessed and defined as the music plays without ruining the output.

Advanced features include old favourites such as transposition and channel reassignment, but there are also more unusual tools such as Invert, which allows either all or part of a sequence to be reversed.

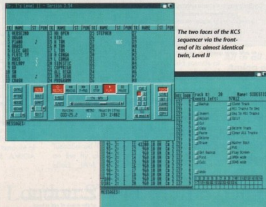
Others include the ability to split sequences by note number, assign



The parent program in all its glory, adding cues the easy way

Very serious sequencing

Our resident muso Paul Austin looks at the latest KCS collection



The two faces of the KCS sequencer via the front-end of its almost identical twin, Level II

them to several channels and expand or compress notes. As is essential, full cut and paste options apply for both individual notes and sections, via the event list editor. Tempo changes can be inserted over either predefined sections or entire sequences.

Sequences can even be delayed with the aid of a play timer – very handy if you're into a bit of DTW.

If you fancy the occasional surprise, the random events option allows predefined elements to be played spontaneously. This can be taken to extremes if applied in Open mode with certain sequences starting, stopping and even muting others.

Track record

It's time for the boring but essential features list, so let's get it over with. Up to 48 tracks are available with a maximum of 126 separate sequences, all of which support full Midi with measure/beat/step display. It also supports controller change and an amazingly high 384 PPQN (pulses per quarter note).

Other features include Merge and Rechannelise, a Midi clock and a Song Position Pointer (both in and out). It can both send and record system-exclusive data, offers independent punch in and out on all tracks. As well as programmable cue in both modes, a simultaneous play and edit option and auto-looping for overdubs are also provided.

Finally, there is a built-in notepad and timing calculator, a play timer to within 1/10th of a second resolution, solid timing better than 70 parts per million, aftertouch, note off velocity filters on record, and it's more than happy to feed the dog and collect the kids as well...phew!

On top of this already frightening list come a few less important but pleasant features, such as the improved front-end graphics (which unfortunately still look very reminiscent of the ST). Perhaps more important is the inclusion of extra editing features via the track mode pull down menus.

Level II

As you may have noticed there's no mention of graphic editing, primarily because KCS 3.5 doesn't support it, at least not internally. Instead the MPE is employed to access the Tiger graphic editing program which, of course, is part of the package – as indeed are Quickscore and Automic, but more of those later.

Now this may become a little confusing as Level II is exactly the same as KCS 3.5 but with the addition of two extra modules. The first of these is the Programmable Variation Generator or PVG. As the name suggests, it's used primarily on finished material to add

random and defined variations. You have the choice of 10 edit screens, all of which have a number of variation and editing tools.

The element to be altered can be selected in a huge variety of ways. For example, simple selections such as pitch, duration or volume are obvious, but more subtle choices such as one note's relation to another can also trigger a variation. If you can't be bothered with complex selections, random variations can also be applied.

Now that the target notes are selected, what can it do with them? Well, for a start the PVG could transpose them, shift them in time, copy them, double them or even use them as the basis for a new riff.

You could even employ the PVG to search patterns, dynamics or rhythms and use these as the basis for change or as targets for enhancement. All PVG definitions can be stored as presets and combined within macros for later use. Instant inspiration at the click of a button...

The Master Editor is the second addition to the system. Unlike most of the editing tools, this particular module has much more global concerns. Its strengths lie in the editing of large sections or entire sequences. To achieve this, another six screens of editing commands await.

You can start simply with some control filtering and track edits, then build up to pitch mapping and sequence bleeding. As you've probably guessed, both of these new modules aren't the simplest bits of software you'll ever use, but if you're willing to burn a little midnight oil with the manuals, the potential for greatness is definitely there – if perhaps well hidden.

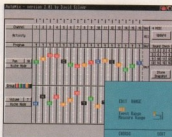
MPE

As mentioned earlier, MPE stands for Multi Program Environment, which sounds suspiciously like a rather fancy title for multitasking. Big news on the ST platform, but not really earth-shattering on the Amiga.

However my initial misgivings were completely unfounded, as the MPE is much more than a revamped version of multitasking. In fact it's more like a form of automatic musical ARexx, which shares all the relevant parts of the music data between the various bits of software within the system.

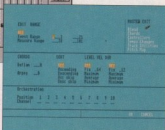
For example, to start the ball rolling you need a host platform for MPE which can be either KCS or Level II. Then if you wanted to do some graphic editing, you could load the Tiger software.

This would then appear in the MPE pull down and when selected would bring the Tiger software to the fore, complete with the sequence you were just working on within KCS or Level II.



Mixing your masterpiece the easy way – colour-coded faders, instant mix selection and all without leaving the system

Six pages of global editing commands just waiting to get to grips with your latest creation



Another scenario would be while employing Automix. Again, it could be waiting within the MPE pull down. When you're ready to mix your masterpiece, simply select and it appears – even if your sequence is still playing. Now you can digitally mix your creation while you're still working on it.

When your creation is complete, it's even possible to print out parts of your choice, ready for real musicians to play live – all from within the system, of course. Up to 19 individual programs or modules can use the system, all working together but perhaps more importantly all sharing a common data source.

There are already almost 30 modules available on the ST which will hopefully make their way over to the Amiga. Unfortunately we're in the unusual position of being out-gunned by a lesser machine, but I'm sure that will change.

As you might expect, holding up to 19 programs in memory is a bit beyond the means of an unexpended A500, so serious users should be looking to beef up their machine to around 2 meg at least, otherwise you'll find the MPE extremely limited. Of course you can

still quit and load modules as required but this does defeat the object a little.

Added extras

We've mentioned the big guns such as KCS and Level II, but its perhaps worth recapping some of the other impressive extras, the first of which has to be Automix. This is far and away my favourite addition to the system, as it allows you to mix your entire sequence via onscreen faders, working exactly as their hardware counterparts do.

A colour-coding system allows you to link various tracks together for simultaneous adjustment of both pan and volume controls. To automate things even further, there's the snapshot panel which allows you to capture individual mixer settings and then jump between up to 16 separate setups during a sequence.

Above the snapshot control comes the sound check panel which allows each track within a sequence to play a preset series of notes. This is very useful if you want to do some rough leveling prior to playing the entire sequence.

The output from Automix can be assigned either to the Midi output or

alternatively to the input/output of KCS. On top of that its output can directly edit the sequence data within the sequencer itself. No more fiddling with velocity percentages – it's all done for you. Pure bliss.

The next sweetener takes the form of the Tiger graphic editor. Now this certainly isn't the prettiest program in the world but it nevertheless does an impressive job. Its fairly standard array of editing talents are greatly enhanced by the incredibly high 384 PPQN, which has obvious advantages if you're looking for highly accurate editing.

A particularly pleasant touch is the graph section of the editor which allows you to draw in various chances rather than rely on the requesters and figures of most programs. Things such as pitch bend and tempo changes can simply be added as curves which instantly translate into sound via the sequencer.

The final program on offer is Quickscore. This is basically a cut down version of Dr.T's professional score printing software. It's by no means as powerful as its bigger brother, but if you're looking for a quick and simple way to get you creations on paper, it's ideal.

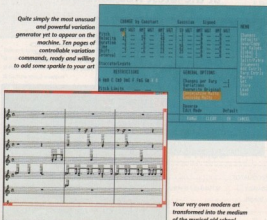
Ugliest

As you've probably noticed, KCS 3.5 is about as serious as they come. As a result it wouldn't be a perfect choice for the beginner. Its professional approach carries right through the package, with even the manual making a few assumptions as to the user's abilities. For the novice I'd say Dr.T's Tiger Cub might be a better starting point. And if you become hooked 3.5 could well be the ideal upgrade.

For the pros it's excellent, if perhaps a little expensive. However in the long run it could be a good investment as its modular approach could effectively remove the need for a complete upgrade in the future.

Having said that, even a pro will need to do some late night reading to get the best from what is certainly the ugliest and arguably the most powerful package yet seen on the machine.

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Price reduced to £179 on trade-in with Tiger Cub, Sequencer 1, MusicK Junior or MRS.

If your particular package isn't listed, I'm sure that those nice folks at Zone will happily cut another throat or two if you ask them nicely.

KCS 3.5 is available from Zone Distribution on 081-766-6564
Price £279

Dr T's Music Software

Dr T's KCS has over the years established itself as one of the most reliable and well featured sequencers available for the AMIGA. KCS has also been used on many major world tours. With the recent release of KCS 3.5 Dr T's have not only shown their support for power sequencing on the Amiga but have in the words of many reviewers produced a sequencer to compare with the most powerful available on the Atari and Apple Mac. KCS now includes the full range of sequencing tools needed for virtually any musical application.



TIGER, the realtime graphic editor, Quickscore, the notation module, Automix, the graphic loaders & PVG are just a few of these tools. Couple this with Dr T's MPE environment where multiple programmes can 'share' data in real time and a newly designed front panel, KCS 3.5 is the answer to all your prayers.

Here's what one reviewer had to say:

'KCS not only offers the best MIDI/music environment available for the Amiga at the present time, but provides workstation potential which is powerful enough to challenge some of the established heavyweights of the ST world'
Paul Owers, Sound On Sound Oct. 1991

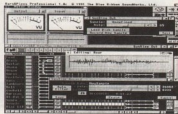
Dr T's produce the widest range of music application software for the Amiga in the world. Shown below is just a small selection of these programmes.

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Phantom SMPTE/MIDI interface	£249
TIGERCub 12 track sequencer	£99
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quantizing, musical tasks such as counter point generation or technical tasks like merging, branching and event conversion. Bars & Pipes Professional is designed by musicians for musicians and will quickly become an invaluable part of your studio.

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TurboSound Technology™ which allows the Amiga to play more than four sampled sounds at a time, anyone can create fully fledged accompaniments using nothing but the Amiga. Multi Media Artists (JAM can create and synchronize with packages such as Showmaker, Imagine, Scala and Calligari), non musicians (using the TurboSound Technology) and all MIDI & Bars & Pipes users can use JAM to try out various musical styles simply and quickly Using the TurboSound Technology™ you can mix samples on the fly creating an advanced multi timbral effect. JAM includes a special TurboSound

editor allowing you to shape, redesign, loop, modulate and filter existing IFF files for use with JAM.

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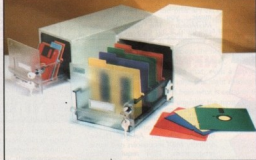
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THE DISK

The best CoverDisk arcade game yet? Find out with Jonathon Sole's classic shoot-'em-up



Defenda!

Forget Space Invaders – the arcade sensation of the decade was Williams' Defender™, and our CoverDisk game this month is about as true to the original as you'll find on the Amiga. Fast, action-packed, and frighteningly addictive, Defenda! will have you tearing your hair out, and that's a promise!

The object of the game is to survive as long as possible and protect the people standing on the surface of the planet over which your ship is flying. There are 10 of them at first, scattered all over the place, but it doesn't take long before their numbers decrease.

Green alien saucers, the standard enemy, will appear in waves and fly around making life difficult for you. When one of them finds a person on the

surface, it will descend, grab the poor defenceless soul, and move to the top of the screen. If the saucer reaches the top, your little person goes pop! and the saucer turns into a mutant purple saucer which seeks you out with a view to termination.

When all your people have been snatched, the planet's surface disappears and you're plunged into deep space.

Mutants

Here all aliens are purple mutants, and you'll have to fight hard to reach the next level, so guarding those pedestrians is a must.

At first, the green and purple saucers are the only aliens you will have to deal with, but as you progress through the



Shoot the saucer to release your planet person

levels an assortment of horrors awaits you. There are bombers, which lay strings of mines across the screen thus making navigation a bit tricky; bouncers, which zig-zag across the screen and can be a real pain; and the ultimate threat – the seekers.

These sleek, grey saucers appear on the later levels and streak towards you in a mad kamikaze dash. They are very difficult to deal with, so don't say we didn't warn you.

Clearing each level will allow you to proceed to the next, but if you're really quick on the Fire button – and you'll have to be! – you can win a wave bonus by wiping out a wave of aliens on your level before the next one appears.

The number of waves in each level increases as you go, and it quickly becomes very difficult to achieve a

wave bonus. Keep trying, however, as you will gain points and make your own life a lot easier. When two waves are allowed to overlap, your blasters are in for a busy time.

Power-ups

No arcade game would be complete without power-ups. The arcade original had none, but versions of the game since then have included them for the sake of improved gameplay. In Defenda! they take the shape of asteroids which drift across the screen. Hit



Now's the time to chicken out



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Amiga Machine Language



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by Jennrich, Schultz and Massman


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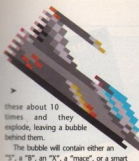
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Amiga 3D Graphic Programming in BASIC



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these about 10 times and they explode, leaving a bubble behind them.

The bubble will contain either an "S", a "B", an "X", a "mace", or a smart bomb. The S gives you speed a boost, B is a bonus of 1,000 points, and X is an extra life. Mace is a special power-up which gives your ship a sort of close defence system.

When a mace is collected, it appears outside your ship and spins around you in an ellipse, killing aliens on contact. This is a marvellous device to have when the screen starts to fill up with baddies. Please note that the mace also kills planet people, so don't hover above your last person if you have one!

The smart bomb is added to your existing total of these devices, of which you have 10 at the start of play. To use it, hold

down the Fire button for a second or two and your smart bomb will go off, killing all of the aliens in your part of the screen. Again, be careful with smart bombs - they kill planet people too!

You'd think the only way to play a game like *Defendal* is to blast away as fast as possible at every mobile object. Strangely enough, though, you'll find a little tactics can go a long way, even in this game.

Sedate

On the first level, for instance, the aliens are sedate enough to allow a bit of people power. Find a stretch of planet surface with two or more people on it and wait till a saucer comes along to pick one up. Let the saucer get halfway up the screen, then blast him and fly into the person. This will result in them hanging on to your ship and you'll collect a few points for rescuing them.

If a person is picked up outside your immediate area, there will be a warning noise. When you hear this, take a look at your scanner. If there are any dots on it going straight up, head for them as fast as you can. Any people collected should



That rock may contain an extra life!

be set back down on the planet's surface before you exit to the next level, thus winning you some more points.

Genocide

On later levels, it's often a good idea to find one planet person and guard it as long as you can. Leave the others to their fate, as you can easily lose the lot if you go haring around after every kidnapper victim.

A more cynical - though quite effective - technique is to fly along the planet's surface deliberately killing off all but the last planet person. In this way, you can ensure a mutant-free level as there will be no people left to produce purple saucers. Morally dubious though this may be, it was a

favourite tactic on the original game and works just as well in *Defendal*!

Whatever tactics you employ, you'll end up dead in the end. All you can do is try to amass as many points as possible, though you'll have to go to it to match the guy I once saw in an arcade with - count them! - nine million points.

Giftware

Defendal is copyright Amiga Computing, but if you like it as much as we think you will, you should send a donation of £5 to the author, Jonathan Sole, at the address in the *Defendal* discs. Please show your support to the author for giving you one of the best CoverDisk games ever.

Authors: Andrew Biddisale
and Nicholas Dodd

FastCat is a program to network two Amigas together using no more than a null modem cable of the kind owned by thousands of users. It is a great deal easier to install and operate than its CoverDisk predecessor, *ParNet*, and has the advantage of working with more programs.

ParNet's major drawback is that it hogs the parallel port, which many utilities attempt to address directly. When *ParNet* is running, these utilities, of which *Protext* is the most outstanding example, rapidly turn up their toes and go guru.

Message mania

FastCat, because it uses the serial port, will interfere with communications in a similar manner. However, as there are far fewer owners of modems than of *Protext* and the sort of programs affected by *ParNet*, it's a less obtrusive utility.

Possibly the most entertaining feature of the program is its message sending facility. With this it is

possible to send messages back and forth between the two Amigas in three different ways.

The default is a spoken message using AmigaDOS's *SPEAK* device. While this tends to produce rather robotic sounds, it is the most useful option if one of the users has a program running which opens a custom screen. Rather than have to return to *WorkBench* to check if a message has been sent, the user will hear it immediately.

The second type, requester messages, pop up on the *WorkBench* screen in a dialogue box. Clicking on OK when you have read the message will clear the box away. Requester messages are best used if both users are running *WorkBench* utilities or programs which don't open a completely customised screen. They will, for example, appear in front of *Protext* but not *Wordworth* screens.

Finally, mailbox messages are sent straight to the directory specified by

the user as his or her mailbox. The default mailbox is a directory in RAM called *FastCat-MBox*. But this can be changed to store messages on floppy or hard drive.

When a mailbox message is received, the user can even have the Amiga's power LED flash on and off to indicate the message's arrival!

File transfers

The central element in any network is its file transfer system. *FastCat*, by virtue of its simplicity, isn't as quick as most, but it makes up for it in ease of use. To send a file to a second machine, all the user needs to do is select *File* from the *Send* menu, type in the name of the source the destination files, and the transfer begins.

The source file is the full pathname and filename of the file to be sent, and the destination file is the pathname and filename of the intended destination on the other machine. If you wanted to transfer your machine's *arp.library* file to the second machine's *LIBS* directory, you'd type both the source and destination filenames as *LIBS:ARP.LIBRARY*.

If you were transferring a data or graphics file and wanted it renamed something a little more self-explanatory, such as *TRANSFERRED.IFF*, it

would be easy enough to rename it in the same operation as you transferred it. Remember - the destination file doesn't exist until you carry out the transfer, so you can call it what you like.

Grabbing a file from another machine is carried out using the same procedure in reverse. You specify which file you are interested in, then where it will go on your machine. If you want to rename it at the same time, just use a different destination filename.

Prefs settings

For *FastCat* to work properly, both networked machines must have identical serial ports. The most important of these is the buffer size, which determines in what size chunks data will be transmitted between the machines.

On the shareware release, this must be 1,024 bytes rather than the Amiga's default 512 bytes. When you register with the authors you will receive version 1.01, which has a buffer size of 512 bytes, resulting in faster communications.

Shareware

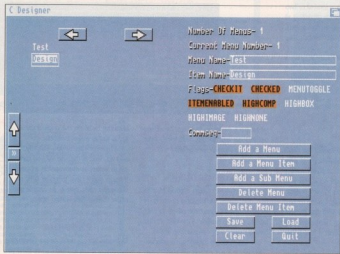
FastCat is a shareware program. If you use it, you should register as a user by sending £5 to:

Andrew Biddisale
4 Corlett Court
Fowwood
York YO2 3LR

Printing

If one of the two machines connected using *FastCat* has a printer attached, the other machine can direct text files to it by sending a file to the printer as selected in the preferences menu. The default is *RAM:SPRT*, and when a file is sent and renamed as this filename, it will be spotted by the other machine's *FastCat* and printed.

There is an option to print a banner and user name with each file so that you can keep track of who's printing what, and form feeds can also be specified between the file and the banner. The printing option really does work a treat.



CDesigner

Author: Nicholas Dyon
CDesigner is a program designed to take the drudgery out of creating screens, windows and menus in C. Using CDesigner, the C programmer need only decide on a menu, screen, or window's make-up, using an intuition-based front end, and the program will generate an ASCII text file containing the code for the specified object ready for inclusion in another C program.

Window dressing

Non-programmers can skip to the next utility as CDesigner will be of no use to you. Those of you still reading should

have little need of instructions, but a quick run through the program's features wouldn't go amiss.

The window designer section has a full list of flags, including IDCMP flags, any of which can be selected by clicking on them. The window's MinWidth and so on can be set using the dialogue boxes at the bottom of the screen, and its screen format is selectable by clicking on the resize button.

When a resolution is selected, the screen changes to show your window complete with drag bar and resize gadget. The window's dimensions are shown in the box in the top left corner of the screen.

To change its size or location, use the drag bar and resize gadget until you're satisfied it is the correct size, then hit the close button to generate the C source code and save it to disk. Simple as that.

Screens

To design a screen, go to the screen designer - no kidding! Here you will be asked to decide on your view

mode, screen type, depth, and so on. This is the least complex part of the program and needs no explaining.

Menus are just as easy to design. The menu designer allows you to add menus, menu items and sub-menus by clicking on the buttons to the right of your design area.

Each menu is displayed as you fill it out, and you can jump between menus and sub-menus using the buttons to the left and above where the menu appears.

Two versions

You can't attach actions to the menu items, but all the usual flags are available, and you can at least see what the menu will look like when displayed. Again, clicking Save will preserve your menu's code on disk.

Note that when you save a file from CDesigner, it will actually save two versions. The second version will have the file extension .TOK and will be a tokenised binary file, which you can load back into CDesigner at a later date.

How to use the Disk

First of all, you must make a backup copy of the CoverDisk. To do this, boot up with your copy of Workbench, then double click on the Workbench disk icon, followed by the Shell or CLI icon. Now type:

DISKCOPY FROM DF0: TO DF0:

or, if you have an extra disk drive, put a blank, formatted disk in DF1: and type:

DISKCOPY FROM DF0: TO DF1:

Follow the onscreen prompts until the copying procedure has ended, then put your original disk away in a safe place. Now switch off the machine and wait for 30 seconds before rebooting with the copy. Wait until the CoverDisk icon appears, double click on it and away you go.

That's all you need to do to make a straight copy of the entire disk.

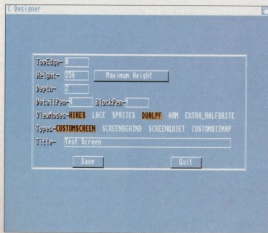
However, you may also want to copy individual programs from your copy of the CoverDisk to a separate disk. In this case ensure that you fully understand which related files need to go with it.

For example, all of the document files on the disk require that the text editor PPMore is in the current disk's C: directory. Therefore, if you copy the docs to a new disk you will also have to copy PPMore to the new C: directory before you can read them.

Some of the smaller docs will not have been crunched, so for these you need only change the tool types on the icon's info screen to reflect whichever text editor you do have on the new disk.

As a general rule, you should carefully read the documentation for any program you copy from disk to disk.

This can save a great deal of messing about and can help you avoid all those infuriating error messages!



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DiskCat

Author: Chris Krivitski

A godsend for anyone with a large collection of disks, DiskCat will enable the rapid location of the smallest file hidden away on disk fifty in your collection. Simply itself to use and with a fast search routine, DiskCat will be of use to all Amiga owners.

The program works by building up a catalogue disk with an entry for every disk in your collection. Entries are stored in the form of an ASCII file containing a list of every program on a disk, and can be scanned by DiskCat to find the file you're interested in. When DiskCat finds your selection, you will be told on what disk it was located so that you may load up the disk.

Cat building

To build a catalogue of disks, simply run DiskCat, click on Add Record, and insert the first disk into your internal drive. When DiskCat has finished scanning the disk, you will be asked for a filename under which to save the record.

This is the entry for the disk you've just scanned, so it should be saved with a sensible name. There is a sample entry on the CoverDisk called CD27.DSCT. CD27 stands for CoverDisk 27, and the suffix DSCT is the standard file identifier added by



DiskCat so it can recognise its entries. After each save, you will be asked whether or not you want to scan another disk. By replying in the affirmative, you can carry on in this way until your entire collection of PD disks is catalogued.

Your catalogue has to be recorded onto one floppy disk, but as there is room on a single floppy for at least 500 entries this won't be a problem for most users.

To search for a file, click on the Search button. You will be asked to insert your catalogue disk in d0, and then whether you want an exact or approximate match. If you specify approximate match, DiskCat will find all occurrences of the string you ask it to search for along with any that are fairly close. An exact search will find the string you've typed and nothing else.

With options to view a disk's entry, then print it, or delete any record from your catalogue, DiskCat offers an ideal opportunity for confused users to make some sense out of their disk collection.

ShortCut v1.2

Author: Michael Bradley

This is a new version of the ShortCut program we gave away a couple of disks ago and which we now use on the CoverDisk. It allows users to set up their own menus for running programs and carrying out DOS functions.

Version 1.2 now has support for up to four menus rather than the single menu provided by the original program. In addition there is a version on the disk called ShortCut.Extra which has no keyboard short cuts, thus enabling longer menu item names and getting rid of the clutter of all those little Amiga key signs.

Extra items

Using ShortCut with keyboard short cuts, you can have a maximum of only 26 menu items before you run out of hot key combinations (there are only 26 letters in the alphabet, after all). The ShortCut.Extra program can accept up to 100 menu items, and is probably a better option for users with large hard drives full of programs.

Full instructions for setting up the menus are included in ShortCut's doc file.

Faulty Disk?

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MineSweeper

Author: Adam Lock

MineSweeper is puzzle game in which you attempt to clear a screen of squares without blowing yourself to bits by clicking on a square containing a mine. The idea is simple but the game can be ideal for whiling away the odd half hour, especially as it will work over your Workbench screen.

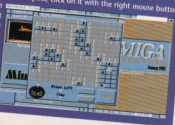
To play, select the difficulty level and size of screen to play on. The more difficult you set the level, the more mines you will find are hidden in the grid. There are two sizes of screen, but I'd advise you start on the smaller one rather than the full-screen sized version.

Danger signals

When a square is clicked on, one of two things will happen. Either you'll be blown sky high, complete with sound effects, or you will find a square with a number in it.

The number indicates how many of the eight squares bordering the one you've clicked have a mine in them. It won't, of course, tell you which is the which squares are likely to contain mines.

Once a square has become suspect, click on it with the right mouse button to mark it as a mine square, then leave it alone. If you find you're left with nothing but a lot of suspect squares at the end of the game and still haven't won, it's time to go back and click on the least suspect squares.



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Let's get one thing straight from the start - I'm not aurally talented. My mother delights in teasing elderly relatives that I was musical from an early age. This only leaves me to presume that the key fell out at some stage.

Microdeal claim that Stereo Master is so easy to use that anyone with an Amiga, no matter how limited their musical ability, can have some fun with it. We will see...

The Stereo Master packaging is about the same size as a high-end game box. Lifting the lid reveals a single floppy, a 40-page manual, a mini-jack lead and, most interestingly as far as I am concerned, a vanilla lump of plastic with a D-connector on one side and a mini-jack socket on the other.

A quick flick through the manual confirms my suspicion that the intriguing vanilla brick is in fact the sampler. This device connects to the Amiga via the printer port. The hardware chain is then completed by hooking up an audio source using the supplied 3.5in mini-jack lead.

After performing the four AmigaDOS commands required to install Stereo Master on to my hard disk the fun really begins. Ease of use has obviously figured highly on Microdeal's list of priorities. A brisk double click on the Stereo Master icon reveals the program's title screen. Click once more to be presented with a

screen comprising four display windows and numerous shiny buttons and counters.

Stereo Master boots up in sampler mode. This is the software module required to capture or "sample" chunks of sound into the Amiga's memory.

There are many different parameters which dictate how your audio input will be sampled. Choose to use the settings Stereo Master loads with and it will sample in stereo at 14.4KHz. If you have never used a sampler before you are well advised to trust the defaults initially.

Sampling

The first thing to do before you attempt to sample anything is set the source input volume level. According to the manual this is achieved by comparing the two onscreen scopes (left and right) with diagrams representing too low, too high and just right.

The scopes analyse the audio input and translate it into a waveform, updated in real time. It's a shame that Stereo Master doesn't feature needle-style PPM or VU meters - I think beginners would find these easier to deal with.

In reality, unless you can input a constant source, like a 1KHz tone, level setting with scopes is more trial than error. During my play with the system I found switching on the "monitor" option was



Bottom gallery 1 - But the many sophisticated features are simple to use

the best way to set levels. This facility pumps the source input straight through the Amiga and out through the monitor speakers.

If your source level is too low you will hear lots of background hum - if it is too high there will be noticeable distortion and clipping.

There is no way to attenuate the volume within Stereo Master. Instead you must connect the input lead to a source with variable volume. A fixed "line out"

will usually be way too loud for the sampler but a variable output headphone socket will be ideal.

Right, you're wired for sound, the input level is set just right and you've got your favourite Oceanic single in the CD player ready to zap it into the Amiga... what now?

Well, it's as easy as pressing a button cunningly marked (REC)ord. Hardly an alien concept I think you will agree. The only problem is that you have to either press the CD player Play button and the Rec button simultaneously or start one before the other. Long arms and good co-ordination are obviously needed!

However, Using the Auto function, it's possible to set a volume threshold to trigger sample recording. This means that Stereo Master listens to the input and as soon as it hears something loud enough it will spring into action.

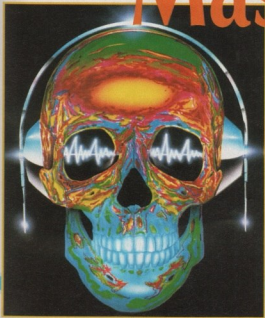
Memory

Sample length is regulated by how much memory there is under your Amiga's bonnet. My 2000 has 3Mb of RAM, which Stereo Master divides up between its sampler and sequencer modules. The program uses the largest available block of fast RAM available to store and manipulate samples, which on my setup is 2Mb.

That sort of storage allows me just over 60 seconds of high quality stereo sampling. Don't panic if you have an unexpended Amiga with no fast RAM. The program will simply grab half of the largest area of available chip memory. It is also possible to configure the system to dedicate more memory to sampling - at the cost of the sequencer. Sixty seconds doesn't seem like a very long time, but the art of sampling is to join lots of small samples together. This is called sequencing, of which more later.

So, assuming you have just sampled

The Master mix



Eddie
McKendrick
samples the
latest version of
Microdeal's
audio package

a substantial chunk of Jason Donovan into your Amiga, it's only natural that you will want to mutilate it beyond all recognition. This is where Stereo Master really scores!

On completion of sampling the two channel monitors at the top of the work screen will resemble something straight out of *Casualty*. In reality you are staring at the sample in all its glory. The peaky bits are loud passages and the straight lines in the middle are quiet interludes.

Below the channel monitors there is a VCR style panel of buttons. Clicking on the play arrow will result in your sample being played back. If you sampled at 14.4K it should sound just as good as the original. If it doesn't, check your input level.

As the sample plays you will see a line travelling across the channel monitor windows. This is a graphic indication of which part of the sample is being played.

By adjusting the position of two blue lines or cursors within your sample, it is possible to restrict the area of audio you are working on. Simply pick the cursors up and position one at the start point and the other at the end point of the passage you are interested in. This is useful for picking out a particular word or beat.

Clicking on the magnifying glass icon will zoom in on the area of sample between the two cursors. Pressing the play arrow will cause the section of sample you have highlighted to be played.

Editing

The real fun of sampling comes in the editing. Using Stereo Master it is possible to do almost anything to a passage of audio.

For example, with a single mouse click you can play the sample backwards with Reverse, Fade In or Out, change its volume, or remove and insert sections at will with Cut and Paste.

It's even possible to put a sample on top of another one using Overlay. Interesting effects are also obtained by

switching left and right channels using the Swap function. There are a number of other editing functions designed to make samples more manageable. These include the ability to compress a sample. Put crudely, compression will result in a sample being squeezed so it takes up less space. The program allows samples to be shrunk by up to 75 per cent.

Obviously the compressed samples aren't anywhere near as good as normal ones, but for drum rhythms and the like it's not really an unbearable hardship.

Samples can be saved in a number of formats including raw and IFF. Stereo Master also has a unique "executable" file format. Save your sample like this and the program will attach an icon to it (as well as several K). Playing is then a simple matter of double clicking or typing the sample name from Ctrl-Idol for putting that personal touch into your startup sequence.

The sequencer

There are hours of fun to be had swapping, mixing, flipping and generally mangling your samples with Stereo Master. Eventually though, the time will come to move onto the built-in sequencer module.

The sequencer allows you to assign your samples to keys on the Amiga's numeric keypad. It is then possible to octave shift them, loop them and play them in any order – a bit like a primitive synth.

The mechanics of the sequencer are very similar to the sampler module. Basically you can load a sample into each of the keypad's 18 keys, bang the Record key and make like Harold Faltermeyer.

One of the most fun features of the sequencer is Text mode where you can happily bang keys and listen to the result in real time. Nothing is recorded, allowing you time to perfect any complex arrangements.

As well as playing a sequence in real time it is possible to insert and delete specific events. This is handy for getting rid of a misplaced beat or adding a touch more "oomph" to your exploits.

As you would expect, it is possible to load and save sequences at will. You



Real time spectral effects provide hours of fun

won't reach the credibility of the Pet Shop Boys in a hurry, but you might have more fun along the way.

These days every program has to offer lots of twiddly bits before it can be considered special. Well, Stereo Master must be extra special if its built-ons are anything to judge it by.

A large section of the program suite is dedicated to an easy to use real time spectral effects generator. Stereo Master will take your input source and manipulate it any of a number of ways.

You can add echo or reverb. You can even inflict ramp, pitch changes, stereo panning, multi-echos (good for British Rail tannoy simulation), chorus, phaser, reverse or plain old pitch bend to your unsuspecting source. It is even possible to customise these effects to introduce your own type of controlled distortion.

Cheap and easy

These sort of effects are by no means new. However, professional units of the past cost a fortune and needed a rocket scientist mentality to get the best out of them.

Stereo Master's special effects generator scores massive fluffy dice points and it might even have proven genuinely useful if it was possible to record the output of the effects system as a sample.

As it stands, you can listen to Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch with pitch change and multi-echo, but you can't record this musical milestone for posterity (or to release as a Colour Me Badd single). It is truly mystifying that Microdeal didn't think of allowing FX to be triggered during sampling!

The ashtray on a motorbike syndrome doesn't finish there – Stereo Master has another breathtaking ace up its sleeve.

The program's fast fourier transform facility will convert your sample data into a fractal rendition of the Himalayas. Don't get me wrong – I'm not complaining, I'm a self-confessed twiddler at heart and the more weird and wonderful features the better! This facility would be something very special if it updated in real time. As it is, it updates eventually rather than continuously.

Stereo Master also has two built-in high resolution spectrum analysers. Very therapeutic to look at in a dark room. The only problem here is that it is not possible to hear the sound and see the analysers simultaneously. Again, baffling.

Conclusion

I approached Stereo Master as a novice and a cynic. I can honestly say that within a few short hours I lost the novice badge.

I think Stereo Master is an utterly superb product for anyone remotely interested in getting the most out of their Amiga's sound capabilities. Even if you think you're not interested in audio, Stereo Master could be the package to convert you.

I have a few reservations and gripes, most of which I have dealt with in this review. The most irritating memory Stereo Master will leave me with is that the audio cable Microdeal supply is only a third of a metre long. It could do with being around 10 times that length – that way you wouldn't have to totally rearrange your hi-fi to hook it up to the Amiga. This really is a minor point, though.

Stereo Master is a complete digital recording studio and sequencer for less than the price of some games. If you have an Amiga, something with a headphone socket and even the slightest tingle of a musical bone in your body – buy it.

BOTH AVAILABLE
Stereo Master is a product of
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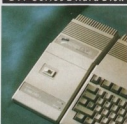
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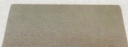
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As promised in last month's 24-bit extravaganza, I'm taking a closer look at the huge range of added extras that come with the IV-24, plus some inside information on G2's all new Sally board which promises to revolutionise high-end video with live effects of, as yet, unequalled quality.

We'll start with the IV-24 and its impressive range of on-board features and, of course, those external software additions which make the board very hard to beat, especially if you're in the market for an all-in-one multimedia workstation.

After eagerly snatching your latest investment from the sweaty palms of the local postie, what awaits within the

shrink wrapping and multicoloured polystyrene?

First comes the board itself and the essential selection of connections, all of which converge on a single port to the board's rear. We'll take a closer look at the available input and output combinations later, but for now it's safe to say that no matter what your setup the board should happily marry up with your hardware.

Controlling the beast

All the glamorous hardware and attendant software is very nice but it needs to be kept in hand, and that's where the IVCP software comes into its own.

There are also separate utilities for the management of Picture In Picture (PIP) display and for handling the board's built-in grabbing abilities.

The above can be invoked via either the CLI or WorkBench, so purists and beginners alike should be quite at home. If you do see yourself as something of an aficionado, there are some extra morsels lurking in the command line.

These hidden tools include options to activate the frame grabber mode, read the IV-24's registers, control the PIP option and load and save both 12- and 24-bit images.

Perhaps the most useful and important of the lot is the IVCO. This is where all the major image and hardware management happens. After clicking on the icon, the screen fills with a control panel which allows you to calibrate the card, switch between RGB and composite modes, and leap instantly from either full video or overlay.

Aside from the mode commands, it's also possible to adjust more subtle

parameters such as contrast or perhaps the balance of red, blue and green within the RGB output of the board.

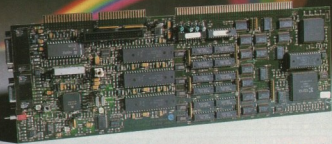
If that's not enough there are also options to adjust the composite phase and keyer.

The hard facts...

We've looked at the software and mentioned how to control the beast, but what's under the bonnet?

Perhaps the most important question to ask of any board is whether it is capable of any pixel, any colour. If the

Will GVP's IV-24 take over the world of multimedia or could aunt Sally save the day with her real-time 24-bit effects and animation?



Impact Vision 24 and the secrets of Sally



answer is "yes", as in this case, you know you're dealing with a serious piece of equipment.

The next essential query concerns the resolution, and again the IV-24 answers respectably thanks to a maximum resolution of 768 x 576.

If this doesn't mean an awful lot, it translates in real terms to a performance well above that required for video applications, but not quite in the same league as power 32-bit boards such as the Harlequin. As opposed to

many of its competitors, resolution and available screen colours are only the start of what awaits within the silicon and solder of the board.

The IV-24 can only hold one 24-bit image at a time, but this can be expanded if you're willing to make a sacrifice and opt for two 12-bit images.

Plumbing it in...

Installation is simplicity itself, especially if you're the proud owner of a 3000, as it's fairly obvious that the product was designed with the 3000 in mind. This isn't to say that the 2000 is neglected, but it will take a bit more messing around during installation.

On the 3000, installation simply means slipping the card into the top slot on the machine, complete with in-line connectors for both the Zorro and video slots. Luckily for the majority of users, however, the designers have avoided the temptation to go for the Zorro III connection and instead plumped for the good, old-fashioned Zorro II.

This still leaves us with the rather tricky problem of connecting the board to the 2000's video slot. This is where the fun starts – if you follow the instructions to the letter it means completely removing the drive bay and feeding the connecting cable and video slot adaptor underneath and into the video slot.

If you're anything like me you won't bother and will instead plump for the lazy approach of placing the board in the closest Zorro and traipsing the connector over the drive bay. This means being a little more careful when removing and replacing the casing but it doesn't really cause too much hassle.

Installing on a 2000 effectively means the end of the video slot, but that isn't quite as bad as it sounds. If you're already the owner of a flicker fixer or perhaps an internal genlock it isn't the best news in the world, but on the plus side, the IV-24 already gives flicker free display in all modes and has its own built-in genlock plus control software. Now doesn't that make the sacrifice a little more acceptable?

The only real problems will arise if and when NewTek's toaster final crosses the pond. Unfortunately this also requires the video slot, so in the meantime it could be worth looking around for a second-hand 2000 or alternatively a decent set of screwdrivers...

As a result you'll have the option of employing some simple page flipping effects which will still appear in the same resolution as the 24-bit alternative.

Employing 12-bit images as opposed to 24-bit means you're limited to 4,096 colours, but unlike Ham (Hold And Modify) these are all true colours. Having made the necessary sacrifice, you're still a long way from animation, but at least it's a start.

Free flicker fixing

Now this little chestnut is by far my favourite freebie available with the board. Because the IV-24 occupies the video slot and provides a constant de-interlaced signal to any multisync, flickering is a thing of the past.

As a result, anyone who already owns a flicker fixer may soon have a derelict piece of plastic on their hands, while those less well endowed might just save themselves a tidy sum.

As long as you leave the board active

and pass the output from the Amiga through it, all your applications will benefit from rock solid, flicker free, interlaced output – providing you're using a multisync of course.

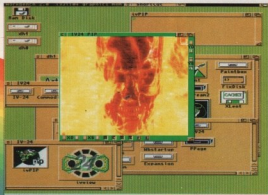
Locking and keying

As well as flicker free video, the board also has some very impressive video keying and genlocking capabilities. It can import both composite and RGB signals, but it's the latter that adds the real power to the package.

Besides importing, the IV-24 can also output to either composite, RGB or Y/C (S-VHS) formats.

As a result you can use either a standard monitor or multisync to display the incoming video signal, while simultaneously overlaying Amiga generated graphics.

The Y/C option is good news for all those lucky souls who've been able to afford S-VHS hardware. Having said that, if you want to perform Luma or



Picture in Picture bringing a new dimension to messing about with Workbench

chroma keying you'll still require an external key generator.

The board comes into its own when an RGB source is applied. Unfortunately, as you're probably all too aware, hardware which supplies an RGB signal direct is far from cheap and in most cases it's well beyond the abilities of consumer VCRs and camcorders even in the high-end S-VHS bracket.

For most of us this will mean an extra investment in the form of a composite/S-VHS to RGB signal converter. Admittedly this is a bit of a pain but if you want the best from the board it's a sacrifice you'll have to make.

The first major benefit of an RGB input is the ability to frame grab in real-time. This option is a must for anyone serious about using the board to its full potential. An instant snapshot in the full glory of 24-bit colour is just too good to miss, even if it adds a bit more to the bill.

The second advantage of RGB is that

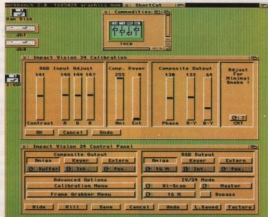
it allows you access to the PIP – or Picture in Picture – display. This impressive trick splits the output from the board into two 12-bit signals – one for the incoming video and one for the normal Amiga output.

Once separated the rescalable video display appears in a Workbench window which can be moved or resized at will, and yet still retains the live video source locked within its boundaries.

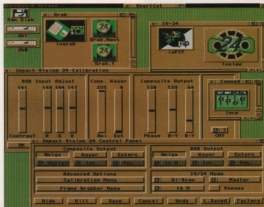
If you find a particular point of interest, it can be frozen instantly for closer examination. It's even possible to view the PIP image from screens other than Workbench, as it remains constantly visible while active.

Whenever the PIP output is used on another screen, the exterior Workbench window and control gadgets are stripped off. As a result, the incoming video single is left as a clean rectangle which appears to float above a background of Amiga graphics.

PIP has obvious attractions for multimedia and educational applications,



IV-24's commodity and calibration software. Making short work of organising the board's output



All the IV24's control software, just itching to get hold of a video signal

► and several software manufacturers are already planning to exploit this feature in their forthcoming releases.

With any video graphics package there's the sometimes thorny problem of synchronising both the computer and video signals. Fortunately the IV-24 doesn't suffer at all in this department and appears to be more than happy working with any incoming signal. This means that there is no need to invest in a time base corrector or TBC, although

Overlaid on designer backdrops or genlocked over a video source – the choice is yours

for professional systems it's recommended.

All in all, I think the board and the added software speak for themselves. I'm not totally impressed with the slightly misleading way in which the additional software is marketed – most of it is no more than stripped-down versions of the original titles.

However, when you look at the package as a whole there's nothing that comes remotely close in terms of flexibility and value for money. As I mentioned last month, we could well be looking at an industry standard in the making.

Price: £1799, plus £49.95 for the A2000 adaptor card (Both including VAT)

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Buckets of bundles

Aside from the various capabilities of the board, its biggest selling point is perhaps the addition of an impressive range of software, which goes a long way to substantiating GVP's claim that IV-24 is the all-singing, all-dancing answer to any multimedia dilemma.

At first glance the ultimate bargain in the bundle has to be Caligari. In its full version it is one of the most expensive software packages for the machine, with a new asking price of over £2,000. Its inclusion with IV-24 means that you're effectively getting the board for nothing.

Unfortunately that isn't quite the case, as the IV-24 version is severely cut down. The most noticeable omissions include the lack of any point editing, no animation module and no option to create cubic environment maps – although it's still possible to load them from the broadcast version. Perhaps the worst limitation of all is that only a single light source can be applied within any environment.

Having highlighted the black spots, it is perhaps worth remembering that the heart of the system still remains intact and it is just as easy and enjoyable to use as its bigger brother. If you need smooth and stylish 24-bit 3D imagery, it's a good starting point, although you can imagine how your inspiration can be slightly stifled by the software's constraints.

Believe it or not Octree, the authors of Caligari, are offering an upgrade to IV-24 users which will knock an – as yet undecided – figure off the price of the broadcast version. It will, of course, still work hand in hand with the board.

To maintain the high profile GVP have added yet another giant of the software world, namely Scala. Over the last year Scala and its opponent Broadcast Tiler II have become the ones to beat for anybody after high gloss titling and interactive presentation.

Like its partner Caligari, Scala also suffers from the effects of some rather drastic surgery. All the interactive elements of the original program have been removed, so in effect you're left with what is basically a glossy video tiler.

As well as the lack of interactive buttons, a fair few wipes and fades have also been scrapped in both the text and page transition departments. But perhaps the biggest disappointment is the omission of all but a handful of Scala's excellent fonts.

If you're not the proud owner of a large variety of fonts and suitable images, this could severely limit the potential of the package. Again, having mentioned the faults it's perhaps worth remembering that the software still operates with all the style and panache of the full package even with the fairly harsh restraints imposed on its flexibility.

Unlike Caligari, Scala is not designed to work with the 24-bit output of the board, at least not in its present form. Instead it's employed as a slick titling system which works solely in the IV-24's overlay mode.

Although the lack of 24-bit support is a little annoying, if perhaps predictable, it does mean that you could use your new shrunken Scala without the board as a display package or tiler in its own right.

Lastly comes Macro Paint which regular readers will know all about thanks to last month's head to head with G2's Imagic. If you missed it, it's perhaps best described as a nice addition to the bundle, but certainly not the best package to appear on the machine.

Late news

Those slaves to technology at G2 are just about putting the finishing touches to their latest creation, namely the high-end successor to the VD2001 – the VD2020.

It boasts full 32-bit spec and, perhaps most important of all, the super-quick Texas 34020 graphics processor.

The new board sports 768 x 574 resolution with a programmable key channel that will interface directly with G2's VC3 giving access to literally every format on the planet, plus broadcast quality linear keying.

Software support will add page turns and other special effects, all of which will run in real-time via the Sally board. An updated version of the original Imagic paint is on the way, and provision has been made for a local SCSI port. This means that an on-board hard drive or perhaps an external optical could access the video RAM directly, and hopefully enhance the performance of Sally.

The board should be available in about a month at a retail price of around £2,500. For further details on either the VD2001, VS2001, Sally or the new VD2020 contact G2 systems on 0252 737147.

The secrets of Sally

What exactly is this rather strangely little piece of hardware? What can it do? Well Sally is quite simply a huge cache of memory of variable size. In her largest form she can comprise of a full 100Mb of 32-bit memory, which can be accessed directly from G2's VD2001.

With this much muscle the unthinkable is possible, namely real-time 24-bit animation and effects. With the complete 100 megabytes on-board, aunt Sally can display up to 8.8 seconds of non-interlaced full frame 24-bit graphics or 4.4 seconds if interlace is added.

The imagery can either come direct from a 3D rendering package via the VD2001 or alternatively in the form of live video, again supplied from the VD2001, but this time routed through the Imagic paint package with its built-in real-time frame grabber.

Once your animation or live video is held within the board, individual frames can be edited via an additional soft-

ware module which works in conjunction with Imagic.

The frames of your choice can be cast, pasted, duplicated and erased as required to achieve the perfect finish to the animation. As you've probably guessed, a 100Mb memory cache doesn't come cheap – you won't get much change from £10,000.

Even in it's most minimal configuration, the board will still set you back a staggering £5,000 for just three seconds of animation.

The input signal to the VD2001 is, as you might expect, the industry standard – RGB – and if you require a splitter, G2 will happily provide you with their own VS2001 for what, after Sally, seems a paltry sum of £285.

Output from the card is again RGB. As well as standard display the card will key graphics internally over the incoming signal from the frame grabber which, of course, is fully genlocked.

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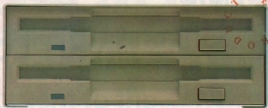
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ISSUE FOUR ■ JANUARY 1992

GAMER



NEWS...CHARTS...PREVIEWS...CHEATS

TARMAC TORMENT
FROM MICROPROSE

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX

MOONSTONE

A HARD DAYS KNIGHT

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POSTER
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SO MUCH FUN
-YOU'LL DIE!

Moonstone - a remarkable combination of fast, aggressive combat action and subtle role-play set in a fantasy world, that uniquely challenges your brain and your reflexes - while covering you in gore.

Oh, by the way, if the sight of so much blood upsets you, don't worry. The blood is an option!

Moonstone features nearly 1,000 frames of incredible animation in 2 Megabytes of monsters and creatures, over 60 beautifully painted backdrops and detailed scenery. Sound effects are high quality digital samples and includes a full musical score and stunning full screen animated introductory and game complete sequences.



Moonstone contains scenes of strong graphic imagery with particular realism. Although these scenes are optional, this product is voluntarily rated 12. Parental Guidance is recommended for younger players. However this is not a legal requirement.

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MINDSCAPE

GAMER *inner* VISION

So here it is - Merry Christmas

REVIEWS

FAST • FRANK • FAIR

ALIEN BREED.....6

Nothing to do with Aliens or Gauntlet. Oh no! Not this one, no sir!

SEVEN COLOURS.....8

Strategic puzzling in a Dorothy and Toto kind of way

FIRST SAMURAI.....10

Muscles and swordplay, and all because the Sushi wasn't cooked

SUPER SPACE INVADERS.....13

A new twist to an old theme, or an old twist to a new theme. Or something

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX...14

Flame suits and tyre-warmers akimbo in this ace simulation

THE BLUES BROTHERS.....18

They're putting the band back together but for some reason it involves a platform game (?)

SILENT SERVICE II.....18

Run silent, run deep, run scared witless, as the captain of the HMS Microprose submarine

HEIMDALL.....22

Rape, pillage, plunder and all that entrepreneurial stuff

ROBOCOD.....24

James Pond returns as a fish with an iron lung

MICROPROSE GOLF...28

More of a driving game than you might think (ha ha)

REGULARS

onword 4

More Amiga games news than you could possibly shake a stick, nay a branch, nay a whole tree at!

And Gamer tells you everything you need to know about life, the universe and the games industry.

talking shop 16

The Gallup Top 40 Amiga games chart plus some ill-informed waffle from Jools (well actually he's quite good but if you tell him he gets a bit carried away)

cheat mode 30

No friends because you can't play games? Is your washing not as white as it should be? Gamer has the answer, with added HakPak!

ONword

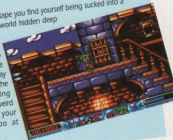
What's hot and what's not. Gamer spills the beans on the latest from the Amiga games scene

VIDEOKID - Gremlin

In Videokid [sic] you play the part of one of those sad teenagers who watches little bit television, and to say you were chuffed when your folks bought a brand new video would be an understatement akin to saying Stalin wasn't a nice man.

As you sit down to watch a tape you find yourself being sucked into a five level arcade shoot-em-up world hidden deep inside your state-of-the-art video [these lads eh].

Any road, you have no choice but to pick up those power-ups and blast your way through five time zones to the relative safety of your living room. Look out for some weird graphics when it comes your way just before Crimbo at £25.99.



TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES II - Image Works

April's been kidnapped and languishes at the top of a burning building. Pizza Hut has gone bankrupt and the world fuel shortage means that no one can afford to deliver.

This is how the coin-op starts (except that I lied about the last two bits), throwing Michaelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael and the other one into a heady world of flames, huge cannon-balls, masked men and anviches as they try to rescue April from the clutches of lots of evil Chinamen.

Developed by Probe, the 16-bit conversion follows the plot and gameplay of the original arcade machine to the letter. Hopefully, for Image Works at least, it can emulate the success of the original.



They're mean, they're green and they're back!

Can the Turtles defeat Shredder and his evil foot clan again?



SPACE CRUSADE - Gremlin

A year after the board game success of Hero-Quest, Milton Bradley came up with the more advanced, hi-tech board game, Space Crusade. Gremlin, having done a fine job on Hero-Quest, quickly signed up to do the biz on its successor.

You have enlisted in the Space Marines and it is up to you and your men to face up to the forces of Chaos as they try to take command of the floating space hulks tumbling through space.

If they gain control and use the space hulks to attack the Earth things could start getting sticky. Only the Marines are capable of facing up to the menace that confronts them aboard these abandoned vessels.

Success will bring honour from on high as your career progresses during the course of the computer missions - failure will bring ignominy and pain, and small children will laugh at you in the street.

Available before Christmas at £25.99.



ACTION PACK - Action Sixteen

Coming out on the Action Sixteen label is a new compilation called the Action Pack. It features ten so-called "classics" from the dim and distant past of the last few years of 16-bit games. They all seem to have received fairly high ratings, but mainly from mags I've never heard of [there's one there called Amiga Computing!]. Mind you, Hostages is there which is pretty fine and so, by all accounts, is Rotor. Even then, 10 games for £27 sounds like good value to me.

Available now at £26.99.

MIG-29 Superfulcrum - Domark

Hot on the heels (well a year since) the original MIG-29 sim from Domark comes the sim of the sequel to the original plane. MIG-29 Superfulcrum is the updated version with cockpit technology more akin to the 80s than the 60s and featuring a modified airframe to make you even more invincible in a dogfight.

You fly as a crack Soviet pilot embroiled in an ongoing campaign against an unnamed enemy as you defend a friendly South American nation from attack.

Drugs have nothing to do with it.



RUGBY - THE WORLD CUP - Domark

Stuff the Aussies. That's what I say. If you feel the need to relieve the embarrassment of losing in the World Cup to the nation that produces Home and Away then this is the game for you. Described by some as the trouser-droppers' equivalent to Kick-Off it is available now at £25.99 from Domark.



Knightmare



"You are setting forth into another place, another time, another world," said Treguard, The Dungeon Master. "And what makes you think that you four mere mortals will succeed in the Quest when so many others have failed?"

I understood, at that moment, that our mission was going to take all our endurance, all our collective skill, and, most of all a depth of courage, that I wasn't sure we possessed.

Ever since ITV's award-winning series hit our screens, the world has been waiting for a computer game worthy of the name. The wait is over.

Tony Crowther's amazing re-creation has everything.

Using the same game system that made 'Captive' adventure game of the year for 1990, 'Knightmare' makes dungeons and dragons games seem like hewts splashing around in a muddy puddle.

'Knightmare' is a sophisticated role-playing adventure where you are

challenged to solve complex puzzles, logic problems and riddles that reveal a rich, ever-more rewarding storyline.

Your journey takes you deep into the dungeons of Dunsheim, to a cataclysmic meeting with Lord Fear and the unthinkable horrible FrightKnight.

Whether or not the meeting is terminal is up to you. You will need wisdom, tenacity, alacrity and... above all, courage.

But you have all those things, don't you...?



Available for Amiga & Atari ST

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Game copyright 1991 Mindscape International Limited

Captive Copyright 1990, 1991 Mindscape International Limited, all rights reserved

Written by Tony Crowther

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A face to face confrontation with death

When contact was lost with the ISC-4 Space Research Centre, the big cheese at the Interplanetary Corps got a little bit jumpy. After all, they'd all seen Aliens at least twenty times and were starting to get an acute feeling of déjà vu. So, better safe than sorry, they rerouted two of their toughest marines from their earth-bound course to investigate.

Having their voyage home interrupted to check out some stupid Research Centre did nothing for Johnson and Stone's already violent temperament, and they docked with the station in a pretty grumpy mood.

Disembarking from the shuttle they were greeted not by a gaggle of bemused scientists, but by an eerie silence. They started to move into the tomb-like Research Centre, guns at the ready. Circuitry hung, torn from the walls, like entrails. An acid acidic stench hung in the air. The motion tracker started it's haunting beep.

"Blimey, this is just like Aliens isn't it?" commented Stone.

"Yes, our current situation is rather reminiscent of that cult sci-fi thriller,



Now look Stone, you either stop hiding up there, or I'll blow your lips off."

Shoulder your assault cannon and face the

ALIEN BREED

GREMLIN ■ £29.99 ■ 1 meg only ■ Joystick ■ Out now

directed by James Cameron of Terminator 2 fame, in which a handful of space marines investigate an abandoned colony and get eaten by slaverling, biomechanical creatures," replied Johnson.

"Like those slaverling, biomechanical creatures over there?" asked Stone, noticing the swarm of razor-toothed armoured killing machines scuttling towards them.

"Yes, those are the ones," Johnson called over his shoulder as he legged it back to the shuttle, a strange smell emanating from his trouser regions.

"Thought so, Urik," said Stone as the slaverling, biomechanical creatures tucked into their dinner.

Yes, boys and girls, Alien Breed is possibly, only possibly mind you, inspired by that top movie, Aliens. It's just the vibes I'm getting from the game. It's not just that the plot's the same, or that the alien graphics look identical to H.R. Giger's Alien design, or that the front cover of the game features a drooling likeness of said Alien.

No, it's just that I'm getting these little voices in my head whispering "Aliens, Aliens" over and over again while I'm playing it. In fact, I'm going to stick my neck out and declare that Alien Breed is blatantly Alien-esque. Probably.

Not that it's a bad thing to nick the idea behind Aliens for a game, 'cos all that skulking around and blowing smelly Aliens to pieces is bloody good fun. In fact, seeing as Activision made such a pig's ear of the official Aliens game, this could be just the ticket for all you gore-starved Alien-fans.

First of all, the presentation is excellent. You get the obligatory story disk featuring some nice cartoon stills and some pulsating ray traced space ships, but this is a standalone disk and needn't be set through every time you play the game. The story disk is good fun, but ultimately cosmetic as it tells you nothing that you couldn't read in the instructions. Nice touch though.

Once in the game proper, the emphasis is on atmosphere. The graph-

ics are nicely detailed and recreate the claustrophobia that's needed to keep the suspense going, but without restricting your movement. The alien sprites are, believe it or not, rather Alien-ish in appearance, as are the tiny face huggers that zip around and bite your ankles.

Keep your eyes open for the aliens who pluck through from lower levels and climb up through the floor. They may look great but they're a tad on the deadly side.

The graphics of the two marines are good as well, especially the way the blasts from their guns flicker over their faces. Rather than see the bullets fly across the screen, you just see the muzzle flash and the little explosions as the



The marines arrive in the derelict research centre, ready for action



Stone and Johnson. Martinez-Ruiz. RETURNING FROM A ROUTINE 30-MONTHS PAROL IN THE OUTER SPACE, NW.



The aliens at their heels, our heroes make a dash for the lift

bullets hit their target. This, while only a little touch, adds a great deal to the realism and the beefy gun FX make it hard to resist. Following lines from *Aliens* at the top of your voice as you rip into a corridor full of monsters.

Also included is some soft, sultry speech that calmly tells you that you're about to die, or that you've run out of ammo. Add a stonking tune, and you've got a package that's more attractive than a gift-wrapped Winona Ryder.

There are plenty of features to keep you busy while you try and stay alive. Each level has an objective which must be completed before you can move down to the next.

Level one is simply a case of making a dash for the lift from the shuttle, with the aliens at your heels, while level two requires you to destroy the reactor and escape before it blows.

Erm, that's as far as I can get actually, but I'm sure the other levels are just as button-tightening. To help you in your missions you can find keys, ammo, first aid, and credits lying around the corridors, and every now and then you'll discover an Inter-Terminal where you can log on for some info on the current level, buy new weapons, and tools, and even enjoy a quick game of bot and ball.

All is not roses though, as there are many hazards to avoid, as well as the aliens. One-way energy doors, uneven



Shoppers paradise! Arc Lazer Rifle anyone?

floors that slow you down and pools of acid are just a few of them. There are also emergency doors that slam shut if their control panels are destroyed, which can be used to your advantage, but can often leave you trapped.

Despite all the wonderful cosmetic bits, it's the gameplay that really shines through. Two-player mode is by far the best as it becomes a race to get to all the collectable goodies before your mate, and the race to the exit can become really frantic as you dive into the elevators with hordes of hungry aliens behind you.

If you're a thoroughly "nice" person then you can opt to share all the collected credits, so it needn't be the one who grabs all the cash who gets the best power-ups. Strictly for wimps of course, but it does make it easier to save up for the really bitchin' weapons.

The difficulty is set just right, with the

first level acting as a perfect introduction to the game. The second level is a lot harder, but unlike most other games of this genre, you won't get lost. Just playing the game is fun enough.

Firmly in the tradition of *Guardian* and *Crackdown*, but with the action and atmosphere of the *Alien* movies, *Alien Breed* is a game worth selling your family for. Tapes the "Breed" bit off the box and just pretend that it is *Aliens*. Buy it this instant.

Daniel



Things get frantic as the aliens gang up on the last surviving soldier

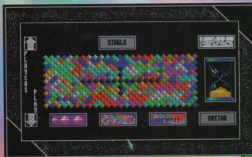
VISION
GGGG
Nicely detailed and dripping with molecular acid.

AUDIO
GGG
Nice speech, thundering FX.

PLAYABILITY
GGGG
Your chance to play at *Aliens*. Who could resist?

ADDITION
GGGG
Tense, explosive action all the way.

91%



From here, all your options can be exercised

In a chess-playing kind of way, 7 Colors [sic] is one of those abstract concepts that means next to nothing to just about everyone except the guy who invented it, and it only means anything to him when he's at the wrong end of eight pints of Gold Label.

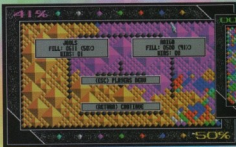
But if we choose to ignore the abstract comment on the all-consuming nature of today's society, in a patronising Open University kind of way, we can take the game on a superficial, mechanical level and look at it from that point of view.

The concept is simple – the board is made up of randomly distributed blocks of multicoloured diamonds, each of which is one of the seven colours. Starting from a point opposite your computer or human opponent you will be in possession of one diamond of one colour. Your first move will be to change your diamond to another colour, but not that of your opponent.

If you have chosen wisely a diamond of this chosen colour will be adjacent to the one you possess meaning that you now have two of one colour. There will be other diamonds of this colour but only the ones connected by a full face to your original diamond will be in your possession. And so you progress across the board by selecting colours that will add to your 'territory'.

Confused? You will be. On top of all this any diamonds of miscellaneous colours that become trapped by your diamonds will become diamonds of your colour.

With the overall aim being to capture over 50 per cent of the play area this strategy may suggest a plan of action that involves capturing a thin string of diamonds across the board so



The winner! Jools takes on the mighty processing power of the Amiga



It really is far more interesting than it looks



You even get the chance to completely design all your own levels

Strategically speaking it could be quite puzzling...

7 COLORS

INFOGRADES ■ £25.99 ■ ½ meg ■ Mouse ■ Out now

that when they meet the far edge of the play area, all the multi-coloured diamonds trapped by this 'string' will become yours.

The game is also timed in a see-saw manner – as your time drops your opponents builds up, so if you get really quick for a succession of moves then the situation may arise where your foe has little or no time to make a move.

But wait! There is even more to confuse you with. The game will also include barriers on some levels which you have to work around to conquer the areas you need, making it just that little bit more complex. The scoring sys-

tem is suitably confusing, in the usual communist way.

You begin with score of 300, and as you win or lose this score is adjusted and saved to disk after each game, until a league is established with various people who have come across your Amiga and decided to play 7 Colors. Unlikely yes, but a very New Age, love the neighbours kind of concept that could happen in the enlightened nineties.

Despite the apparent complexities that probably have you blithering into your coffee at this very moment it is at least seven dozen times easier to play than it is to describe, and enjoyable in that bizarre Infogrames kind of way that kept me engrossed with Alpha Waves for ages.

As you get more and more into it, working your way up through the levels against the computer, little strategies start emerging and it slowly becomes surprisingly addictive. Not 'keep you awake at night' addictive – but then those games suffer a very early burn out – but a 'casual relationship' addictive that will always be fresh when you come back to play it.

Well worth it purely to build up the collection and impress your mates.

Jools



OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS!TM THE DATA DISK



YOU'LL NEED YOUR ORIGINAL
LEMMINGS PROGRAM TO RUN
THIS DISK.

PSYCHOSIS

Bulging biceps and loose-fitting loon-pants in...

FIRST SAMURAI

IMAGE WORKS ■ £25.99 ■ ½ meg ■ Joystick ■ Out now

Deep in the tranquil countryside of ancient Japan, Lord Akira (who by a strange twist of fate has the same name as the teenage cult cartoon movie hero from the same part of the world) and his young Samurai were collecting taxes from the local peasants when they began to believe something was up. Yes, something was definitely up.

Now all you revolutionaries out there may be of the opinion that anybody who collects taxes from the villagers in a crypto-fascist kind of way deserves to die in the most painful way possible. Eaten alive by rats, that kind of thing. But this is no morality tale, no. What was up was this...

The Demon King had come down from the mountain, in a game show kind of way. This was not a nice man and he went on to prove this by burning the village with his magic powers, killing all the peasants, raping all the pigs and eating all the women, or something. You see? If this guy had been a real socialist revolutionary he wouldn't have wiped out the village.

Having wasted the village completely with one click of his horrendously gnarled fingers he turned his attention to the Warrior Lord. Then he killed him.

The young Samurai could do little against the evil magic of the Demon King - his master had not given him instruction in such things. Perhaps if he had things might be different. Fortunately, the Demon King spared the Samurai's life, realising he could be



of more use spreading the word about what happened on this black, black day. What a mistake.

The young Samurai knew he had to avenge the death of his master who had been like a father to him. Hearing of the victory of the Demon King, Wizard Mage (the good guy) returned from sea and fought a battle for the good people of the area.

Atop the mountain they fought, lightning, fire and explosives setting the night alight. The Demon King, being a bad guy and therefore a coward, feared defeat and disappeared into the future.

The people were now safe but the young Samurai knew that his soul could not rest until he had beaten the living crap of the Demon King, but he had to persuade Wizard Mage to help him. Only he could teach him the magic of time travel, and only he could teach him how to catch flies with chopsticks.

Prancing in front of a statue of Buddha is not to be recommended for the religious among you

After many years of training, the young Samurai was ready for the trek to the Japan of the 24th century, to capture the Demon King and bring him back to this land and time - where he can be sacrificed.

Ten levels of stylish beat-'em-up action ensue, with our hero making the most of the magical energy he can pick

up on the way to maximise his potential as a Samurai.

The hero has two power indicators shown, with other info, at the bottom of the screen. On the left is an arm, which when fully visible shows that physical strength is at maximum. Strength is lost when a hit is taken, and regenerated when food is picked up.

On the right is a sword which when fully shown means that spiritual strength is fully topped up, allowing certain actions to be performed. When spiritual





A flying leap to impress your spiritual leader

strength is low it means that the player loses the use of his sword until such time as the energy picked up by killing enemies replenishes the meter enough to warrant its return.

Other weapons can be picked up such as daggers, bombs, and grenades all of which have a very limited lifespan. The current one will be displayed just to the right of the physical strength bar.

The control method works extremely well. The usual fire and move is there but it is a side effect of the proper system. This works by the player holding the Fire button and moving the joystick to insinuate different moves. Either system is just as effective but the latter is the best. It gives great scope for fluking

together a series of moves in mid-air, knocking out a load of enemies coming from all directions, shoving, picking your nose and landing – in one piece.

All of this came about from a few waggles of the joystick and was completely unintentional, but it looks so smooth and flash that it would be dead easy to convince your mates otherwise.

On top of all this beating, hacking and slashing, certain objects must be collected to make sure the level is completed. These are called specials and are essentially a thanks to Wizard Mage for being such a decent bloke. They are often well hidden and a certain number must be found.

Another item essential to the completion of the levels is the bell. It can only be picked up if your spiritual energy is up to the required level. It may seem strange but as it is used to summon Wizard Mage, you need a bit of magic to do it. But why, I hear you call, do you need to summon him at all?

Well at certain points in the level an insurmountable obstacle will be encountered. The trick is to ring the bell and Wizard Mage will appear to work his magic so that the obstacle is overcome.

If you don't suss that this is what you have to do the first time you come across the problem, every next time you get there Wizard Mage's face will appear in a ghostly apparition kind of manner to hint at what's going on.

As you progress through the 10 levels the enemies become more aggressive and imaginative, until by the end of the game it becomes a real hassle to beat everything up and still fulfil the objectives – just how it should be.

The first thing that hits you about the game though, even before you get to the rather attractive gameplay, are the exceptionally gorgeous graphics. Ace backgrounds – they seem to have found about fifty more scan lines from somewhere – an excellent intro taken straight from Japanese porcelain, and detail in the levels and characters that matches anything else on the market. The sound is pretty fab as well. After the upbeat intro disk you come to the game and as soon as you make a move or hit something it becomes



Sword-swiping at the enemy in the Japanese countryside



The two whirling balls can be hit back at the offending nasty

clear how super-duper it actually is. As you hit an opponent an orchestral stab is released, with the next hit producing one of a slightly higher pitch. This gives a succession of hits a really epic, Gillette TV advert effect that really drives you on to strike out and be as effective as possible with your sword.

And if you get to the treasure or food, a resounding sample from the Hallelujah Chorus results, giving a real sense of achievement. This does get mired by a rather naff tune that fades in if you don't do anything for a few seconds. Clearly a big incentive to keep moving. Speech plays a part as well. If the hero loses his sword because of a lack of mystical energy he will cry "Oh no! My

Sword!" in a very Bruce Lee manner that befits the atmosphere. All of these aspects combine to make it highly addictive. An early demo was played to death by the advertising staff here, and it's well worth £26 of anyone's money. Especially if it's somebody else's.

Its style is far more frantic and action based than that of its main Christmas opponent from Psygnosis, whose emphasis is more on exploration and accuracy with movement than violence. That considered, it is probably the best scrolling beat-'em-up to appear on the Amiga – so far.

Jools

VISION
GGGGG
Charming sprites and terrific backgrounds.

AUDIO
GGGG
Superb effects but the tune runs a little slightly.

PLAYABILITY
GGGGG
Cripes! I knocked me socks off.

ADDICTION
GGGGG
That Demon King shouldn't nest because you certainly won't.

94%



ACTION PACK



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**COSMIC
PIRATE**
90% COMMODORE USER

ON SAFARI
81% - YOUR AMIGA



FASTLANE
90% - ST USER

HOSTAGES
89% ARCADE ACTION MONTHLY

ROTOR
90% AMIGA COMPUTING

ELIMINATOR
92% COMPUTER GAMES WEEK

SHERMAN M4
ACE RATING 925

TARGET
89% - YOUR AMIGA

MYA
85% MICRO MAG

**ATARI ST & AMIGA
£26.99**

COLORADO
84% C U AMIGA

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SENSATIONAL ACTION - SENSATIONAL PRICE

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Everybody knows just about all there is to know about Space Invaders. It is basically the game that launched a hundred clones, a thousand addicts and ten thousand petty thefts as kids robbed their grandparents to pay for it. Ultimately I guess that without that game I wouldn't be in this job. I'll kill the guy responsible if ever I meet him.

This time around though, the scenario is slightly different. Eighty years hence the last remaining Space Invaders machines have been cast into space. The earth just ran out of room for them and since everyone was capable of beating the things five minutes after birth it seemed pointless keeping them hanging around.

After all, this space could be used to house 50 families in the biological equivalent of a file-archiving system developed by a scientist searching for a cure for AIDS.

One such machine collided with a satellite and careered off into deep space. Light years later a cosmic bag-lady found the machine and decided to flog it to the authorities.

They analysed it and decided that the tactics used by the aliens on the machine could be adapted to make a perfectly usable strategy for

wiping out the population of a planet. With a finely honed sense of irony the aliens decided to give it a try on the planet from which the machine came - Earth.

This brings us back to the age old scenario - the earth is under threat from a race of aliens and you are the poor schmuck who has to throw away his life trying to save everyone else.

But the twist is that these aliens are only marginally less thick than the originals. This means that they still hang around in big groups and are reliant on huge numbers slowing down the processor enough to make them look as though they are moving really fast.

In another act of crass stupidity they have motherships which instead of just giving you points give you power-ups as well. I mean, stupid or what? - giving the opposition weapons is really thick! It's like selling arms to Iraq or Libya.

Apart from that, the gameplay remains much the same. There are new attack patterns but the basic idea of stopping the aliens from reaching the ground is still there.

The big change comes in the graphics. A wide range of alien spacecraft compete against grotesque creatures for the Most Garish Alien Thingy award. And all

this action generally takes place on full colour backgrounds that make my favourite shirt look tame.

So, does it maintain the tradition? Despite the graphics, sound and ace cartoon intro it lacks a certain something. The addictive qualities of the original are not there, probably because the simplicity has gone.

The other strange thing is that a little variety seems to be worse than none at all in this game. You notice the same aliens reappear, the same power-ups and it all begins to get just that little bit boring. The original was OK because you expected it to be the same. This version puts variety on the agenda and fails to fulfil its obligations to diversity and present a general difference of style.

So, it is nowhere near as good as the original, and nowhere near as good as a lot of other games, but it happily diverts the odd fifteen minutes or so every now and then. But then so does a cup of tea.

Jools

The bonus level sees you rescuing a herd of cows from aliens. I have no idea why...



The first wave that you have to defend the Earth from. If you let them past then you really are a complete waster



Erm, some blue ones to compete with now



They're back - and this time they're a bit miffed

SUPER SPACE INVADERS

DOMARK ■ £25.99 ■ 1/2 meg ■ Joystick ■ Out now

VISION

GGG

New and improved backgrounds

AUDIO

GGG

Better than dum-dum-dum...

PLAYABILITY

GGG

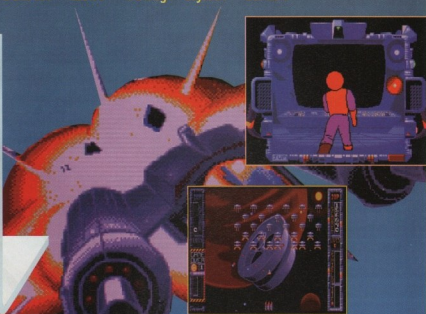
Simple but effective.

ADDICTION

GGG

Handy Conversation Street, but not bad.

70%



Anything Mansell can do you can do better

FORMULA ONE

MICROPROSE ■ £34.99 ■ 1 meg ■ Joystick ■ Out December

In the long and honourable history of racing games/simulations, attempts have been made to capture the behaviour of the car as much as possible. As we enter 1992 the programming know-how is there, in a number of places, to faithfully reproduce the behaviour of a Formula One Grand Prix car.

Up until now though, no-one has ever accurately represented the 16 Formula One tracks of the championship tournament – no one, that is, until Geoff Crammond began work on Formula One Grand Prix for Microprose.

Building a reputation on Revs for the BBC Micro some years ago, a game which Acorn users the nation over swear by, he then went on to do Stunt Car Racer, a game that won him the same acclaim from 16-bit owners as he received from Beeb owners before. Since

then he's been working on this, the game that puts you into the driving seat of a six gear, normally aspirated 200mph plus racing machine, and frankly it scares the pants off me.

Strictly speaking this is a simulation – that's why it is being published on the Microprose label, and once you get into it and discover the attention to detail you'll understand why.

The game begins in the pits as you prepare to qualify for the race ahead. Don't panic though, no matter how bad you do you will always qualify for the race. This 120 minute qualifying section gives you a chance to get used to the track and mess around with the car's set-up.

Four variables can be, erm, varied on



The first corner always sorts out the men from the boys

the car – tyres, brake balance, downforce from the wings and gear ratios.

While the car does have default settings for each of these parameters, it is always better to have a twiddle yourself as the car's performance can be increased greatly.

There are six options for tyre choice – A to D are the four dry racing tyres ranging from hard to soft, Q are the very soft qualifying tyres that give a good speed but disintegrate and lose



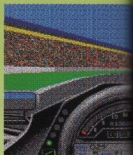
grip after only a few laps and are absolutely no good for a race, while Ws are for wet weather driving.

Brake balance affects the distribution of the total braking force between the front and the back axles, altering the way the car behaves on braking. The type of corners on a certain track will

determine the way this parameter is changed. The amount of downforce is also crucial – the more downforce, the better the car holds the road on corners, but the top speed is lessened, so a track with a lot of tight corners – Monaco for example – would need a lot of downforce whereas a track with a long straight, like Hockenheim, would require less downforce to increase the top speed.

Gear ratios have much the same considerations, with winding tracks needing more low-end acceleration to come out of the corners faster, but the trade-off here is a lower top speed – for a higher top speed the low-end acceleration will have to suffer.

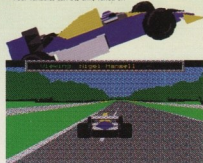
The idea of the practice laps is to give you a chance to experiment with these set-ups and see which variation best suits the track. Each lap time is recorded and the best one determines where you are on the grid. Two or three laps with each set-up tell you whether or not it is worth pursuing, and which drivers you are going to have to



look out for. To help the novice there are six driving aids (see box), one of which is lost every time you increase to the next of the five difficulty levels. They are all useful but once you have become used to how the cars function you will find that although you might not want to increase the difficulty level just yet, you won't want all the driving aids on – after all, it takes most of the fun out of it.

The five difficulty levels determine how well the other cars drive, but you can also determine the distribution of performance between them using the switch at the bottom right of your dashboard. A diagonal

slope means that it is realistic, ie the best drivers will be in the best cars. These figures are based on race times for the 1991 season which has just finished. A flat line means that all cars and drivers are the same, and a wavy line means



Drive a bit on the careless side and you'll end up with a dent on the front wing. This reduces downforce and the car handles like a tub of mousie

One of the camera angles gives a chaotic view. Once you get used to the gears this can be a good way to drive



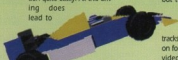
THE GRAND PRIX



Coming up behind Patrese at Hockenheim. If he follows team orders he should let you through



because each race can take up to three hours if played at the full length the championship can be saved, and so can the race at any point whatsoever. This may sound unlikely but when you consider that the computer is actually driving every car on the track, not just working out where it is, the computer knows exactly where every car is at any one time. Therefore it can save that information quite easily. All this driving does lead to



that it is randomised - good drivers could be in crap cars and vice versa.

Race length will have already been determined by you at the start of the championship as a percentage of real race length and cannot be changed without resetting to the beginning - after all, it would be unfair if you changed the last race of the championship to one lap to make sure your position was unassailable. Naturally

certain compromises on the graphics side of things.

There are no two ways about it, on a standard 1 meg A500 it is jerky. But 3D vector graphics are the only way that the circuits can be captured accurately right down to the last bump and trackside building.

Well, almost - not all the detail is there but what is there is very accurate. Monaco is the clearest example of this

Nope, he obviously isn't following team orders



with the Casino and that tight left-hand hairpin which drops about 20 foot during its course, to name but two features being clearly recognisable. The accuracy of the tracks has been worked on for a long time using videos taken from the BBC and satellite TV, car data has been gained from Honda technical data and close contact with the Footwork team (formerly Arrows) who gave a lot of assistance with the friction and drag data. One member

of the Footwork team drove around a few of the tracks in the game and was apparently stunned by the accuracy. The jerkiness is acceptable when you take all of this into account and more so because the game still feels as though you are actually racing at 180 miles an hour. It isn't slow like some games, just a bit like blinking a lot while you're driving.

The jerkiness is acceptable when you take all of this into account and more so because the game still feels as though you are actually racing at 180 miles an hour. It isn't slow like some games, just a bit like blinking a lot while you're driving. The sound is the biggest let-down, the engine noise being simplistic to say the least, but something had to be sacrificed in a packed memory and that was it. Then again, a droning whine might be all you hear inside a helmet!

This is a minor quibble when you look at the game as a whole. I was worried at first when I heard the term 'simulation' mentioned, because I felt that gameplay would be sacrificed for accuracy, but if anything the accuracy helps - it means that each track requires skill and concentration and a lot of practice before you can get close to emulating the fastest times.

As well as this, because each car is being individually driven, each race becomes engrossing to the extreme. Brilliant.



Keeping the revs up at the start is crucial for that swift getaway



Read this if you can't drive

Generous to a fault, Geoff Crammond has provided six driving aids to help the crap ones among you. These are the finished aids which some earlier reviews in other mags failed to mention:

Going from left to right

- 1: **Auto Braking.** This brakes the cars to the right speed for the corner. It won't stop you hitting another car though.
- 2: **Auto Gears.** Changes up and down in just the right places.
- 3: **Self Correcting Spins.** If you spin off then you will always be turned to face the right way.
- 4: **Indestructible Mode.** You won't be beaten up by other bigger tougher cars.
- 5: **Best Line:** Puts a dotted line on the track which shows the best route to take around the track.
- 6: **Gear Reminder:** Suggests the best gear for the next corner.

VISION

GGGG
Reasonably smooth and very accurate.

AUDIO

GGG
Average chip-based tune but awful effects.

PLAYABILITY

GGGGG
Like being in the real thing, but without the risk.

ADDITION

GGGGG
Nothing will stop your quest for that perfect season.

93%

Jools

GALLUP CHART Compiled exclusively for **GAMER**

The Gamer chart is compiled by Gallup Ltd, and is the copyright of the European Leisure Software Publishers Association.

Twenty new entries this month, seven of which are in the top ten. It's beginning to look as though the money's starting to be spent as all the top games come out of the woodwork in the build up to Christmas. All these new entries mean that there is only room enough for four climbers, with 14 games dropping to some extent.

Anco's excellent compilation comes straight in at number one, beating even the biggest licence of the year, Terminator 2, into second place - both of which have relegated Jimmy's snooker to third place. Magic Pockets has turned up at number four, but the real shock is the fact the Core's Thunderhawk has basically disappeared from the chart. The remaining four new entries, Final Fight through to Alien Breed, are all top games or big names.

The two big god games of this year have come in at fairly similar placings, with Mega Lo Mania entering two places above Gremlin's Utopia. Now they'll stand up to competition from Populous II over the December selling period is going to be very interesting. The budget release of the original, entering this month at 25, will enhance the already large interest in the release.

Other new entries of note include Last Ninja 3 from System 3 and Flight of the Intruder from Mirrorsoft.

Next month? There's going to be loads of stuff, but due to deadline pressures caused by the Christmas break, you'll have to wait till the March issue (on sale beginning of February) to find out who sold what in December. Publishing eh? What a laugh.

JOHN

THIS MONTH		LAST MONTH					
1	↑↑	NE	Return to Europe	Anco	£7.99		
2	↑↑	NE	Terminator 2	Ocean	£25.99		
3	↓	1	Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker	Virgin	£29.99		
4	↑↑	NE	Magic Pockets	Renegade	£25.99		
5	↑↑	11	Bubble Bobble	Hit Squad	£7.99		
6	↑↑	NE	Final Fight	US Gold	£25.99		
7	↑↑	NE	Lotus Turbo Challenge 2	Gremlin	£25.99		
8	↑↑	NE	Head over Heels	Hit Squad	£7.99		
9	↑↑	NE	Alien Breed	Team 17	£24.99		
10	↑↑	25	Shadow of the Beast	Sizzlers	£7.99		
11	↓	5	Silent Service 2	Microprose	£34.99		
12	↓	6	TV Sports Football	Mirror Image	£9.99		
13	↑↑	29	Dragon Ninja	Hit Squad	£7.99		
14	↑↑	NE	Mega-Lo-Mania	Mirrorsoft	£30.99		
15	↑↑	NE	Rugby - The World Cup	Domark	£24.99		
16	↑↑	NE	Utopia	Gremlin	£29.99		
17	↓	4	Full Contact	Team 17	£9.99		
18	↓	3	Cruise for a Corpse	US Gold	£27.99		
19	↓	8	New Zealand Story	Hit Squad	£7.99		
20	↑↑	NE	Turrican	Kixx	£7.99		
21	↑↑	NE	Altered Beast	Hit Squad	£7.99		
22	↑↑	NE	Last Ninja 3	System 3	£25.99		
23	↓	12	Lombard RAC Rally	Hit Squad	£7.99		
24	↓	7	PGA Tour Golf	Electronic Arts	£25.99		
25	↑↑	NE	Populous	Electronic Arts	£9.99		
26	↑↑	NE	Batman - The Movie	Hit Squad	£7.99		
27	↑↑	36	Flames of Freedom	Rainbird	£34.99		
28	↑↑	NE	Fantasy World Dizzy	Code Masters	£6.99		
29	↓	21	Pro Boxing	Code Masters	£7.99		
30	↓	15	Manchester United Europe	Krisalis	£25.99		
31	↓	10	Monkey Island	US Gold	£29.99		
32	↑↑	NE	Scooby Doo and Scrappy Doo	Hitec	£7.99		
33	↑↑	NE	Flight of the Intruder	Mirrorsoft	£34.99		
34	↓	9	Supercars	GBH	£7.99		
35	↑↑	NE	Wacky Races	Hitec	£7.99		
36	↑↑	NE	Power Drift	Hit Squad	£7.37		
37	↓	13	North and South	Digital Int.	£7.99		
38	↓	16	Rainbow Collection	Ocean	£19.99		
39	↓	28	Defender of the Crown	Mirror Image	£9.99		
40	↓	31	Indy and the Last Crusade	Kixx	£7.99		

'STATE OF THE ART' 16 BIT TECHNOLOGY

The mystery/role-playing adventure, combining History and classic science fiction, based on the world famous role-playing game by Game Designers' Workshop.

Space 1889: Discover a recreated solar system as envisioned by the scientific theories of the 19th Century and in the imaginations of such classic writers as Jules Verne, A. Conan Doyle and H.G. Wells. Written by the same team as the critically acclaimed 'MEGATRAVELLER 1'

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● Planets and stars are accurately represented in Space. Actually navigate by the constellations themselves!

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● Historic 19th Century weapons include 30 guns, 4 throwing weapons and 9 close combat weapons. Ranging from bolt-action rifles and single-barrel revolvers to swords and daggers.

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● Create five characters, male or female, from among six

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● Over 100 locations to explore on Earth alone - all depicted with historical accuracy and fascinating details. Including London, New York, San Francisco, the Far East and the Valley of the Kings.

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● Meet and interact with over 500 unique characters, each with distinct personalities.



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CU AMIGA

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I can't think of any role-playing game which has the depth and richness of what's going on.

GAMESMAN

This game is truly, uncategorically "Mega!"

ACE

A quantum leap for sci-fi RPG's.

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"A triumph of intelligent game design."

THE ONE

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GEN 4

Megatraveller 1 is THE Game of Today...

AMIGA POWER

"Terrifying depth, friendly and helpful controls, great atmosphere, excellent balance of strategy and action.

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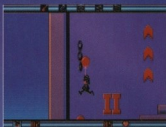
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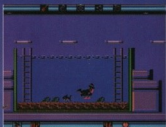
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Jake in the Blues Brothers merchandise warehouse!



Fun with balloons



It's Elwood taking a dip in an overlarge fishbowl

The men in dark suits and shades are back and after the success of the film and video they are now proudly rockin' and rollin' on your Amiga, thanks to Titus.

The game's story goes like this. Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin. Once upon a time there were a couple of nice respectable chappies called Jake and Elwood Blues who'd unfortunately spent a long time in that nasty, nasty place, prison. Upon leaving the... (cut the crap I haven't got all day or else you'll be fired - Games Ed).

Gulp, right I'll start again. OK there are these two dudes called Jake and Elwood Blues - the Blues Brothers - and they were nicked and thrown in the slammer (at the end of the film, remember?). When the boys got out after a long stretch they discovered that some little tea-leaf had nicked all their musical equipment, and this is where you come in.

You have to control either Jake or Elwood - you can have them on the screen at the same time if you find a friend with a spare joystick - and guide them round several locations trying to get their equipment back. Not an easy task.

Control of the Brothers is so simple that even Jools our games editor picked them up

with no problems whatsoever (watch it, you - angry Games Ed). Pulling the joystick left and right moves your brother around the screen in the respective direction. Shoving the joystick up makes your brother leap a mighty enough jump to put Wayne Sleep to shame, and pulling down makes your brother duck.

To attack your fearsome enemies, who are strategically dotted around the place, all you have to do is press Fire to pick up an object and then press Fire again to throw it at your enemy, knocking the blighter out for the count. The objects are few and far between, so use them very wisely.

Each level contains one item which isn't too hard to find - all you have to do is use your brains a bit. When you find the item you have to

leave via the exit, which is placed somewhere in the level.

At the bottom of the screen is your energy meter. Your energy is represented by three hearts and when you come into contact with an enemy or whatever, you lose one of those hearts. When all those are lost you lose one of your three lives.

But not to fear, because hearts can be regained by either finding a little heart - they are dotted around the level - or collecting one hundred records, which are to be found in little clusters.

As you can see, you have to do a lot of dodging enemies, a lot of exploring for the essential items, and a lot of hunting for exits. I did warn you it wasn't an easy task, didn't I?

The game really does excel on the graphics and sound front. The graphics are brilliant and give a really good Blues Brothers "feel" to the game. On the sound front, there are five fantastic tunes all taken from the movie and Titus must be applauded for these, which really do make the game for me.

After all the duff film conversions that have been released (Terminator 2, Navy Seals, Darkman, Back to the Future 3, Gremlins 2 and so on) this really is a breath of fresh air. The playability, graphics and sound are all good.

There isn't a lot I can grumble about except maybe that the game is quite hard and definitely not one for the platform beginner.

If I was Titus I would be very proud of this excellent film conversion.

Biffa

The jailbirds with soft hearts for some jiving

BLUES BROTHERS

TITUS ■ £25.99 ■ 1/2 meg ■ Joystick ■ Out Now

VISION
GGGG
The character sprites give the game that Harmoni-Barbers feel.

AUDIO
GGGG
Five fantastic tunes from the cult movie.

PLAYABILITY
GGGG
Easy control system makes it great fun to play.

ADDITION
GGGG
Keeps you coming back for more and more and more.

88%



It's showtime...music please



Aren't they just so damn cool?



FOOTBALL

CRAZY



3

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ST FORMAT

ST ACTION

The Ace

The One

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- Best footy game to have appeared on any machine.
- The best computer game ever.
- What a game! Gem to Play, Magic.
- The best game ever to grace the ST. Highest accolade I can give.
- Brilliant, Buy-Buy-Buy
- Ultimate Soccer simulation

ST Action

The One

Amiga Format

ST Format

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- A stroke of pure genius.
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- Enthralling and Addictive.
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Got 'em skipper

"Oh, Captain," gasped the Engineering Officer, "those bulkheads won't take much more of this! Ye cannae change the laws of physics!" We had attacked a peaceful little convoy of Japanese battleships and cruisers about twenty minutes before, and had spent the intervening time trying desperately to dodge the six escorts and their incessant depth-charging.

So far they had fought fair, but it was only a matter of time before the water was filled with the sound of Des O'Connor as those fenshish orientals resorted to the ultimate weapon. I had to think fast, and engineer Mr Scott's impressions weren't helping my concentration.

"There goes another one," he added as a depth-charge went off perilously close. "Much more of this and she'll break up, Cap'n!"

"Hard left rudder!" I shouted, "Release debris!" There was a sort of drawn out glooping sound as the debris, designed to fool the destroyers into thinking they'd sunk us, was fired from tube one. We'd added an extra touch of realism by coaxing the engineer into the torpedo tube with a story about dilithium crystals. It's a far better thing, and all that, eh?

After ten more minutes of crash diving, hard ruddering, and glancing sweetly at stop watches - well, they do it in the movies, don't they? - we evaded our pursuers. One engine damaged, a fire amidships, our periscope wrecked, and the four torpedoes we'd fired were all duds. Ah well, at least we got rid of the engineer.

Silent Service II is the follow up to

MicroProse's smash hit of 1986, *Silent Service*, which to date is still the best sub sim on the Amiga. The original game had challenge, detailed control of difficulty level, and tense action. So how can they have improved it?

The answer is a double dose of graphics and sound. *Silent Service* was excellent on the gameplay front, but fairly under-endowed when it came to presentation. The sound effects were primitive and the graphics functional, so there has always been room for massive improvement.

And massive improvement is what we get after all these years! When the game loads, which can take some time, *SS II*'s heritage becomes obvious. It was designed as a game for VGA IBM compatibles, and as such has digitised pictures of the ships and far more presentable layouts for the various action stations you can access.

These include the map screen, where most of the action takes place, the periscope, which you'll use as little as possible if you want to survive very long, the bridge view, damage control, and the gauges (you have to check these yourself as you've just shot your engineer out into fifty fathoms of the Pacific Ocean, remember!).

The action stations are accessed either by pressing function keys or by clicking on a small symbol at the bottom of your screen. There is enough information contained in them to keep most people happy, but I would have liked a continuously updated depth gauge on all screens. When you're in shallow water and under attack, running around is the last thing you'll ever do. All the graphics are slick and

colourful, yet they manage functionality at the same time. The gauges screen is a little confusing at first - I found myself wondering which was the thermostat and which was the claqueter - but you're soon au fait enough with it to take a quick glance under combat just to make sure there's enough power in the batteries to keep that little rabbit tapping away on his tin drum.

The game's sound effects have been improved out of sight. Everything is sampled, right down to the 'dive dive dive' as you slip below the waves. The seagull sounds when you sail on the surface are a nice touch, too. Sonar pings, explosions, and engine noises are all realistic enough to add a healthy wedge of atmosphere when you're in the thick of things, so they do exactly the job you'd expect for a simulation.

You can play *SS II* in several ways, though the difficulty levels have been greatly simplified. Instead of the individual options in the original, such as whether or not you want expert destroyers or convoy zig-zags, the player is given a choice of four levels - Introductory, Normal, Advanced, and Ultimate. The only realism factor under your control is whether you have historical or flawless torpedoes.

For much of the war, American torpedoes were of a distinctly dodgy design, so if you choose the historical option you will find many of them turn out to be duds. This is a real pain if you've fired off two torpedoes, then crash dived and turned

away at flank speed as all sensible commanders will do. By the time you realise your torpedoes have caused no more damage than a quick paint job will cure, you're hopelessly out of position and the escorts have been alerted.

I found the temptation to fire three or even four torpedoes at a small freighter was irresistible after a few of my torpedoes had gone "dunk" instead of "boom". This is wasteful - after all, they are a submarine's most valuable resource after fuel and air.

The difficulty levels work fairly well. Introductory is easy and designed to let you get your feet wet - or keep them dry, in this case! - and Normal is a well balanced option for when you've mastered the basic tactics of submarine warfare (peek up when they can't see you, fire from under cover, and run away very quickly).

Of the two higher levels, Advanced seems to offer more adept destroyers and alert lookouts, which is my way of admitting they saw me coming a mile



Another triumph of US engineering goes off with a "dunk"



Two torpedoes streak off on the map screen

away and depth-charged me till my ears popped. Ultimate level is hairier than an Afghan Hound.

There's enough of a challenge to keep the average sim fan going for a very long time with SS II, especially when it is played in the War Career

mode. This allows you to choose a start date for your career, the base from which you begin, and your patrol zone. From this point, it's up to you where you patrol, which contacts you investigate, and how long you live.

You won't last long if you rush in at



Enemy ships seem to melt rather than sink

size of the contact, its bearing and the time of day.

This determines how close you can go to an enemy without being seen. There are different values for end-on, broadside-on, and your periscope along with the range at which you'll be visible

Torpedoes on the starboard bow!

SILENT SERVICE II

MICROPROSE • £34.99 • 1 meg • Mouse/keyboard • Out now



on sonar. I generally chicken out of any daylight attack as they're usually more hassle and danger than they're worth, but even sticking to attacks in darkness, I've so far failed to survive longer than June 16th 1943 - over two years short of VJ day!

If you're a sim fan, buy this game - it's excellent. If you have the original, try it first. The gameplay is essentially the same and you might not be bothered about the fancy touches.

Anton Black

VISION
GGG
Better than the original by far.
The digitised ships are especially good.

AUDIO
GGG
Limited, but of a high quality and adds atmosphere.

PLAYABILITY
GGGGG
A challenging sim with plenty of long-term appeal. Combines tension with tactical awareness.

ADDICTION
GGGGG
Plenty if you like simulations, but absolutely none if you don't.

88%

Norse to see you...to see you Norse

HEIMDALL

Core Design • £30.99 • 1 Meg • Joystick/Mouse • Out Now

Vikings have a bit of a reputation. You see, they're generally considered to be a bit "hard". Not just hard as in "Come on you ponces, I've had 23 pints and I'll tek youse all on", but hard as in "plucking rusty nails from their kneecaps with their teeth and enjoying it". Yes, it's official. Vikings are "hard". Or at least they used to be.

Somewhere along the line, these powerful noble Vikings suddenly became Abba and Roxette. I ask you, what can have gone wrong?

Did some horrendous twist appear in the DNA of the Norse warriors that resulted in Scandinavia being famous for Lego and crap disco music rather than hairy hammer-wielding killing machines and boats with dragons on them? Personally I think that it was those pesky Norse gods having a laugh. Sort of like a divine Jeremy Beadle prank.

The Norse gods were famous for stupid things like that, you know. Come with me on a swirly trip back through time, and I'll show you what I mean...

WoooooOoooooHooooooo. Wibble. (One quick swirly trip back through time later). Well, here we are in Finland, home of the Vikings. Or is it Sweden? It could be blimmin' Durham for all I know, but take my word for it, this is definitely the home of the Vikings.

If you look over yonder you'll see a lovely little Viking village, and a small boy hurling axes at a little girls head. OK, settle down. It isn't what you think. Well, actually, it is what you think, but there's a bloody good reason for



It's the Heimdall Posse, or, chilling out

it. Young Heimdall, for it is he, is the laddie in question and the reason he must abuse grazed up animals and throw sharp objects at young girls is because he is a God in human form. Or a human in Godlike form. Either way, he's destined to be the saviour of all the Vikings when he grows up. No snogging on the back seat of a longship for Heimdall I'm afraid. But before he can go on to fulfill his majestic destiny he must prove himself to be a worthy warrior, and apparently Vikings proved their manhood by worrying farm animals and threatening young lasses. Nothing's changed really has it?

There are three tasks which young Heimdall must complete for him to gain the respect of the villagers. First he must sever an incarcerated girl from her pigtail by flinging axes at her, then he must capture that infamous greasy pig, and finally he must retrieve a bag of gold from a ship, while everyone tries to beat him up.

How well you do in these sections will directly affect your chances in the proper game, because obviously the village warriors aren't going to join up with a little squirt who can't even keep control of a pig.

Therefore, if your performance in these sections is especially crap then you won't have as many crew members to choose from later in life. On the other hand, if you're ace at these bits then everyone'll be wetting

themselves to be in your gang, just like Gary Glitter. Once you've proved your manliness, we fast forward a couple of decades to when Heimdall is a strapping viking warrior, so it's time for another of those spooky swirly trips through time...

WoooooOoooooHooooooo. Wibble. Blimey. This time travelling lark's fun isn't it? Anyway, it's now about, ooh, ten or fifteen years later and the time of Ragnarok is nigh. It is prophesied that the evil god, Loki, will have a punch up with the good gods and will scatter the weapons of the gods throughout the viking lands, so the good gods don't stand a chance. Luckily, the good gods thought this might happen and so they created Heimdall yanks ago to find the weapons for them. Forward planning, you see. Highly efficient fellas these god types.

So, Heimdall sets off to find all three of the god's weapons so they can give Loki a good thrashing and then all will be well with the world. Unfortunately for Heimdall, the weapons are pro-

ected by many bogus monsters and traps and such like.

Without a second thought, Heimdall selects his posse from the village macho men, and leaves behind the comforts of dangerously potent ale and the tender recesses of well oiled pigs and heads out into adventure and excitement.

And lo, it is written that it would come to pass that in the year 1991, the gamesmiths of Core Design would take the great and (not entirely) true legend of Heimdall and transform the tomes therein to forge a video arcade game of truly trouser rending magnitude. And they did as well, you know.

Yup, Heimdall is corkier than a badly opened bottle of wine. It's gorgeous. It's fruity. It's like Cadaver without the control problems. It's like Dungeon Master

All this excitement is a bit much for of Heimdall

Lovely, super, smashing, take your time, the money's safe...





Geez Charlois, don't you think the barbie's a bit too hot?

with an arcade feel. It's not all bad, if the truth be told.

In the main part of the game you control Heimdall, and two of his six strong crew, as you explore all the islands that make up the viking world. The world is divided into three separate lands, the land of men, the land of giants and the land of the gods. In each land you'll find one of the lost weapons, but you'll have to solve plenty of little quests and puzzles along the way.

Of course, vikings being vikings, there's bound to be loads of scrapping going on. And there is. Combat is very much in the style of Elvira. The mouse is used to click on the weapon you wish to use and then on the ATTACK icon. You'll see the combat from first person perspective in a little animated window and the results of your attack. Timing is of utmost importance, as your enemy can easily dodge a badly planned attack.

Magic can also be used, to either protect your team or to assault your opponent. To put it simply, the combat in Heimdall is great. It's just far too tempting to leap into a fight with some huge monster just so you can see what

wondrous animation awaits you in the fight scene. Stupid, yes, but great fun!

The graphics are just amazing throughout. The animation on the opening trial sections and the fighting bits puts tripe like Dragons Lair to shame, and the attention to detail on the walking around sections really brings the game to life. I can't really do the graphics justice, so look at those screenshots, get all overcome by the sultriness of them and then drink a pint of cold water. See what I mean? Brilliant.

The sound is limited, mainly due to the amount of memory that the graphics eat up, but what is there is good enough. Footsteps, creaking doors and a stirring theme tune are about all



This is only the map for the land of men. Somewhere in there is one of the gods' weapons



90%

you're likely to hear.

But stop meaning, just be thankful for what you've got. You selfish mongrels, spare a thought for the ST owners. All they'll get is some tinny scratchy noises. Mind you, that's their fault for buying a smeggy computer.

To sum up then, Heimdall steals little bits from Cadaver, Dungeon Master, Knight Lore on the scenery, and that crap cartoon Vikki the Viking and mixes them all up into a wonderful concoction that should have any self respecting adventure nut locked in a small room for donkeys years. A vast throbbing epic of a game.

Daniel

HAKPAK

In a fit of unbri-
dled generosity,
Gamer responds
to public demand
by continuing
the HakPak
series actually
inside the Gamer
section of the
magazine. We've
brought them
inside because
it's too cold at
this time of year
to be hanging
around outside.

GAMER HAKPAK

Warzone

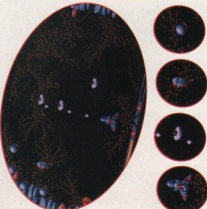
Cover Design

To cheat on this great action shoot setup all you have to do is press F1, F2 and F3 one after another on the title screen and you will be blessed with infinite lives.

Xenon II

Image Works

While you are in the middle of this great shoot setup by the Blomax Brothers, bring the game to a halt by pausing it then typing in RUSSIAN AIR (with spaces) - then unpauses it. Now all you have to do to skip to the next level is press the letter N.



SHOOT-'EM-UP



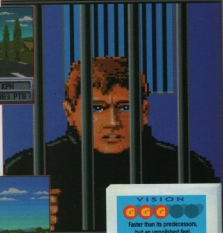
A throbbing bike and an open road... in Dover?



Off the bike and on to the jetski to find some Bounty bars



It's Bergerac action all the way



That pesky Scooby Doo baddie gets his comeuppance

1992 and all that OUT RUN EUROPA

US GOLD ■ £25.99 ■ 1/4 meg ■ Joystick ■ Out now

Racing games. Hardly a rare commodity are they? They come and go like a kangaroo stuck in a revolving door. And slap me down with a tub of low fat yogurt, if US Gold haven't released yet another Out Run game to fill up our eager Yuletide stockings.

Unfortunately for US Gold, the Out Run games have a reputation for being, well, a little bit crap actually. To say the original game was slow would be like saying the Pope is a bit religious, and Turbo Out Run wasn't exactly turbo charged, was it? So Out Run Europa really has to be the wasp's armpits to prove itself. Has it succeeded? Read on and find out.

To break the rather predictable racing game style, US Gold have incorporated a "plot" into the game. Plot? Ha ha! It's not really a plot, just an excuse to try out other styles of graphics. Anyway, for the purists amongst you here, in all its glory, it is.

The Plot: You're supposed to be a secret agent, blah blah, exciting car

chases, blah blah, dangerous missions, blah blah, Out Run with different sprites, blah blah. And there, as they say, you have it.

What this all boils down to is a multi-level drive-em-up in which you leap from motorbikes to jetski, to sports cars to speedboats and thunder across Europe with police and enemy agents in hot pursuit. Every now and again an enemy agent or cop will zoom up behind you and try to knock you for six. You can knock them back, but the best course of action is to use one of your limited turbo boosts and zip out of range. Wow.

The graphics are decidedly average, looking like they haven't quite been finished, and this lends the game an unpolished feel. This is the sort of presentation we'd expect from a budget game, not a big Xmas title from a major software house.

Thankfully, things have been speeded up from the previous two escapades.

But that can act against the game, especially on the Jetski level. As you sweep from side to side, rocks can suddenly lurch out of the distance and send you flying before you get a chance to react, which knocks precious seconds off your time limit.

The sound, for those who need to know, is exactly what you'd expect from a racing game. Uninspiring tune, chundering engine noise and squeaky skid effects. Ho de hum hum hum.

The first time I played the game, I hated it. Yes, I'll be honest. I couldn't stand it. It felt sloppy and poorly planned out, almost as if US Gold had released it without testing it properly in time for Xmas. But surely they wouldn't do that? Further playing didn't really do much to change my mind.

Despite all the different sprites it's still a run of the mill driving game. It's not as

VISION

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

Faster than its predecessors, but an unpolished feat.

AUDIO

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

Heard it all before.

PLAYABILITY

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

Adding nothing new to the genre, it doesn't stand out from the crowd.

ADDICTION

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

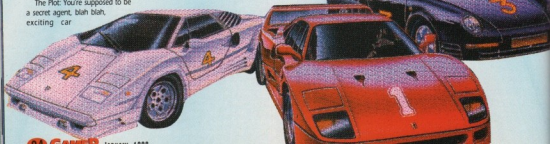
Addictive to a certain degree, but don't expect any sleepless nights.

70%

bad as first impressions might lead you to believe, but it's still a long, long way off being as good as it should be. Alongside competition like Lotus Challenge 2, Out Run Europa looks positively laughable.

Doubtlessly people are already buying it in droves, but the more discerning among you would be wise to fork out for a game that concentrates less on self-gratifying hype and more on playability. As average as average gets.

Daniel





Baby love, you are my baby love...

BABY JO IN "GOING HOME"

Loricel ■ 1/2 meg ■ Joystick ■ £25.99 ■ Out now

Everybody loves a baby – why? It's because they are so sickeningly cute that's why, and Baby Jo is no exception. He screams, he cries, he wets his nappies, he burps, he sucks his thumb and he's yours for only £25.99.

Yes, I'm afraid it's true, those guys and gals from across the old English Channel (that's France just in case you didn't know – Geographic Ed) have come up with a cutesy platform game, but is it any good? Well, read on and find out.

The blurb that comes with the game's instructions reads "Who is the new hero?" and the answer is simple – it's Harry Secombe, but apparently Loricel think it's Baby Jo. That's fine by me but when did you last see Batman wet himself or when did you see Superman start sucking his thumb?

Right, enough of this superhero business, what do you have to do? Being the kind and considerate person I am, I will tell you. It's simple, Baby Jo is lost in the countryside, far from town, his home and his mother, and all you have to do is get him home again.

But have no fear, because Baby Jo is very clever and by using his unique sense of direction he always knows which way is home (Quick, phone the That's Life team).

While trying to get the baby home you have to watch out for hazardous traps and the fearsome baddies. The baddies – all of which are as cute as Jo – include things like Jack-in-the-boxes, flowers, worms, wasps, black clouds which fire lightning at you and even an indestructible sun.

Having all these baddies trying to get poor Baby Jo can be a problem, because babies don't tend to carry Uzis and flamethrowers in their nappies. So what does Baby Jo use to dispose of his enemies?

Well, he uses a more powerful



Watch out for those spiders, Baby Jo

weapon than an Uzi or a flamethrower – he uses baby rattles which are placed around each level. However, they should be used wisely because there are a lot of baddies and not a lot of rattles.

So what else can Baby Jo use to



help him get home? Well, there's a first aid kit which restores his energy, and there are also bonuses in the form of fruits and sweets. There are balloons which are inflated with helium so that Baby Jo can climb trees or cross ravines, too.

Baby Jo has a friend called Jock the Duck, who looks identical to Daffy Duck. Jock provides Baby Jo with some helpful clues, but beware – Jock has a Jeremy Beadle-type personality and some of his clues are only jokes.

There is one snag with Baby Jo, which is that he hasn't been toilet-trained and if you eat too many bonuses he tends to fill his nappy rather quickly, thus reducing him to walking rather than running. To overcome this problem

VISION

Nice graphics that give the game that cutesy feeling.

AUDIO

Good sound effects, pity about the annoying tune.

PLAYABILITY

Scrolling damages the gameplay.

ADDICTION

Level of difficulty stops you coming back for more.

70%

Go and get your rattle Baby Jo, it's behind yoooooou!



Oooh what's in the surprise parcel kiddies?

Jo doesn't trust the NHS, he's got his own medication

you must find a new nappy. There are two types – the ordinary nappy and the super nappy. The latter gives Baby Jo super speed and enables him to cross huge distances in a single bound.

The graphics are really nice and give that added cutesy feel to the game. Soundwise, the in-game tunes get on your nerves after a while, but the sound effects are excellent with Baby Jo giggling, burping and crying all the way home. One complaint is that the scrolling is a bit jerky – and the game is rather difficult!

Overall, Baby Jo is just another average platform game. Loricel have tried very hard but it doesn't compete with the likes of Magic Pockets and Robocod.

Jonathan Maddock



What a guy? RoboCod leaps deadly traps in a single bound

Oh crikey. Oh crikey o' riley. I'm in love with my second game this month. First of all I was reduced to a mound of trembling jelly by the knee-knocking gorgeousness of Alien Breed, and now I've gone head over heels for RoboCod. What will the neighbours think?

And do you know what's best about both games? They're both original. No big money licences, no celebrity endorsements, just good ol' fashioned computer games for the sake of making good ol' fashioned computer games. Ooh, I've come over all nostalgic.

Visions of Manic Miner, Jet Pac and Chuckie Egg swim before my misty eyes. Those were the days.

And, smite me backwards with a steaming hot Spectrum power pack, those days look like they might be returning. Hurrah, hurrah and thrice hurrah.

Anyway, before I completely lose myself in the hazy realms of 8-bit memories, I'd better tell you just why RoboCod has sent me so squiggly at the joints. Cos it's bloody brilliant, that's why. It's one of those games that just spurts playability and general loveliness out of the monitor and all over your lap. From the wonderful way it lampoons RoboCop - who could resist a game with the subtitle 'he's mean, he's green, he's part machine?' - to the intricately crafted levels, it's a winner through and through.

The story goes like this: The evil Dr



RoboCod steals himself (ho ho ho) for the confrontation that awaits him inside

We've been expecting you, Mr Pond

ROBOCOD

MILLENIUM ■ £25.99 ■ ½ meg ■ Joystick ■ Out now

Maybe has taken over Santa's toy factory and is producing deadly toys to completely bugger up Christmas for everyone.

Who could save the world from a nightmare of exploding Ninja Turtle figures? Well, we did try that woman from Watchdog but she wasn't in. It was then that the governments of the world had a brainwave and got in touch with F.I.S.H., who in turn got in touch with Pond. James Pond, that is.

Since his last mission, which spookily enough took place in the original James

Pond game, James has been "hanging out" with all his under-sea homeboys but when duty calls he's ready for action once more. He reports to "F" and welds himself into a robot suit which will enable him to breathe out of water. Thus fortified against the slings and snorkels of outrageous fortune, he stomps off to exact fishy justice on Dr Maybe.

OK, that's the story out of the way, so just what can RoboCod do? Well as you can imagine, RoboCod weighs a bit, with two tonnes of solid titanium sta-

pled to his nipples, and so instead of zapping the bogus bad dudes with a gun, he just jumps on their heads and squashes them. Fair enough. He can also extend his body vertically and grab onto platforms high above him. This is a really handy gadget, and as there's no limit to how high he can go, you can really have a laugh making him lurch onto a really high platform and then letting go. Yuck yuck yuck.

You can also scrunch down to look at what's going on below you. Add to the usual array of power-ups that grant

Out and about with the Cyborg Trout

During his adventure, RoboCod can take advantage of three different vehicles. And here, in a pretty coloured box, they are:

RoboCar



RoboCod isn't above resorting to devious means. As you can clearly see, the thieving bar steward has gone and swiped poor old Noddy's car. But Noddy's just an outdated symbol of blinkered xenophobic fascism anyway, so who cares?

RoboBath



Obviously, if you really want to make a splash when you're out on the town, you should be driving a porcelain bath. Beats a Porsche any day, I don't think. Conclusive proof that certain games programmers are a few lozenges short of a chemist.

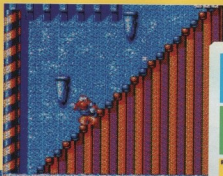
RoboPlane



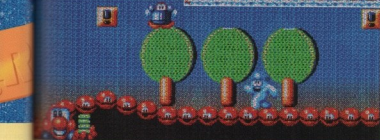
To really shift through the levels, the RoboPlane is the thing to find. Fast, deadly and decidedly plane-shaped, the RoboPlane is most certainly a plane. Yes, it's definitely a plane. And a very nice one too.



Snakes alive! Robo slams on the brakes



Boy Racer made for Robo as he shows off his rather nifty fin spin



It's no good hiding, you've got a job to do

VISION
GGGG
Crisp, cartoony sprites and socksfuls of little widdly bits.
AUDIO
GGGG
A great spritzy remix of the RoboCop music, and neat FX.
PLAYABILITY
GGGG
So much to see and do, I dare you to be bored.
ADDICTION
GGGG
Incentive ahooy!

91%

JAMES POND II

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you the ability to fly, or to become invincible, and you've got a pretty tough fish. Robo can also hop into vehicles to aid his progress, and these range from a nifty little plane to a car to a bath tub. Not really sure about flying around in a bath tub, but Millennium reckon it's true, so we'll give them the benefit of the doubt. And if you think that's weird, wait until you clap eyes on what awaits you inside the factory.

Each set of levels takes place in a "room", each of which represent different sorts of toys and games. There are nine rooms in all, each comprising several levels and a big guardian-type thingy. The rooms cover such topics as sports - where big footballs and golfclubs tower above you - to the circus where crazed clowns try to fillet you. The cartoon style is there throughout, with pretty much everything having a silly little face on it, and even the nasties look like rejects from the worst 60's acid nightmare. Bizarre is not the word. Erm, well, actually bizarre is the word. And so is bonkers.

The graphics are brilliantly stylised, managing to keep the feel of the original but still adding something new. Bigger, better and brighter than before is the best way to describe them. The animation is spot on, with plenty of neat little touches to look out for. For instance,



What ho, Robo old chap, beastly hum at three o'clock and all that

Can Robo's wings get him past those smirking bullets?

the way that Robo will pick up momentum as he runs down a steep slope and then skid to a halt at the bottom, with his little fins nowt more than a blur of speed.

Naturally the programmers take full advantage of this momentum and usually put a really fiendish trap at the bottom of a slope so you run straight into it and die horribly. Still, you've got to

laugh. Sound, believe it or not, is excellent too. The tune is a bouncy cartoon-style parody of the ominous RoboCop theme, and the springy sound effects complement the graphics well. Being, thus, kerp-splat and wibble. You certainly won't be turning down the volume on this one.

Of course, RoboCop does suffer slightly because it's "just another plat-

form game". In the past few months alone we've had the rather excellent Magic Pockets and the commendable Rolling Ronny, but RoboCop stands up well against such competition. It's better than Ronny, there's no doubt about that, and I might even go as far as to say that it's better than Magic Pockets. Scandalous? Well, I'm just a sucker for a fish in body armour.

There are tons and tons of features and little cheats to discover as you go along. Enough to keep you exploring for weeks on end. But all of this begs the question - what comes next? Dirty Had-dock? Pike Rogers? Put it this way, if you liked James Pond then you'll go ape over this, and even if you didn't like James Pond, buy this anyway or I'll come round and break your windows. Yes I will. Now bog off, while I have another bash at the Sweeties level...

It went straight down the middle...

MICROPROSE

MICROPROSE • £34.99 • ½ meg • Mouse • Out now

Golf games have been somewhat more available on the whole for the Amiga than the ST, especially with the recent release of PGA Tour Golf. This was a fine game but the conversion suffered because no changes were made to the 16-colour lo-res EGA graphics. The 32-colour med-res graphics of Microprose' little club-warmer certainly show up Electronic Art's poorly presented, but highly playable game.

Suitable for the basic A500 machine, Microprose Golf offers, after loading, a menu of options that can be selected before you dive in to the serious business of competition play. Options for past play include loading a previously saved round or a replay of that hole in one on the ninth.

There is also a demo of the play which is handy for beginners because it screens, in one broad sweep, the majority of the available features. You can also view of your player's statistics (see later). However, for most beginners you will be well advised to play the driving range and the putting practice area.

Both of these areas have been well designed. The driving range offers alternate strips of fairway and trees – daring you to hit your shot "straight down the middle", as one crooner described it. In addition to the directional guidance you are offered help with distance as the major distance landmarks are scribbled onto the fairway (100, 200, etc.).

The putting practice area is just as good. The view for the shot can be changed, the speed of the green can be altered and a grid system can be overlaid to help you observe precisely how the ball is moving after your shot.

After your practice sessions have been completed you can select one of many different types of competition. Microprose should be congratulated for the wide choice (a pat on the back is in the post, Paul – Sarcasm Ed).

Medal is a competition for points using a score card. Points are awarded for each hole – the lowest score wins. Skins is a



Club selection is not important until you are very familiar with the game

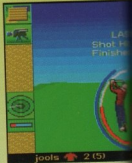


The view down the fairway as you tee up

competition for money. An amount of money is allocated to each hole before the round is played and the player who completes the hole with the least number of strokes wins the cash. If there is a draw then the cash is carried on to the next hole, and then the next until the

total amount is won. Head To Head is you against the computer, playing for points. Tournament allows you to play with up to four human players for points. In Singles you play for the number of holes won overall. Bestball 3 and Bestball 4 is a competition for points. However, here the match is you or you and a friend against two opponents with one ball each.

Threesome and Foursome (is deep breath) either two players against yourself or two against two with either two balls for two teams each taking alternate shots or two balls



The swing-onster is how you exercise an incompetent lack of control over your shots

each with the best score on each team, counting for the final card. Finally, Threeball and Fourball is a competition of three or four individual sides who play for points. In just about all of the above, you can toggle whether a computer or a human player takes part.

Once you have selected the competition you must allocate the skill level. Novice players get things easy while a player with a handicap must suffer all of the vagaries of play (wind speed and varying direction).

It is nice to see a proper handicap system in a golf game. It means that you will be "given" a number of shots that will be subtracted from your final score.



91%

SE GOLF



The better you do, the lower your handicap becomes. Your player statistics can, therefore, be saved to a separate data disk.

It is pleasing to watch how your player improves – or otherwise – over time and competition. A close eye can be kept on your player's statistics from the main menu View Stats option. Here you can see your player's performance via a large bar graph plus statistics such as average score, average putts holed, number of birdies scored and so on.

There is a wide selection of courses to choose from: Deep breath: Ballbrook, Farthing Valley, St Augustine, Fairdale Park, Pentham Valley, Buckland Heath and Mountsummer Point.

There is a welcome wide selection of variables that you can change before the shot is made, such as varying the foot positions, the height of the tee and the club selection. Other variables include a wide variety of camera viewpoints and an instant replay.

Playing a fairway shot has been well implemented. The game penalises you for a strong shot. Therefore, it is more

difficult to hit a straight shot the harder you hit. Basically, you click to initiate the shot, click again to stop the "strength" meter, then click again to try to land in the "straight" zone (which will shrink the harder the shot). Failure to find the "straight" zone will mean a hooked or sliced shot.

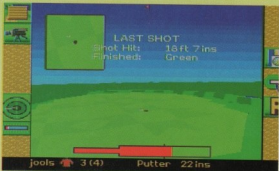
For putting, just click to initiate the putt, wait to increase the shot's power and click again to stop the strength meter. This section of the game is a little unusual from others in that the distance you can hit is not explicitly displayed onscreen.

On the fairway you have to quit to the club selection screen and gauge from that how far you go around the strength meter. It might sound strange but this is the nearest simulation to asking your caddy to give you details of the hole.

Putting is even more bizarre – across the bottom of the screen is a thermometer gauge. The line which bisects it is the ideal strength for a straight flat putt into the hole from wherever you are. It is up to you to work out whether you need



Prior to each hole the players are given an overhead view of the upcoming hole



Putting is sometimes a little too easy, or maybe I'm just Nick Faldo in disguise

less for a downhill putt or more for an uphill putt. The static-screen graphics make the most of the 32 colours, and as the camera tracks the ball, the smooth way in which the course rotates is reminiscent of the Konami Golfing Greats coin-op, which included more custom chips than you could shake a salt sachet at.

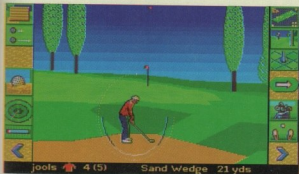
Microprose Golf has many advantages. One excellent feature is the design of the topography which is nicely contoured and contains all of the essential obstructions including water, sand and trees. Even better, this allows the ball to react to the contours. For example, the ball can "kick" if it finds

the right spot on the fairway. Other nice features are the ability to change the distance measurements from metres to yards and the colour of the player's jersey.

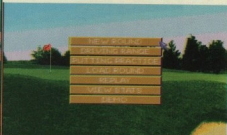
There are niggles, though. You do not see tournament computer player updates, such as in PGA Tour Golf, which has a commentator updating the play. You always have to exit to the scoreboard to find out where you are relative to the competition.

There are many excellent features to Microprose Golf which has, on the whole, been expertly designed. Possibly the best golf game you'll find on the Amiga, it is definitely the best looking, and my personal preference is for this against PGA.

Paul Rigby



A nasty lie in the bunker may prove to make the chip onto the green more difficult than it is (jwaffe, commentate, commentate)



The plethora of options before the game starts may prove too much for some

Biffa's cheat mode

You can't help it... succumb to Biffa's seductive short-cuts...



NAVY SEALS

Oy babies, here is a cheat for that game of the firm of the same name. To help Charlie Sheen and his buddies all you have to do is type in PSBOYS to get infinite credits.



DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

This game was recently released by Mirrorsoft on their budget label Mirror Image. So if you are being bothered by medieval dragons and are having trouble rescuing large-breasted maidens then here's the cheat for you, you darling old knight.

Simply press K while the second disk boots up and as if by Merlin's beard you will have a huge army of mighty knights at your disposal.

SWITCHBLADE 2

What's on the board, Miss Ford? Well it's not one, but two [count 'em] cheats for that beat-em, shoot-em, slash-em, run-around-like-crazy-em-up game, Switchblade 2, by those masters of the driving game, Gremlin.

To skip levels type in LEVEL on the title screen followed by the number of the level you want to start at. Also, typing in CHROME on the same screen brings up an exciting hidden sub-game. Didn't they do well

BRAT

Plenty of nappy changing in this game. To help you along a bit here are some latter level codes: BISHAMQ, MIHEMOTO and last but not least SASUTO 20.



MEGA-LO-MANIA

Here's some cheeky level codes for that great game Mega-Lo-Mania:

2ND EPOCH - BNVABDUNBHV
3RD EPOCH - COVCPMVBEL
4TH EPOCH - WKCCEUKNL
5TH EPOCH - GATAVROKROT
6TH EPOCH - WAKDXGPDDBZ
7TH EPOCH - KUJKTORPLGHV
8TH EPOCH - PEHAUBPKZAO
9TH EPOCH - GYDJIHPNHN
MOTHER BATTLE - TLJVSNNIGO

PANG

Here's a cheat for that excellent game Pang. You know, the one with the Japanese chappies running around taking out their frustration on a set of large balloons. When the Well, here it is - load the game then select the normal difficulty level. When the screen with the aeroplane comes up type in WHAT A NICE CHEAT as quickly as you possibly can. You can now move to any destination.

CAR-VUP

Get your motor running, move out on the cheetaway. Are you looking for a ch for this platform car game? Well, your dreams have come true, my princess, cheat try entering your name as R.L.TOONE on the high score table for infinite lives. Ho ho squibble bibble, I do love these cheats!

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if you can read
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PUZZLE & QUIZ

Here are all the level codes for that great puzzle game.

1-BQHF 2-JMUE 3-ECDE 4-WMCS 5-TOKB 6-WNUE 7-FXOD
8-WMNG 9-KXCE 10-VAMS 11-CHNE 12-WMHN 13-OCOS 14-BROY
15-COZO 16-SXCK 17-JAUM 18-HMAL 19-MMRH 20-KGPF
21-LIGW 22-WZCN 23-HAVE 24-LUNZ 25-POGV 26-VYU
27-IGGD 28-LUDJ 29-OGOL 30-BQEP 31-KRMS 32-PFES
33-BOSN 34-NQSR 35-VQNT 36-NQOS 37-KXNK 38-BEBA 39-XV
40-WRTH 41-IGNUD 42-LJMR 43-LUDP 44-TJOL 45-CHVZ
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60-ZYU 61-BMOW 62-TIGW 63-GOHX 64-LJPO 65-LJUN
66-ZNIZ 67-GGUA 68-TJOT 69-MJLZ 70-CCGO 71-JAM 72-EFT
73-OCOR 74-MNHN 75-MJDU 76-MNHN 77-FHAC 78-GMNO
79-JMNO 80-ENUG 81-SCOF 82-LJLO 83-OPN 84-LJUN 85-LJCK
86-LJTH 87-VYIS 88-WZVY 89-WZCO 90-LJLO 91-LJUG
92-OTMI 93-REFE 94-BEFC 95-BFQ 96-WWHP 97-IOCS
98-TKND 99-MJUV 100-QJRE 101-PRH 102-VQDU 103-PFAC
104-XMNL 105-NEG 106-WNHB 107-ECRE 108-LJOC 109-KZCR
110-BQAO 111-BQCU 112-MJAL 113-PFAC 114-JMNL 115-EGNW
116-PHOF 117-PFET 118-OCOW 119-PHIT 120-FHML 121-BPVS
122-SJAM 123-NKCE 124-TKX 125-MRIT 126-ORLD 127-JMNE
128-FJLA 129-HEAN 130-HEZ 131-FHIT 132-ZFVA 133-TIGG
134-OPNH 135-LJNO 136-LJLZ 137-PHPC 138-LJUT 139-VJMH
140-SJLK 141-NICE 142-LJUC 143-ONOR 144-GJVO 145-JBLU
146-FHEN 147-COZA

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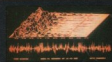


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UPDATE

We set out on our monthly mission to keep your finger on the pulse of the ever-changing Amiga market

As you've probably noticed, many of the serious Amiga packages have become firmly entrenched in their respective market positions. As a result, this all-new section is devoted to keeping you in touch with the latest developments in all areas of the machine.

Because most serious software is constantly being upgraded it's almost impossible to keep pace via the usual features process. Now we can bring you the information as it happens, so watch this space for the latest news and advice on the sometimes expensive and occasionally essential developments in the area of upgrades.

To open this new column we'll look at what is surely the Amiga's premier image processing system. ADPro has long been an essential part of any Amigan paintbox, and its position is unlikely to be challenged, thanks to its latest reincarnation.

ADPro 2.0 has had a major face-lift thanks primarily to the inclusion of JPEG compression, a system which somehow manages to attain compression ratios an amazing 1/80th of the original size when applied to 24-bit imagery.

Other sweeteners include the ability to print accurate 24-bit colour and 8-bit grey scale images via Preferences. Before, the best the Amiga could manage was 12-bit for colour and only 4-bit for grey scale.

It's even possible to print unlimited size, full colour 24-bit posters, something which even the most powerful Macs can't do without a good few Valium down 'em.

As you might expect the new ADPro has a few additions in the area of 24-bit

boards. Support has been added for Digital Creation's DCTV, GVP's IV24, and of course our old friend the Harlequin from ACS.

If you've not already moved over to WorkBench 2.0, it could well be time to start saving for the ECS as the all-new ADPro includes a wysiwyg anti-aliased text operator which employs the talents of Kickstart 2.0's scalable fonts.

Perhaps the most pleasant user friendly addition is that of a universal loader which automatically detects the format of the file in question and sets about importing it without the usual hassle of searching through the ever-growing mountain of ADPro loaders.

By the time this particular literary masterpiece hits the streets the new ADPro should have arrived in the UK, so for more information contact the Silica Shop on 081-309 1111. The present price quoted is £199.95 including VAT but this may change so have a few extra quid on hand just in case.

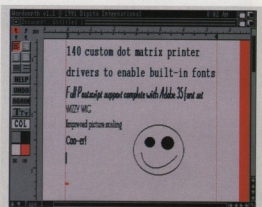
Paul Austin

Smooth stylish Scala

If you're not a connoisseur of DTV or multimedia the rather enigmatic title of Scala won't mean an awful lot, but if in future you plan to turn your attentions to either of the afore-mentioned areas it could become the package of your dreams.

The new 1.1 version is certainly an attempt to make those dreams even sweeter thanks to the inclusion of some additional whistles and bells to an already excellent program.

Perhaps the biggest change is the addition of three levels of anti-aliasing.



Wordworth v1.1

In its original form, Digita International's Wordworth wordprocessor was one of the best available on the Amiga. With version 1.1, it may just have sneaked to the number one spot, pushing Protext, the Amiga's answer to Brian Adams, from its long-held position.

First the bug fixes. The original was fairly bug-free, so there's only really one to report. The Check Single Word spelling function, for some reason, didn't allow the user to automatically substitute the suggested word for his or her own. This has now been fixed.

font's disk contains a full set of Adobe 35 PostScript fonts (giving 35 typefaces when bold, italic, and underline are used), and a generous 140 custom printer drivers.

This latter feature will be of immense interest to users of the more expensive dot matrix printers who've never bothered to make use of the printer's built-in fonts or who've tried but been foiled by the manual.

Font heaven

If, for example, you have a Star LC-10 and the driver and printer fonts have been installed (made painless by a point and click installer), you can select the printer's internal fonts from Wordworth's standard font requester. In this way, using all the printer's fonts in a single document is as easy as using any Amiga font.

This feature alone would make Wordworth 1.1 an immensely attractive buy for many dot matrix owners, but when taken in conjunction with PostScript fonts, page scaling, page preview, and colour NLQ printing, the upgrade makes Wordworth the most complete and desirable Amiga wordprocessor. Sorry Protext!

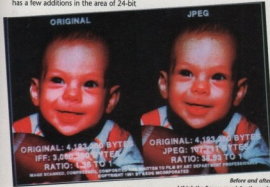
Stevie Kennedy

Phone Digita on 0395 270273 for further details.

Lovely lasers

The most significant addition to version 1.1 has to be its support for PostScript, the language spoken by most of the better laser printers. By creating a document in PostScript fonts, the user can now produce hard copy of a quality limited only by the laser printer.

Digita have resisted the temptation to make PostScript a "bolt-on" upgrade. Instead, they have fully integrated it, such that PostScript printing — complete with page scaling — appears on its own screen within the printing preferences section. On the whole, PostScript implementation is smooth, seamless, and very neatly done. In addition, the Wordworth



Before and after — I think the figures speak for themselves

UPDATE

AMIGA

Anti-aliased and Standard *Can you spot the difference*

► Unfortunately I can't really say that the enhancement is particularly spectacular, as you can probably tell from the screenshot (above).

The anti-aliasing has been applied to the words "Anti-aliased" and also the "and", but unless your eyesight is a good deal better than mine I doubt you'll see much improvement.

As well as the rather anti-climatic anti-aliasing come four or five extra whips and fades, which no doubt add a little more range to your presentations.

To be fair, many of the major improvements are hidden away in the bowels of the software so it's perhaps a

little early to complain. All the new elements are listed below so have a browse and see if anything suits your palette.

As I said there are not a great number of changes on the surface, but

under the skin there's quite a lot going on.

Unfortunately there is a downside. For some ridiculous reason the software still doesn't support continuous cycling. Instead we're limited to the original standard of 99 loops, after which intervention is required from the user to restart the presentation.

Why can't a continuous option be added? Scala's big brother, namely Info Channel, already supports it, so why isn't it included?

Life would become a lot easier for those of us interested in product display and unmanned multimedia applications.

If you do invest make sure you receive the latest 1.1 manual, as some packages have been shipped with the older model. Without the updated version you'll have a very hard time digging out some of the more subtle improvements.

Paul Austin

New features

AREXX support
Canon StillVideo control
Anim RealTime buffering
Colorfont support
Full support for outlined fonts
under WorkBench 2.1
Automatic remapping of brushes
and colorfonts
Superimpose transition
A to Z transition

Layout box display
Full dead-stop
New controls for remapping,
underline air and underline
position
Improved loading time on A3000
– now up to five times as fast
Automatic polarity buffering for
interactive applications
New function key commands

Hit Kit axed!

Those Mancunian musos at Galits music software have made a novel move in the already confusing area of upgrades by ignoring the predictable path of constant additions. Oh no, they're actually taking something out, namely the Hit Kit, which in the past was bundled free with any purchase of Sequencer 1.

In brief, the Hit Kit is a collection of various complementary Midi sequences which cover all manner of musical styles. It allows you to build entire songs by simply combining their various component parts.

Drum patterns, middle eights, bass lines, arpeggios – they're all there, and in just about every style from Latin to House. It's even possible to produce complete songs, but if you're in the market for a record contract I wouldn't advise it...

Now before you all head for the hankies, it's not as bad as it sounds. The Hit Kit isn't dead, it's just gone to a better place, and in the process it has had some extra bits added.

As a result it now appears as a standalone package which will retail for £29.95. So for those of you who want to adopt the Lego approach to music making it could be an ideal Christmas present.

GB Route Plus Edit

GB Route Plus, as reviewed last month, stands as the only serious Amiga route-finder program and, though greatly improved over the original version, it isn't perfect. The release of GB Route Plus Edit should bring the program closer to its optimum performance.

The editor is a very simple program whereby the GB Route Plus user can alter the map used by the main program. Alterations are carried out on a full copy of the original map, places and routes being added with the mouse and a system of X,Y coordinates.

Small town boy

If, therefore, you're a bit miffed at not finding your village marked on the GB Route map, it is a matter of minutes to amend the data, add the roads to connect your rural domicile to the outside world, and save the results to your GB Route disk. The program is very easy to use and will allow any number of alterations to be made to the original map.

Unfortunately, you cannot alter the positions of the locations given in the original map, and it isn't pos-

sible to amend the details given for roads or sections of road already on the map.

This means you couldn't, for instance, decide to lower the speed rating of a section of motorway you know will be suffering from roadworks for a few

months, but as you can compensate for this in GB Route through various preferences settings, the omission isn't damaging.

The XPOS and YPOS coordinate system used by the editor is fairly accurate, and should allow the placement of new towns to within half a mile or so, so it's accurate enough for the purposes to which GB Route puts the map. You can enter locations in national grid coordinates, but the X,Y system is more precise.

In large towns and cities, it should be good enough to enable the inclusion of detailed delivery routes to individual customers, depots, or even the locations of real ale pubs, cash and carry warehouses, and hospitals.

The uses to which GB Route can now be put, thanks to GB Route Plus Edit, are limited only by the needs of the person using it.

As the program is currently available to registered users for only £9.95, it represents a bargain you shouldn't be without.

Stevie Kennedy
Complex Computers can be reached on 0706 224531.



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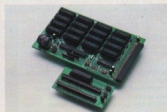
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Snarl though some arcade freaks may at the phrase "adventure game", the genre has refused to die. Its demise has been predicted or announced a dozen times in the last decade, and each time the harbingers of doom have rung the adventure game's death knoll just a bit too soon.

Since The Quill wowed Spectrum-owning adventure fans in 1984, there have been many packages released whose purpose is to aid in the coding of text-only or text-graphics adventure games.

Until the release of Visionary, Heyley Software's HotRack 2 was the only example of this kind of package available for the Amiga. Now, however, Aegis have come up with what is easily the most powerful adventure creation language in the 16-bit market place.

Graphics bonanza

Visionary is intended as a complete mini-language rather than a code generator. It can therefore be used to create anything from a simple text adventure to a totally mouse-based Dungeon Master-style game complete with animation and sound.

The downside is that the Visionary language has to be learned before users can produce their own games, but this is offset by the fact that the language is small, friendly, and as much like plain English as possible. You may not be able to boot up and go with this package, but the excellent manual with its straightforward tutorials and sample game makes for a smooth and glitch-free learning curve.

The manual takes beginners through the game creation process by using a sample game, entire listings for which are located at the back of the instructions. Each of Visionary's code sections are introduced and their basic structures explained before the more advanced features are reached in later chapters.

In this way, the learner can proceed from simple room descriptions through objects and their manipulation, to the adding of graphics, animation and sound. In all sections, however, the Visionary language remains easy to grasp and no more taxing than Basic or Amos.

In some ways, particularly the manipulation of graphics and the mouse,

A vision of the past?

Stevie Kennedy tries out Visionary, the latest adventure writing package

Visionary is similar to Amos in that it has powerful commands for creating "click zones" and for detecting when a mouse button is pressed within a zone. The user can utilise these features to create graphics adventures including screen graphics with hot spots and active elements.

This means, in short, that a finished game might allow the player to click on an icon to examine something, then click on the object in the screen picture to receive a description.

Hot demo

The demonstration game "I was a cannibal for the FBI", which comes with the Visionary Programmer's Handbook (an optional extra), includes objects which may be clicked on and dragged to the player's inventory area, hot spots, mouse control of movement, and many other features which the user would otherwise have to code long and hard to achieve in C or Assembler.

The experienced Amos programmer could produce similar results with almost the same degree of ease, but as Visionary is designed specifically for adventure games, it is both easier to learn and more adept at creating the results required by the adventure fan.

Possibly the most useful and powerful feature in Visionary, however, is its flexible implementation of attributes. Each room can have up to 32 attributes, as can each object in the game. These can be designed by the programmer or can be standard Visionary attributes. The Default attribute is the most commonly used, as it sets out the possible exits from a room, closely followed by Visited, which automatically tests to see if a room has been entered, and the self-explanatory Dark attribute.

The values of these attributes can be tested at any point in the game to deter-

mine how Visionary will react to a player's input, and they come into their own when the user designs attributes of his or her own. With a bit of thought, you could have a Weight attribute for each object, or an Airsplay attribute for every room in a space station-type game, or even a Friendly attribute when designing non-player characters (NPCs).

With a maximum of 65,000 each of objects, rooms, subroutines, or possible actions, and a whopping upper limit of 128,000 variables, the programmer has plenty of scope to play around. Add to this the 4.3 billion characters of text Visionary can handle – though I challenge you and your hard drive to make use of them – and you have a system capable of keeping up with the most prolific of creators.

All Visionary games start their life as Ascii text files entered using a wordprocessor or text editor. Aegis supply the Visionary Interactive Editor to make creating graphics and generating code as easy as possible, but I didn't have a copy and relied instead on Cygnus Ed to create text files.

Once you've typed in your code, you must compile it using the Visionary compiler VCOMP. This works extremely fast, and generates code ready to be tested with the DEBUG utility. DEBUG is a very friendly piece of software, and lies at the heart of every Visionary creation. It makes testing and debugging almost as pleasure as it enables the users to

change attributes, jump from location to location, change startup parameters, and generally muck about with the code to his or her heart's content.

If you generate a cross-referenced error file when compiling, it is relatively easy to find and correct errors, track down rogue variables, and sort out subroutines. Once the bugs are removed, the code is then ready to be linked, using the VLINK linker, at which point it becomes a standalone game you can freely distribute or sell.

Completed standalone games are at least 200K in size, as this is the amount of code tacked on by the linker to enable them to run. However, as this leaves 500K for your source code before a floppy disk's limits are reached, there is enough room for even the largest of games.

Huge graphics-only affairs will sometimes cause storage problems, and may have to be crunched, but until you're prepared to learn enough assembler to code a game from scratch, you'll just have to accept the odd limitation.

Conclusion

Whether your tastes are of the text-only variety, or your secret dream is to create a Dungeon Master variant with a Terry Pratchett theme, complete with animated Rincewind, you'll find that Visionary has the power to develop the game you've been hiding for lack of programming skills.

All those potential programmers who've begun from a comatose slumber over a beginner's guide to C or assembler are recommended to give Visionary a look. It's well worth it.

Visionary is a product of Oxi-Aegis Inc., PO Box 90309, Long Beach, CA 90809

Phone: 0101 213 427 1227
Price: No UK price as yet – phone Aegis for details
Release: Imminent



Visionary is capable of producing games in the style of graphics-only programs such as Bloodhorn

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Daniel Whitehead takes a journey through the scrolly-infested PD jungle to see what he can find

SHAREWARE SHOPPER

Selection

The Eric Schwartz Collection

George Thompson Services Theme Pack

The big mention this month goes to George Thompson Services down in Hertfordshire. They now offer various "theme" packs of PD software for around a tenner, and one of their latest packs is bound to be of interest to those who like to use their Amigas to show off to their ST-owning friends.

For only £9.99, or £10.99 for non-members, you get a set of five disks comprising nine of the now classic Eric Schwartz animations. You also receive a slide show entitled *The History of Amy*, tracing the life of Schwartz's cartoon creation Amy the Squirrel right back to the turn of the century, and a disk of some highly impressive, and reputedly rather rare, animations by Dennis Sibera.

All the animations run from Worklunch, although a lot of the more impressive Schwartz anims require more than 1 meg. They do take quite a while to install, but once all the frames and sound effects have been made ready the animation will run over and over again until a mouse click allows you to choose another.

The animations typify the Schwartzian sense of humour and fans of his Aerotoons will be pleased to see the return of Nasty Aggressor Training and Skydive, while the other vintage offerings range from a short but sweet Batman spoof to a brilliantly thought-out Road Runner tribute.

Of course, the quality of the drawings is excellent, and Schwartz's talent for creating great facial expressions puts him on a par with, ooh, Tony Hart at least. Honestly though, if you've never seen an Aerotoon, then you haven't lived. Every time I've loaded them up, a small crowd gathers to watch and people can be heard murmuring things like "They're very good aren't they?", "Yes, it's just like the telly" and so on.

Despite the slightly higher price than usual, the pack is well worth shelling out for, if only because the animations contained within are fast becoming Amiga legends. Just the thing to while away the cold winter nights with the family, and it's bound to be more entertaining than Russ Abbott's Christmas "bonanza".

Wasteland is the first game to hit the PD market from the 3D Construction Kit, and quite a nice little effort it is too. The idea is that you are assigned the unenviable task of preventing a nuclear meltdown by exploring the reactor and stabilising the core.

It's a good idea, and it plays pretty well. The author has got to grips with the construction kit, despite its bugs and niggles, and has produced a game that is definitely worthy of a budget release, maybe even full price!

It's actually quite hard, and it may take even the most dedicated adventurer a while to suss things out. So, not one for the novice, but if you've done six impossible things before breakfast, why not round them off by completing Wasteland?

The graphics are a little rough around the edges and they can be quite disorientating at times, but



The first fruits of the 3D Construction Kit in the shape of Wasteland

Wasteland

N.B.S. PD Disk No. G206

the sense of scale is captured with style, and the sound effects add greatly to the atmosphere. Given the restrictions of the construction kit, this bodes well for the future of PD games after the glut of mediocre

SEUCK offerings. Very professional presentation, a massive play area and plenty of puzzles make it fiendishly difficult to fault, as well as to play. As a PD game, this is an absolute bargain. Snap it up.

The Birth of Film

George Thompson Services

If you've ever wanted to know how the motion picture was developed, then this disk is just the thing for you. On the other hand, if you're a DVideo

fanatic then this is a shining example of what can be achieved with a bit of effort and an interesting subject.

Taking the form of an interactive tutorial, it takes you through, amazingly enough, the birth of film, and illustrates its points with small animations and text windows containing relevant information. These are accessed by clicking on people's names in the text, or pictures which

then burst into action to bring the story to life.

Considering the subject matter, this is a great idea, and as the animations and text are onscreen at the same time, you can see what you're reading about.

This works really well, as you can find out all about the first moving pictures as you watch them. Educational and interesting.

The clear graphics and well written text go nicely together to form a package that wouldn't look out of place on the CDTV. No keyboard entries are required, so I wouldn't be at all surprised if it does find its way to the screens of "the shiny disked one".

Oozing professionalism all over the shop, this little educational proglette will be of great use to anyone studying the media, or indeed anyone who's remotely interested in what films were like before Terminator 2 was even a twinkle in Mr Hollywood's eye. Very impressive.



Everything you wanted to know about Mars, but couldn't be bothered to ask

Mars

George Thompson Services

Blimey, yet another George Thompson Services disk. They are busy little beavers down in Hertfordshire. Again, this disk is very well presented, with loads of digitised pictures and well thought out text.

It's another educational disk, along the lines of the Birth of Film, but without the interactive aspect. What you get is a slide show of various pictures of the red planet, with relevant features highlighted and text describing just why that red smudge is really the majestic heights of the Olympus Mons.

It's not as exciting or interesting as the Birth of Film disk, and it lacks the interactive element. Whereas in Birth of Film you could explore the program to a certain extent, the Mars disk is very much a spectator affair. All you can do is sit back and watch all the pretty pictures. Some animation would have spiced it up a bit, and some sound perhaps, but as it stands it does tend to get a dull.

I suppose if you're a big fan of the planet Mars, then this may be of interest, but it doesn't take advantage of the computer medium, which leaves it fairly redundant.

Mission X

N.B.S. PD Disk No. G208

Yet another Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit creation, and this one's actually a sequel! Yes, these SEUCK games are self-multiplying, it would seem. This, for those who want to know, is the sequel to R.A.I.D. (that's Really 'Ard In Design, fact fans) which was reviewed in the November issue, and actually got a lukewarm thumbs up.

Not that the sequel seems to go any further in the quest for originality, settling instead for different backgrounds and enemies.

As far as SEUCK games go, this one is probably the best you're likely to find. The graphics are of a very high quality, although they do look a tad SWIVish, and really wouldn't look out of place in a professional game. The sound's not 'arf bad either, as it happens.

If the game has one major fault it's that, like a lot of SEUCK games, it's just too unapproachable. The collision detection is dubious at times and the trundling speed makes it hard to carry out any great feats of speed and skill. Blind



An amazing new concept in PD games? Er, well, no actually. Mission X from N.B.S.

luck seems to be just as much a part of play as joystick dexterity. Unfortunately, we've seen this sort of thing chugged out on PD month after month and Mission X is really nothing new. If you haven't already got a SEUCK game, then this is the best so far, but if you've got piles of them exploding from your disk box then this isn't really worth the effort. What a miserable old thing I am.

Catacombs

AmigaNuts Disk No. 1202

As everyone decks the halls and jingles their bells for the festive season, the number of PD games is rocketing. What better way to spend those last few pounds from that mysterious Auntie

Angus in Inverness you never knew you had?

Well, you could splash out on this cheapo Gauntlet rip off. Not what you'd call the best PD game in the world, but it's playable enough and is even charming in its own little fluffy way.

You control the traditional furry underpantsed, axe-wielding barbarian

who must make his way up through different dungeons, for no other reason than that it's those barbarians like to do when they're not barbarianing.

Along the way you can collect keys for doors, treasure for points and kill monsters for the hell of it.

Unfortunately, there isn't really enough to do on each level to make it a really gripping game. If you're very lucky you may meet one or two monsters, and then despatch them with a few swipes from your axe.

As such, this game isn't really seat-of-your-pants adventuring. What it is though, is a fairly competent puzzle game.

Some thought must go into which way to go and how to get to a key, so you can get through a door so you can get to the exit, and so on.

If you look beyond the flickery graphics and the jerky scrolling, it's harmless enough. Don't rush out to get it, but give it a go if the opportunity arises.

Video and Text Viewer

AmigaNuts Disk No. 1199

Another treat for all you video buffs. This handy little program allows you to add rolling credits to your home video masterpieces, so Jeremy Beadle knows exactly who's who when you send him that humorous clip of your mother-in-law failing of a swing.

The program will take text files, and allow them to be edited and generally mucked about with so they look a bit more snarky. You know, nice colours, even big letters, that sort of thing. Also available to impress friends and family with are a variety of spooky screen wipes so your text can be scrunched and slipped all over the shop, rather than just scrolling up the screen.

The program isn't just restricted to home video use though – it can also be used to add scrolling text files to your Amiga programs, so you can make the README file on your disks a little bit more exciting.

Please note that this program is not PD, and is only available through AmigaNuts. Anyone else who is distributing it is a thieving toerag and deserves what they get. Oh yes indeed.

The whole thing is fairly easy to get to grips with, and there are a couple of example files to give you some ideas. Add to this a huge manual on the disk that gives you all the commands in great detail and you've got a powerful package. Well worth making the effort to get used to.

Graphics Construction Kit

17 Bit Disk No.1417

For those who want to dabble in every aspect of graphics work on the Amiga, this disk should satisfy your craving. Not, as its title might suggest, a complete graphics package, but rather a selection of the tried and tested PD graphic design programs.

Andrew's Animation Studio puts in an appearance, fresh from our June CoverDisk, and is joined by plenty of other handy utilities. There's a mouse pointer animator, a font editor, and various file converters. There's also PPShow and PPAnim, and a variety of boot programs. Something for everyone.

Not really suitable for a beginner, as

some of the programs require at least some experience with other programs of this kind. People who are interested in professional animations probably won't find anything new here, but it does make a useful sketchpad for ideas to see how they work.

There are some criticisms, not least of which is that a lot of the programs are in German, which won't make things that much easier. Also, many of the programs don't have Docs which doesn't help, especially when the actual programs are still in their native tongue.

Still, what you do get for the price is plenty of useful graphics tools, and if you can read German then you shouldn't have any problems at all.



The many wonders that the patchy Graphics Construction Kit can offer

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 6124 - POM POM Game - *Trifid!*
 6125 - Hollywood Trivia - Quiz good
 6126 - The Very Adjective the
 6127 - The Very Adjective the
 6128 - Trivia - Written with space race
 6129 - The Very Adjective the
 6130 - The Very Adjective the
 6131 - CULEBLES - By Tooby from ET
 6132 - Ready Ready - Educational pre school
 6133 - The Very Adjective the
 6134 - The Maze - Incredible 10 maze
 6135 - Trivia - Needs two players
 6136 - The Very Adjective the
 6137 - Trivia - Needs two players
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 6200 - The Very Adjective the

- P91 - Pieriam - Absolutely superb
P93/4 - Star Trek Megadrome - I May miss
P95 - Rick Parks Art - Quite incredible

ANIMATIONS (most 1mb)

- [illegible]

- M223 - ESI Modules Disk 3
M225 - Audiomagic V2 - More utilities
M227 - Prognosis Samples - Sound samples
M229 - Jean Michel Jarre Live - Brilliant
M234 - Delta Music Editor - Very good

DE LA VII^e LEÇON. — 1891.DEJA VU (Incorporating
MCCN) 01-08-06

- [illegible]

BUSINESS & SERIOUS

- B02 - Wordwright - Wordprocessor
- B04 - Clerk - Accounting
- B06 - U-Edit - Very powerful wordprocessor
- B07 - Flexibase - Powerful yet easy to use
- B09 - Anabase V3.76 - Excellent database
- B10 - Inventory & MemoPad - Very handy
- B12 - Business Card Maker - Pretty Good
- B14 - Vitec - Similar to Lotus 1-2-3 or PC
- B17 - QED - Superb text editor
- B18 - Trooplog V3.0E - Bad crunched files!
- B19 - 600 Business Letters - Brilliant
- B20 - Missyred V2 - Latest version
- B21 - Filbase II - Easy to use database
- B22 - Database Wyr - Name & address
- AFD10 - Forms Ready Unlimited
- AFD119 - Ready Mail database V2.0
- AFD132 - Family History Database
- AFD134 - Spanish Diary - Pretty good!
- AFD257 - Cassette Labeler - For the lazy
- AFD266 - Area 3D Demo

MUSIC

- M11 - *Social Samples* - Includes perfect score
- M14 - *Vibrato* - Brilliant music & graphics
- M10 - *Jazz: Middle Jazzy* - with good pics
- M14 - *Beethoven Music Box 2* - Very good
- M15 - *Sounds of Silence* - 7 tracks, VGood
- M18 - *Angelswept* - By Rod Taylor, Bill
- M19 - *Classic 1 - M* - Electric strings again!
- M20 - *Classic 2* - More of his formidable work
- M34 - *APDC 11* - Sound utilities
- M35 - *APDC 18 - MID UTILITIES*
- M42/3 - *Soundtracker V4* - Excellent
- M52/3/4/5 - *Modules* - Need I say more?

SLIDESHOWS & PICS

- P05 - Fendle Europa Slideshow - V. Good
P09 - Sandide II - Exceptional quality
R11C - New Slideshow - Best 1, 2, 3 hrs

EDUCATIONAL & GAMES

- G002/3/4/5 - **Ed-Pack** - Teenagers & over
- G007 - **Learn & Play** - Infant & junior age
- G112 - **Game Solutions** - Very good
- G124 - **Talking Coloring Book** - Nearly OK
- G20 - **Hurricane II Demo** - Playable demo
- G22 - **Tennis** - 3D game, needs 1 meg!
- G312 - **Star Trek** - By Thomas Richter
- G35 - **Board Games** - Includes Monopoly
- G38 - **Frantic Freddy** - Good arcade fan
- G39 - **Chuzzle** - Excellent game
- G43 - **Amalgam** - Demo 12 also drip
- G43 - **Megadrip** - Excellent breakfast clone
- G44 - **Wack** - In Wonderland - Excellent
- G46 - **Super Drive** - Good Speedster clone
- G47 - **Amalgam Chase** - Very nicely done

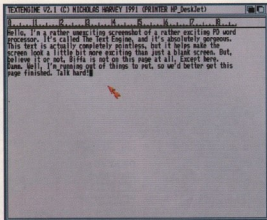
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Text Engine v2.1 is possibly the best PD wordprocessor ever

Text Engine v2.1

17 Bit Disk No.1401

Guess what this is. An extremely good shareware wordprocessor, with a bunch of features and a friendly approach that makes it very easy to get the hang of. That's what it is.

Some of you may be familiar with Text Engine, so for your benefit the new version boasts a new menu layout, erase facilities, disk DIR function, and apparently this time the Delete key works properly! It also features 10 macros, which can easily be redefined using the cleverly designed macro editor. All the features you'd expect from a full price WP package and, as they say on TV, many more.

It can switch from NTSC to PAL mode, so it's compatible with whatever setup you use. There's plenty of text styles, from italic to extra height, which only show up when printed, but markers appear to let you know what's been changed. It's an amazingly professional

package. There's also a spell checker on the disk and a word count in the program.

If you want a great wordprocessor for under a tenner then don't hesitate to get hold of this. As it is shareware the author is relying on you, the honest and lovable public, to pay him his dues and send him a meady fiver. You know it makes sense.

Label Designer 17 Bit Disk No. 1389

This is one of those funny little utilities that is useful in a strangely useless sort of way. What it does is, quite simply, allow you to design labels and print them out for your disks.

It's the sort of thing that may never have crossed your mind, but it's a pretty handy thing to have. It should be of extra special interest to people thinking of setting up a PD library, or just for making your Amiga Computing Gallery disks look more impressive.

It's very easy to use, and will load files which you can then edit to suit

Scanner disk magazine

Telescan Computer Services

Disk-based magazines vary from the downright awful to the pretty damn impressive, and luckily Scanner is one of the impressive ones. It comes on two disks - one disk containing the bulk of the editorial and the second disk holding any games or demos that wouldn't fit on the first disk.

For your money you get a plethora of the latest demos and PD games, plus some golden oldies that you may have forgotten about. The games are almost always some of the best on the scene and vary from shoot-'em-ups to puzzle games.

On the editorial side you get regular PD news updates, which cover the whole PD world fairly comprehensively, a letters section which proves that PD is becoming more than just a hobby for a lot of people, and a variety of features, memory space permitting.

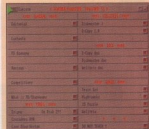
The writing is always informative, and refreshingly informal, and the direct interaction between readers and the magazine itself is a sign of a healthy interest in disk magazines.

For the technically minded among you, there's always a good selection of new PD utilities to try out, which makes the magazine a lot less short-sighted than other disk magazines which can tend to concentrate on coders and other small areas of the Amiga PD world.

Also published as a spin-off from Scanner is Humdringer. This irregular series manifests itself as two disks stuffed with PD games, and I do mean stuffed. You get about 20 games per disk, so there's a couple of hours to be spent just looking through all

the games on offer. Bargain city, dudes. A lot of thought and planning has gone into Scanner - the front end is easy on the eye and everything is only a mouse click away. Issue four should be available as you read this, as should Humdringer the Revenge.

All in all, Scanner is possibly the best disk-based magazine around, and if you want a monthly supply of the cream of PD then a subscription to Scanner is worth its weight in vector bobs.



The polished front end of Scanner disk magazine, and you can't tear the pages!

your purpose before printing out. With a bit of effort you can get them printed on sticky labels and have a really efficient library operation.

That's about it really. It's easy to use, there's some example files on the disk, and it's as useful as you make it. If it sounds like the sort of thing you might need then go get it.

Insanity Tools

17 Bit Disk No. 1418

No less than 203 utilities on one disk. Yup, count 'em - 203 utilities. Obviously, there are about fifty or so virus killers, and several million sample rippers, but, to coin a phrase, variety is the spice of life.

Now, if you actually expect me to tell you about each and every utility, then you're sadly mistaken. There is a limit to journalistic inspiration you know, but I will tell you some of the goodies you can get from this disk.

There's a FixSaddam, to sort out that highly humorous virus that really had everyone rolling in the aisles, there's a couple of boot intros that you can install on your disks so that you can have games playing as the disk boots, there's a fractal generator, the perennial PPMore, and literally hundreds more.

I think it's fairly safe to say that you'll find something of use here, and even if you only ever use five or even ten of the utilities, you'll have got your money's worth. Serious techy boffins should look out for this one.



This is one of the default pictures you can use for the Label Designer

WRITTEN BY JEFF WHITE

DEMO'S

- A388 Bart Simpson Demo/Decay
A396 Phenomena Engima Demo
A304 Any vs Wallace: Schwartz, 1 Mb
A331 Ark: Lemmings Demo/2 Disks, 2 Mb
A334 Batman the Movie/E. Schwartz, 1 Mb
A336 Shuttle-Coach Ann.E. Schwartz, 1 Mb
A338 Mr Potato Head i/Chris Hill (1 Mb)
A340 Pleasure in i/Excellent Pleas Demo
A342 Virtual World Demo
A350 Scorpions Demo Disk 1/5
A352 Tronball Animation (1 Mb)
A360 Digital Innovation/Anarchy's label
A362 Defjam Demo/Wel Worth a Look
A367 Unicorny Anim (1 Meg)
A375 Piano Anim (1 Meg)
A372 Terminator 2 Slideshow (2 Disks)

SOUND

- 5001 Sound tracker: Music programme (needs ST-Q1)
5002 Sound Games creator
5004 Med music programme V.3.0
5006 Med V3.1/1 meg only
5010 Protracker 1.18 needs ST-Q1
ST-Q1 Instrument disk for SoundProtracker
ST-Q7 Speech samples for SoundProtracker

EDUCATIONAL

- E001 Education Disk 1 (Age 5+)
E004 Education Disk 4 (Age 5+)
E006 Learn and Play (Age 4+5)
E008 Colouring Book (Age 5+)

GAMES

- G003 Drip Arcade Game
G007 Tennis/2 Player Tennis
G044 Chess/superb version
G048 Seven Tiles/Speedball Game
G049 Eat Mine/Enraged Mine Game
G051 Fantastic Freddie Arcade Game
G052 Pipeline/Pompania Game
G059 Wheel of Fortune/TV Quiz Game
G060 Quizmaster v1.3a: Chivham
G061 Property Market/Trading Game
G064 Game Cheats/Codes + Solutions
G067 Mental Image Game Disk 1
G068 Casino Games/Compilation
G069 Space Games/Compilation
G069 Space Games/8 Games
G071 Castile of Occoon Adventure
G072 Spacey Emulator + Games
G073 Megaball Breakout Game
G074 Adventure Writer
G076 Star Trek Shoot-em-up
G077 Simpsons Shoot-em-up
G078 Batsmanacy/Archie (1 Mb)
G079 Wizzy's Quest/Arcade (1 Mb)
G080 Popsys LCD Game
G081 Cubulus/Rubic Type Puzzle Game
G082 Downhill Challenge/Skiing Game
G083 Destination: Moonbase/Lunar Lander Game
G084 Fruit Machine Simulator/Amos PD
G086 Pat-i-Amos PD (1 Mb)
G087 Jeopardy/Rac Style Game (1 Mb)
G088 Master of the Town/Target Practice
G090 Five Alive/Compilation 5 games
G091 Computer Conflict/Shoot-em up
G092 Quiz Master 2 Professional
G096 Zeus/Puzznic Game
G100 Mach Fight/8 FI RPG Game
G101 H.A.C.L. Solutions/Games Hacks
G103 Pom-Pom Gunner/Shoot-em up
G107 Monopoly/English version

UTILITIES

- U001 Ambase Excellent Database
U003 #F: Fonts and surfaces for DTP
U007 Dope Intonator
U008 Space writer Demo creator
U009 RM relational database
U010 Viscous spreadsheet
U011 Jazz bench work bench replacement
U012 North T's compiler
U027 Emulators/C&A and ST
U028 Bank N/Accounts Programme
U031 Russian virus killer V.2.1 kills 124 viruses
U065 M-ast: Computer aided design
U067 Crunchers compilation inc. power pack
U069 i-Copy backs up protected disks (most)
U070 Mandarbit: PD compilation
U099 AMPO utility disk: 30+ Utilities
U109 Dantstar utilities 3/Compilation
U120 SIOCU compilation
U121 C- Light Ray Tracing package
U125 Red Sector Demo Compiler
U129 PDC 3.33/Complex C Compiler
U130 Black Tiger Star Utilities
U135 C Manualiser version 1.4 disk
U139 Fonts for Red Sector Demo Master
U140 Wordright/WP & Spellchecker
U142 A&A Emulator V1.0/ICA Emulator
U145 Rainbow Writer/Video Creator
U158 Trilogic back up disk/Copy compilation
U160 Delta Crew Virus Filters/Compilation
U161 Mandarbit Animation V1.2
U163 RM PD Emulator/2 Disks
U183 Typing Tutor
U184 ABPO Comm's Pack/Komem and J/Room
U195 Door to Door/Route planner
U196 TSB Vector Designer V1.1
U176 Vector Bell Editor V1.2
U177 RSI Demo Maker Music Disk 1
U178 RSI Demo Maker Modules Disk 2
U180 RSI Demo Maker Utility Disk
U181 TV Graphics Video Graphics Clip Art
U219 TV Fonts/Video Fonts Clip Art
U220 ClipArt for DTP

MUSIC

- M062 Phenomena Music 1/18 wicked tunes!
M067 Madonna Vogue/Sides & Music
M068 Madonna Spensky
M071 D Mad music
M076 Synth Music 6/3 tunes inc. Cygnine
M080 Janet Jackson/Rhythm Nation 1814
M085 Amazing Tunes 1/3 Disk (1 Mb)
M086 Computer Game Music Disk/Compilation
M088 ECM Music Disk 8 tunes
M096 Intruders Music Disk/Variety
M097 Technomix II Music Disk

- M032 Groove is in the heart
M016 Feel The Rhythm
M017 Technomix Mega Mix
M021 Jet Shop Boy's/Superbia
M022 Digital Concert 3
M028 Digital Concert 6
M030 808 State Semires
M035 100 C&A tunes
M040 Simpsons Do the Bart man. 3 disks
M042 Betty Boo 2 disks
M044 Miami Vice Remix

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Super Twintris

17 Bit Disk No. 1419

Yup, it's that of Russian puzzle classic, updated and revamped for the PD world yet again. And yet again, it's great fun.

The big twist here is the inclusion of a simultaneous two-player option, so the heat is really on to beat your mates. Apart from that, there's very little else new about it. There's a cute bat and ball game as you boot up, and the presentation is first class. If you still don't own a version of this dangerously addictive game then this is as good as any.

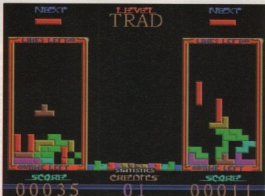
Master of the Town

Digitz Disk No. GAME86

The Weirdest PD Game of the Month award definitely goes to this rather dodgy Operation Wolf clone. As most of the text in the game is in German, and there are no instructions, the actual ins and outs of the plot are slightly blurred.

What happens is that you are faced with a nice picture of a street, and must then smash everything by throwing stones at them. Or at least that's what it looks like. Thankfully, the game is apparently free of any dubious neo-Nazi overtones, so we can only assume that it's just the product of some rather twisted little German fellas imagination.

Gratuitous vandalism aside though, it's not really a very good game. As there are no instructions, you have no idea of just which things you must smash before the sirens start and the police arrive. Plus the fact that it's incredibly dull. Nice graphics, nice sound, dismal idea. Don't bother.



Dismal German Oppo Wolf vandalism in Master Of The Town



Seeing double in the updated Super Twintris, still as addictive as ever

BattleCars

N.B.S. PD Disk No. G192

Ever fancied driving really fast and letting rip at other cars with a machine gun? Especially people who drive Allegros at 15 mph below the speed limit, no matter how many cars are queueing behind them. (Well, who hasn't?) Makes your blood boil doesn't it? Well, BattleCars lets you get revenge. Sort of.

It's a really straightforward concept. You've got two cars, and a large arena with some obstacles in it. All you've got to do is hunt down the other car and shoot it enough times so its armour gives way and it explodes.

The whole thing is seen in first person perspective, and the 3D view is surprisingly fluid. It's set at just the right speed as well, so you go fast enough to get the adrenaline flowing, but not so fast that you can't control your actions.

Another nice feature is the fact that you can link up with another computer and play against a mate. We couldn't try it in the office, but if it works then that should bring many a firm friendship crashing to the ground.

BattleCars is really good fun. It could have been better, though. The enemy car doesn't fire back so it does become a bit one-sided, and on the higher skill levels I often found that I lost for no good reason. Still, it's a good old-fashioned blast and certainly worth picking up for a couple of hours entertainment.



Kill the Lads! Motorised mayhem in BattleCars

Ring, ring, ring

If you've seen anything you fancy then give the bods in question a ring.

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RAMS

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Amazing animations, toe-tapping tunes and gorgeous graphics all figure as Jonathan Maddock dotes over this month's demos

Yes I'm back and on a regular basis too! I'll be here every month showing you the new and best demos that are around at the moment. Lights, camera, action...

First this month are the Keftrens and their Guardian Dragon Demo which features some very nice graphics and stonking sounds plus all the usual starfields and scrolly messages. This is a very good demo indeed and well worth adding to your collection.

If you are interested in vectors, scrollers and bright colours then the No Reality demo from the Devils might just be the disk that you are looking for. This demo has so many RGB plasmas that you are likely to need a thorough eye test after watching it. It also has a really funky tune and contains loads of vectors, some of which are really well put together.

Voyage by The Fantasy Force is original, has great graphics and excellent sound. It takes place in a vector world in which you move around, and you can access different parts by disappearing into a large TV set! It is well implemented and I must applaud The Fantasy Force for an excellent effort.

The next program is a mixture of games, demos, music, animations and a few utilities. The games section consists of two games, the first of which is called Frantic Freddie - OK but nothing special - and the second is a rather excellent Boulderdash clone called Cave Runner which is one mega game guaranteed to keep you coming back for more and more.

The demo section consists of two programs by Anarchy entitled Madness and Madness 2, both of which are outstanding, while the music section contains two tunes which are not really going to set the house on fire but are alright for a quick listen.

The animation on the disk is the third in a series of juggler animations. First of all you had the man juggler juggling the infamous Amiga balls, then you had the woman juggler juggling the infamous Amiga balls and now Axle productions present the juggia which is of an Amiga juggling it's own infamous balls. Got that?

Overall it's an excellent disk to have if you're strapped for cash because it has a bit of everything.

The disk is called Pic'n' Mix by Axle productions and you can obtain it from 17 Bit software. Fun



Disk of the Month award goes to Strictly PD with their highly amusing Warzone and Sickness simulator. Warzone consists of several helicopters, jet fighters and guns all sampled and at their disposal at the touch of a function key. The sickness sim comes complete with sampled burps, coughs and farts.

At the beginning of the month PD music disks were a bit sparse but, as if by magic, we received a super-abundance of them from Digitz. There isn't enough space to mention all of the disks in detail but, I will give you something to whet your appetite.

Golden oldies

The disks are all from America and range from entertaining sketches to some great golden oldie tunes from the sixties. The best sketch disk features a brilliant take off of Star Trek entitled Star Trek and features the crew of the Starship Booby Prize. It is hilarious and lasts a lengthy five minutes. It certainly had the Amiga Computing team rolling around the office.

The best music disk is entitled Baby Sittin' Boogie. This unbelievable chart hit reached number 17 in 1961 and was performed by Buzz Clifford (ask your mother or father - they'll tell you who he was). The thing that really makes the song is consistent gurglings from a baby, hence the title Baby Sittin' Boogie.

The other disks include chart hits such as I Talk to the Trees, I Got a Wife and No Time for Sergeants. The other sketch disks include Golf game, Call in the Family and Rock and Roll Doctor (very funny indeed).

The only other music disk we had in this month was from Amiganuts, containing four good tracks of music including the C & C Music Factory's Things that Make you go Hmmm and two tracks from top pop group Level 42 with Lessons in Love and Guaranteed. This disk is more than worth adding to your collection - get it today.

That's all for this month, demo fans. I'll be back next month, same time, same channel.

Animations

We have also had a whole truckload of animations in this month, and I've waded my way through them to sort out the best.

Lemmings - A Tale with a Moral, from NBS, shows a big lemming squashing a smaller lemming under his foot and then suffering the consequences of his actions. It's not nearly as good as the anti-lemming demo by Eric Schwartz, but is ideal for adding to your collection.

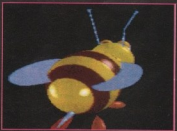
Digitz sent in an excellent animation. Entitled Tirreno, it features flying birds and fish! As it's 1 meg only, all you 1/2 meg owners will have to get an upgrade to see it. It is very smooth and shows what the Amiga really can do.

The most anims this month were sent in by our friends Amiganuts, ranging from busy bees to spaceships to flying clocks. The full list is as follows: Busy Bee, Orbiters, Wardrive, Trek, The Boings and last but not least Time Flies. All are brilliant and definitely worth adding to your collection.

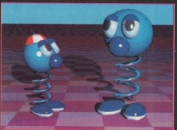
DEMO round-up



Oosh watch out out for that bee...



...aargh! it's stung me



Bouncing is more fun with the Boings



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If you're a regular reader it's almost certain you're well versed in the Amiga's huge array of graphic features. In recent months these features have been taken to the extreme thanks to packages such as Show Maker, Scala and of course the ever-growing band of 24-bit boards.

To compete in such illustrious company, any new package has to be very special indeed. On that score Presentation Master has nothing to worry about. Just like its contemporaries it has its own array of features which make it distinct from the rest of the field.

Unlike Scala and Show Maker, Presentation Master doesn't concern itself with the video graphic aspect of the machine, but rather sticks to its primary mission – the presentation of information.

Now before we delve into the ins and outs of the package it's worth defining just what Presentation Master is actually designed for, as it's very easy to lose the point, especially when you start twiddling with its huge array of options.

Presentation Master, as the name suggests, is at its best when used as part of a presentation. If you're a corporate high flyer who wants to introduce the boss with a multi-level introduction to your latest brainchild, it's perfect.

To achieve the ideal presentation, Presentation Master allows you to import scanned or digitised images, produce countless graphs of almost infinite variety, design logos and artwork in a PostScript-quality paint package, run animations and load Ascii text, which can then be stylised and added to the action.

Once the component pages are ready they can be included in the show via the slide sorter which allows you to arrange the various pages in the sequence of your choice.

Simply displaying one slide after another isn't much to shout about, so to enhance the action Presentation Master uses a hierarchical design which defines various pages as parents and other connected pages as children which can then only be accessed from the parent if and when required.

This system obviously lends itself to a stylised form of Hypertext. Let's say you're presenting a plan for a real estate development. Your opening slide could show a plan of the building itself. As the presentation progresses, either hidden or visible buttons within the primary image could trigger a whole series of slides that relate to that particular aspect of the development.

When a particular series of slides complete their display the presentation can automatically return to any point ready to either continue with the main thrust or diversify again onto another related subject.

Now if you've ever been the lucky

soul chosen to produce a presentation the thought of all this jumping around probably sounds like an ideal way of turning a great idea into an unmitigated disaster.

To combat the confusion Presentation Master offers a speaker's notes option which allows the user to append relevant information to each slide in the presentation. This can then be read prior to the presentation or printed beneath the image of the page.

Text talk

Obviously these notes don't need to be restricted to the presenter, and in fact there's nothing to stop you producing accompanying hard copy to enhance the show. Because of Presentation Master's PostScript potential, paper presentation can be almost as impressive as the onscreen alternative.

Perhaps the first task in any presentation is to add your literal genius to the action. This can be done in two ways, either via the good old fashioned manual method of bashing in the copy via

the keyboard, or alternatively by importing Ascii from your favourite wordprocessor. The latter is perhaps the best option as Presentation Master doesn't support any spell checking options as yet.

OK, if we assume that we have the necessary text, the next job is to glamourise your masterpiece with the addition of drop shadows, bullets, outlines or perhaps one of the numerous fonts packed onto the ten disks which make up the system. As you'll soon notice,

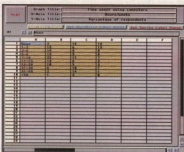
Presentation Master is almost as much of a DTP package as it is a presentation system. As a result some of the terminology used leans heavily towards publishing.

Perhaps the most noticeable reference within the text handling department is that of bullets.

A bullet is basically a small logo which

denotes a point of interest within the copy. So, for example, headings may have a star before the line to attract attention and subheadings might have a hash or perhaps nothing at all. Like the text itself the bullets can have drop shadows added, outlines, definable colours and a whole array of font sizes and styles.

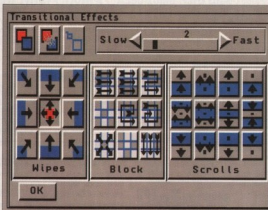
If the numerous fonts, bullet styles and enhancements needed to be added each time a new line was introduced,



Either type or import that vital information – it couldn't be simpler

Presenting a masterpiece

Paul Austin, AC's very own Mr Multimedia, looks at the ultimate way to put your ideas into action – with Presentation Master



Styling made simple – just a few minute's tinkering and you're on the way to a masterpiece



Placing pages couldn't be simpler thanks to the ever-friendly slide sorter

the whole process would be painfully slow. To avoid this, three levels of indentation can be assigned to each layer of the text to complete an overall style tag. These various styles can then be invoked by using the Tab key. No tabulation and the text could appear as a headline, one tab for standard text, and perhaps two tabs for cross headlines.

Each of these could, of course, have its own font and additional styling, all predefined via the text settings requester. Once the design of the text is complete you can turn your attention to the actual layout of the page itself.

To assist in the layout stage there's a selection of text handling tools which will automatically transform text from upper to lower case and can capitalise the entire text, or just the first letter of any word.

The usual selection of bold, underlined and italic are on hand, all of which can be added either as the text is typed or via a click and drag process which will produce a blanket transition over large areas of imported copy.

Title panel

Up until now I've mentioned the text layer but this is only part of the overall text page. Above the main text sits a heading and subheading panel which is set on its own plinth just like the larger window below.

On to this separate plinth you can place anything you want, but it's perhaps the perfect spot for the corporate slogan or maybe the title for your latest brainstorm.

Like all the available layers you're not just limited to the initial conditions imposed by the page style you first choose. Any layer can have additional graphics, text or graphs added as required.

The word layer has already been liberally spattered throughout the article but without any real clarification as to what it means. In short, Presentation Master sees a layer as a template onto which it can compile various types of visual information.

Whenever you highlight a particular

layer, its relevant tool kit appears ready for editing. Once the necessary changes are complete a simple selection from the pull downs brings up the next new tool kit and highlights the layer in question. When all the editing is complete, it's back to the slide sorter to place that particular page in the correct point in the show.

As I mentioned earlier the DTP feel is very strong and nowhere is it stronger than the graphic design section of the package. Producing any graphic layer immediately confirms an extra special paint package which is on a par with such illustrious names as a Pro Draw.

Bliss to use

One of its most impressive attributes is the ability to work with Presentation Master Polyfonts which, like the additional standard fonts, come as part of the package.

To be honest it's hard to stay objective for after a few minutes with these little beauties – they're quite simply bliss to use. They're a rather strange format which seem to be somewhere between Compugraphic and WorkBench 2.0's scalable fonts.

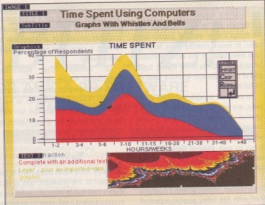
Whatever the format, it's the results that count and it's fair to say that they can be stunning. Apart from simply resizing the font it's still possible to edit each letter individually by selecting any one of the numerous points which appear on its surface when the latter is selected.

These points can then be clicked and dragged into any position. To make things even easier, small levers appear which can be pushed and pulled to produce perfect curves.

The aforementioned point editing process applies to all objects within the graphic window so there shouldn't be any need for the sometimes tricky process of drawing via the rodent.

Like the normal text fonts, Polyfonts can benefit from all the outlines, drop shadows and print styles of their less flexible counterparts, plus an extremely pleasant extrusion option which produces very convincing 3D effects.

Objects can be separated or grouped, and if necessary manipulated en masse.



A closer look at the wipes and fades that introduce your masterpiece to the public

Producing an undulating curve of text complete with a flowing graphic to complement the sentence would be simplicity itself.

Simply group all the components together and then distort them as a whole. When an object is defined it can be extruded, curved, or have perspective applied as required. The only real limit is your imagination.

Among the glamorous effects come the usual array of painting tools which any DPaint fan will know and love. Aside from the bending, distortion and perspective comes another requester literally fit to burst with a series of object arrangement tools that perform all manner of miraculous placement and morphing tricks between any two selected objects within the image.

To be honest the graphic facilities of Presentation Master could be well worth two pages all of their own but I'll afraid we'll have to keep things brief. Rest assured that it will be a very long time before you run out of ideas with what is one of the best PostScript-compatible paint packages I've had the pleasure of using.

It's almost a certainty that many images appearing in Amiga produced publications will have their roots firmly entrenched in the heart of Presentation Master thanks to this particular section of the program.

Data display

Now that we have the text and the graphics it's time to add those vital statistics that will hopefully clinch the deal or secure that well-earned promotion. To do this you'll need to employ Presentation Master's graph and chart producing talents.

Activating the chart and graph options is a simple matter of clicking on the chart icon within the paint program. This immediately brings up Presentation Master's data sheet which at first looks a little daunting.

Fortunately the accompanying manual is excellent on all aspects of the pro-

gram with the chapter on graphs and charts being no exception.

Data can be imported or typed in a similar manner to that of text entry. Once the data is in place and the parameters set all that's left is to hit the Plot button and watch your figures come to life in glorious technicolour.

Like the paint package, the charts and graphs section could eat away most of the mag if explained in full. Suffice to say that the display formats include horizontal and vertical bar graphs and line, area, spline and pie graphs. All graphs and charts can appear in either 2D or 3D.

Most of these styles can be applied directly to any data within the sheet by simply selecting a new display format from the Chart tool kit. This instantly transforms the information from one display format to the next in a matter of seconds.

If you're really out to impress, multi-series charts can be produced with individual parts of your database standing side by side to provide the best possible overview of the subject in question.

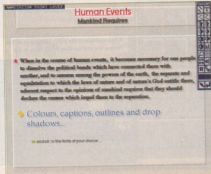
And finally...

When all the elements are complete each page can have any one of a wide variety of wipes and fades added with either manual or timed pauses between pages. All in all it's hard to find fault with what is a seemingly flawless execution of an original idea.

I only wish I had a few more pages to spend on what is one of the best power programs yet to appear on the machine. If you're interested it's worth remembering that a hard drive is essential, and anything less than 2 meg of memory would be suicide.

The package reviewed was a gamma test version. Pricing and supply details are as yet unknown.

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Finances. Budgets. Taxes. Three words that are guaranteed to send even the most organised among us into a frantic scramble for something else to do. We'll do anything but sift through endless figures.

But these things must be endured, so why not make them a little less hassle with an accounts package? Designed to make personal accounting at least bearable, digita,s Home Accounts 2 might just fit the bill.

Well, it's confession time. Asking me to review an accounts package is like asking Paul Daniels to write a thesis on early Bolivian farming methods. I know nothing whatsoever about personal finance.

So I suppose I'm the perfect person to try out this new *pièce de résistance* from Digita. After all, if it can sort out my twisted perception of money matters, then it's just got to be foolproof.

First impressions last

Thankfully, Home Accounts 2 has a very friendly approach which helped to thaw my initial trepidation, and although I was forced to refer to the manual to clarify a few terms, I could actually understand a lot of what the icons and menus were on about.

I was flabbergasted, not to mention a little bit worried. Could it be that I was actually going to understand an accounts package? A sobering thought.

Digitala pride themselves on the fact that Home Accounts 2 is easy enough for beginners to get into, but still detailed enough to allow all the financial buffons to do all their financial boffo bits. This is in evidence in the wonderful manual, without which I probably would've sunk without a trace. While the program is easily accessible, a good manual never goes amiss.

For beginners like me, the tutorial contained within the manual will take you by the hand and show you just how to set up your own accounts and keep track of them with the program. This step by step guide is very well thought out and rather than just say that "this does this and that does that" it helps you to set up an example file.

While you build up your example,

It'll demonstrate all the different features. It certainly made things a whole lot easier for me and if you're feeling nervous about cryptic options and unfathomable features then let me put your mind at rest. Home Accounts 2 is very, very easy to learn.

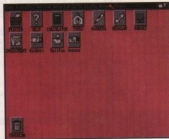
Taking account

After setting up all your preferences and dates and things, you come to the crux of the program. The first thing you must do is enter the details of all your accounts. Savings accounts, current account, credit card, that sort of thing. As you do this you can set a maximum and minimum limit on each account.

Thus if you want to keep your current account out of the red, you can have the program warn you when the balance reaches a set limit. This warning will come up each time you begin the program if the balance is not rectified, and is a very handy option especially for someone as totally disorganised as myself!

Once you have your accounts set up, you must set up your transaction types. These are used to clarify what each transaction was actually for. Each type is abbreviated to a four letter code, and can be expanded upon in a reference box so you won't forget what the codes stand for.

A list of all the transaction types



Into the black

Surely it's impossible?
Daniel Whitehead
attempts to sort out his budget with the help of Home Accounts 2



can be called up at any time with the F9 key and others can be added to keep up with your changing needs. The types can be anything from cash withdrawals to car expenses and gifts.

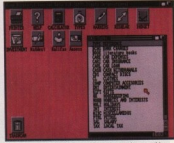
Of course, the whole thing is completely user definable, so if you want you can set up a transaction type to cover the purchase of free range eggs. That's assuming, of course that you want to

keep track of exactly how much you spend on free range eggs.

Some transactions can be set automatically, such as salary, taxes, any bank loans, mortgages and all the other wonderful ways that the world has to drain your resources. This way, you needn't worry if you don't use the program for another two months.

As soon as you enter the new date, the program will update its records according to the preset transactions, so when you look at your current account you'll see your salary in there and all the debits worked out for you.

This is very handy if you fancy hibernating for a few months but don't want to spend hours laboriously typing in all the comings and goings of your account when you wake up.

[illegible]

It's also a wonderful example of just how little effort is required to keep your financial records up to date.

Getting friendly

Another rather handy little feature comes into use when setting up a cheque account. Once you have entered the next cheque number from your cheque book, the computer will keep track of your cheques.

When entering a transaction, if a cheque is involved, pressing F8 will automatically insert the next cheque number. This helps to prevent scrambling through cheque stubs trying to remember which cheque was for what.

It's also handy for verifying which cheques have been cashed. It may only be a small feature, but it's further proof of a well thought out and user friendly program.

Once a transaction has been confirmed, by a bank statement for example, you can place an asterisk against it to denote that the transaction is reconciled. This will act as a final stamp to denote that even if you want to pretend otherwise, the money involved has been and gone. Gulp.

It's obviously a good idea to keep your files reconciled in this way, so you have an up to date record of what's gone through. If you want, the program will globally reconcile all transactions between any two dates, so you can reconcile all the transactions from your last bank statement in one fell

swoop. It can also automatically reconcile transactions if given the start date, the end date, the target balance and the number of transactions that should make that balance. Unfortunately, this won't always work things out the way you want them, so there is an option to repeat the process until it is to your satisfaction.

Obviously, a program dealing with such a diverse topic as finance has to be fairly flexible – different users will use the program for different reasons.

To cover this, Home Accounts 2 is as redefinable as possible. You can set all the default preferences, so if you tend to use cash machines a lot you can have "cash machine" as the default transaction type.

You can also redefine the function keys to suit your needs, and the balance sheets can be altered to remove any columns you don't make full use of. So whether you want to keep a note of your meagre savings account (like me) or hold sway over the finances of a major corporation, Home Accounts 2 can be adapted to your needs.

Stick to a budget

For those who have a problem with overspending, which I'm ashamed to say is an issue close to my heart, there's also an option to set a limited budget for each transaction type.

For instance, if you want to try and cut down on the amount you spend on clothes then you merely set a budget on your clothes transactions for, say,

£30 a month. Now all you have to do is try and stick within that budget! A program that not only keeps track of your money, but slaps your wrists for spending too much of it! What will they think of next?

Also included is a calculator, which will not only work out your everyday arithmetic to help you sort out what you spend, but also contains a special interest calculator. Not that the calculator is especially interesting you understand, but it works out simple interest calculations.

This is quite handy if you're planning a loan, but because the terms of such loans are so variable you shouldn't rely on it implicitly, rather use it as a rough guide. Another handy addition though.

And for the upwardly mobile among you, there's an investment section that will keep track of your shares, trusts, and bonds. The prices of these are then included as assets which the program will take into account.

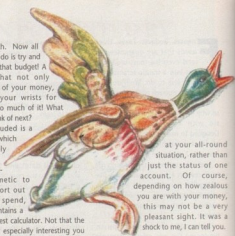
The moment of truth

Of course, there comes a time when you'll want to stop typing in all your transactions and take a look at just what your financial situation is like.

Home Accounts 2 allows you to do this by providing a budget overview, which checks your actual expenditure against your preset budget, or via a financial report which can either be viewed onscreen, dumped to a printer or saved to a disk.

This is, after all, what Home Accounts 2 is all about. Keeping a record of what you spent is all very well, but your bank statements can do that for you.

The advantage of having it all on computer is that you can actually look



at your all-round situation, rather than just the status of one account. Of course, depending on how zealous you are with your money, this may not be a very pleasant sight. It was a shock to me, I can tell you.

Manually speaking

As I said before, a good manual never goes amiss and Home Accounts 2's is certainly good. Not only does it contain the life-saving tutorial, but it also features a huge section which deals with every single option in the program in depth. Very handy for when you've got into the program and are looking to do more ambitious things with it.

Also present is a large chapter which discusses financial issues. A brilliantly clever idea, as it helps you to avoid some of the pitfalls of the money world. It includes stuff on good housekeeping, getting credit, how to avoid debts and loan sharks and some general hints on how to make the most of your money.

Conclusion

So just how mind bogglingly dull is Home Accounts 2? Well the answer, I'm rather distressed to report, is "not very". Granted, it won't make you go into paroxysms of pleasure at the sight of it, but it's actually a completely functional, very useful and amazingly easy program to use.

If you're already a Home Accounts user then this is the way forward, but if you're a wary newcomer to accounts packages then cast off your doubts and splash out on Home Accounts 2. You'll probably be very surprised. Even I could understand it. And believe me, that's saying something.

Home Accounts 2 is published by Digita International for £54.99.

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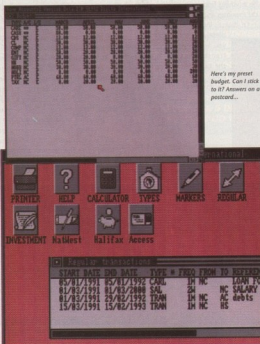
Ease of use

Implementation

Value for money

Overall

And here are my regular transactions. This means the computer will do all the working out for me, thank goodness



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Games people play

I'm an educated, intelligent person – a professional qualified psychotherapist come hypnotist and member of MENSA who has been searching for a hobby which will use my brain cells for a long time.

This search finally lead to me discovering the joys of Amiga computer games, some of which are extremely sophisticated. I'm into Powermonger, Moonbase, Harpoon, Waterloo etc, games which strengthen our memories and teach history, geography, politics, statistics and initiative.

So why is it that people who choose other hobbies like football, darts, snooker, fishing and crossword puzzles look down on computer games as being childish if I, for one, rejected their choices as not being mature and intelligent enough?

And what is wrong in using this purely for amusement if they can do so with their respective choices?
C Bruzel, Ilford

There you have it kids – you don't have to be a Mr Thickle to enjoy playing games on the Amiga!

I've yet to experience anyone telling me that I am childish for playing Powermonger. I have, in fact, yet to experience playing Powermonger. Games can be character building – take Lemmings and Pit Fighter for example.

Seriously though, I do agree with you that the Amiga is as legitimate as most other hobbies entertainment-wise. As long as you don't go overboard on buying software it can be cheaper too.

Floppy frustration

I read your news story "New policy greeted with mixed feelings" with interest as we ourselves have recently had problems with our four-month-old Amiga which we bought from a small dealer in our area.

When our Amiga went wrong (disk drive) I took it back to the shop quite honestly expecting a new machine. The shop were quite happy to recommend Commodore and sell it to me, but when I took it back it was a different story.

All they would offer me was to send the machine off to the national repair centre, and couldn't give me a time when it would be back, only anything from four to six weeks.

I telephoned Commodore's head office complaints department, who were equally unhelpful and I telephoned the national repair centre who were also



unhelpful. I wrote to the managing director of Commodore and finally gained a little more satisfaction, but still my machine was not returned until 30 days after I had taken it into the shop, with a new disk drive installed.

The new disk drive makes an awful grinding noise and isn't as it was before. I feel cheated after spending £399 on a computer that is four months old and that is now not in pristine condition, but I haven't a leg to stand on.

The dealer I bought the machine from admitted that Commodore have an appalling after-sales service record, especially with small outlets. With the larger stores like Currys and Rumbelows they would have exchanged the machine straight away.

The only lesson I have learned is to never buy from a small outlet ever again, and not to recommend any of my friends to buy Commodore.

I would be interested in your comments.

L M Skeggs, St Albans

Dear oh dear, you haven't been very lucky with your Amiga have you?

I agree that it is a pain when anything you own goes wrong. I do think you are expecting a bit much of your poor local dealer, though.

Look at the problem from his point of view. He sells you a brand new Amiga that he has bought from a distributor. You pay him – he pays the distributor. No problems so far.

Four months later you, a third of the way through your warranty, appear on his doorstep with a knackered machine. He could of course get straight on the phone to his distributor and buy another Amiga for you to take away.

You would be happy while he, on the other hand, would be left with one broken machine that he can't sell as new after it's fixed. He would also be faced with a bill for the new machine he supplied to you. The profit margin on an Amiga sale is typically 17 per cent so you can see it just doesn't add up.

The point I'm trying to get across is that your local shop sells Amigas on the understanding that Commodore will repair them if they go wrong. Obviously six weeks is a long time to wait, but the fault lies with Commodore and their national repair contractor, FMG.

If you buy an Amiga from one of the high street multiples, there is a chance they will change it on the spot. This is because they hold much larger stocks of machines. Having said that I doubt you would get a direct no quibble swap from any shop after 30 days.

If you bought a new car and the clutch fell to bits three months later what would you expect – a brand new replacement or a repair?

Most local dealers do a hell of a good job in advising people what setup is right for them. After the sale they go on providing as much dedicated support as they can. I would prefer to respect their position than advise people to shop exclusively in the high street and promote extinction of the breed.

Pirate ahoy?

Hands up all those readers who disagree with pirated software? Yes, a vast majority appear to be of the opinion that they do not wish to possess such software. Now hands up all Amiga dedicated magazines who support this view. Yippee, a full house and they all have stated within the last few years that they will not advertise such software within their hallowed pages.

Well, maybe someone can explain how software seems to change status as it crosses European borders. More to the point how can one of the leading five Amiga magazines within the UK distribute 78,266 copies (according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations)

Name that tune

I started buying Amiga Computing from the May 1990 issue. I remember that on your old CoverDisks you used to supply us tunes that loaded into MusicBox, an old track player program. The tracks were Song0, Song9, EmpireStrikesBack, NameThatTune, SpaceConsert and MemoryDust.

On the October 1990 issue you stopped providing us with tunes. Then on the November and December 1990 issues you started them again but this time they were self-executable. These ones were Marilyn and Pipes of Lost Time.

Of course (from January 1991) you are now supplying them in MED format. The question is, is there a program to convert the MusicBox and self-executable tunes to MED format?

While I'm at it, I strongly recommend OctaMED from AmigaNuts. Although it cost me £10, it was well worth it for eight channels. However, there are serious limitations on eight channel mode due to the heavy CPU load, but that doesn't matter. I can't wait to get version two!

G MacGregor, Epsom

Have a word with AmigaNuts to see if there is anything to convert from MusicBox to MED. We certainly don't know of such a utility but it's amazing what can be supplied if you pay enough!

I don't think you stand much chance of converting the standalone tunes to a MED-friendly format – again AmigaNuts might be able to help.

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of a commercial program under the guise of public domain?

Although I shall not mention the magazine by name I refer to the Red Sector Demo Maker. This, together with the additional utility disks, is listed in a majority of Public Domain advertisements.

I recently purchased the Demo Maker, expansion set and vector object editor disks locally. All three are only supplied together with an instruction book and are issued by Data Becker GmbH of Merowingerstr 30, 4000 Düsseldorf 1. This company is also responsible for serious software such as BeckerText and numerous books covering the full range of professional Amiga use.

Each public domain software library is therefore depriving DataBecker of a total of £64.47. More to the point, the offending CoverDisk has just cost DataBecker £1,849,436.30. As all this software has been issued during the last two years it would hardly appear to be a case of the programs having gone past their sell by date.

With all magazines openly supporting FAST and ELSA the word is that even to hold pirated software is an illegal act. If this is so it is beyond my comprehension as to how the instant creation of 78,266 criminals can be justified. It certainly takes the steam out of the present argument with regard to full games as CoverDisks.

Of course, all the above can be verified with a current issue of the ISBN catalogue – then again you could just look at the CoverDisk in question. They even have the Data Becker logo as one of the sample graphics to use with the demo maker!

5 P Woodward, 12 AD Regd RA, BFPO 20

Hmm... all sounds a bit strange! Have you checked with DataBecker or Red Sector to see if any deal has been struck with the magazine concerned?

We Amiga magazines might compete, but we are all very professional. I find it unlikely that another mag would just rip off a commercial program.

I think you will find that there will have been some form of agreement in place before the disk appeared. If not, let us and the magazine concerned know.

A secure future

For my final project for GCSE Design and Communications I have chosen to study computer security. This will involve researching the various ways to prevent a computer from being stolen.

As an owner of an Amiga 500 I feel that the Amiga is the ideal computer to use to design a solution to this problem. Unlike the PC, for which a range of security

During a conversation with the editor today, he suggested I write to you to let you know what we are all about.

We are four Amiga users who decided to start a club after realising that when people first buy their computers there is not much help available in the way of manual translations or guidance. There is also very little information available to say which programs would be best suited to people's needs. We are not prejudiced and will take any member with a 16-bit machine. If they have not got a machine then we can find then the cheapest in the area.

We have managed to gain the support of the local

The funky bunch

Yes, I know this is Amiga Computing not Music Week, but I feel I must put a few facts straight. It may surprise Mr Ove Gustavsson (ESP, October 1991) that Sinead O'Connor was certainly not the first person to use the Funky Drummer sample.

Originally the breakbeat from an old James Brown record (titled strangely enough "Funky Drummer"), it has become the most used drum sample in modern music.

Literally dozens of records have nicked it, eg (off the top of my head) Ghetto Heaven by the Family Strand, I'm Not the Man I Used to Be by Fine Young Cannibals, Waiting for that Day by George Michael and even Wouldn't Change a Thing by Kylie Minogue. To say Sinead O'Connor originated that

devices exist, to my knowledge the Amiga has none.

The culmination of this project will result in a design for a security device. I have compiled a list of questions for a survey to help in my research.

Should you be kind enough to print this letter, would you include my full address to facilitate replies from those of your readers who might like to participate in this survey?

A Matthews, 94 Chapel Fields, Charter House Road, Godalming GU7 2AA

I print your address with pleasure! Unfortunately I can't print the questions though, there just isn't enough space.

Anyone who wants to help out should write to the address above for a copy of the questionnaire.

Do let me know how you get on, and send in details of the security device you eventually come up with – we might even do a review!

PD praise

It's me again, from Burmans PD (issue 39). I'd like to thank you not only on my behalf, but for the 100 or so members whom the letter provoked into joining. I'm sure that they are all happy having joined the cheapest PD company around and are grateful to you for putting them on the right track.

Business has picked up and I'm doing better now than I have ever done! Thanks to Amiga Computing.

Before I go, I wonder if any other AC readers have noticed that you have got bigger by 2cm?

R Burman, Middlessex

I'm glad to hear that your library is still going

sample is like saying SAW invented classical music!

Finally, bearing in mind that George Michael recently paid out royalties to James Brown for use of that sample and, to the best of my knowledge, Miss O'Connor has not, I wonder if Mr Gustavsson's views on musical copyright are still as strong?

I Am Stretched On Your Grave by Sinead O'Connor is by far the most loud and unoriginal use of that sample I've ever heard.

B Turner, County Durham,

Right, glad you got that off your chest. I think we will publish the Gallup Top 40 music charts from next month!

from strength to strength. Do me a favour and send some of your latest releases to our PD pundit, Daniel Whitehead, at the usual address. It would be good to get you some coverage in our Public Sector.

Just think, if I'd printed your address this time, you might have got another hundred members.

CDTV turkey?

Why oh why oh why, is the structure of my chromosomes... (ha, joke).

But seriously, can you answer a couple of little questions about the Amiga?

Everyone goes on about the Amiga being the only home computer with the ability to multitask. Now I'm not putting it down – I've owned one for three years and wouldn't part with it – but is it not a fact that true multitasking can only occur on a machine when there are as many processors as processes? So would it not be true to say that it only gives virtual multitasking through processor sharing?

Secondly, why did Commodore spend all that cash on developing the CDTV system, only to decide to also release a keyboard for it (soon) turning it into an Amiga, and release a CD-ROM drive for the Amiga turning it into a CDTV system?

Would the money not have been better spent on me (a poor student) or just on the development of a CD-ROM drive for the Amiga? Or a hardware ZX81 emulator? Or an easy way to fit an upgrade on an ST?

A lot of money to create two very similar things. Is that not quite silly?

Clubbing in

retailers covering Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells, Bexhill and Hastings including Pace Shareware, Senlac PD and M.C.A. Softcat of Ryde, who have agreed to give club members discounts on all hard and software.

We produce a monthly magazine on an Amiga 500 with a 1500 upgrade using Pagesetter 2, printed on the cheapest Amstrad and photocopied on a Ricoh, for sale to the general public at 50p, which our members get free with a monthly disk. All profits go back into the club. The local reference library has asked if we will supply them with a copy on a regular basis.

We have been in existence since July '91 for the purpose of getting other 16-bit users together to exchange information and assist others less capable. We will be

arranging social evenings, outings, tutorials and competition nights. We also eventually aim to help the community such as schools, the disabled institutions and anyone else in need of help with their computers.

Until then we need as many members as possible.

5 Petrie, The Computer Club, 16 Laton Road, Hastings TN34 2ES

Well, if you have spoken to the editor it's a jobsworth situation! I have printed your address – hopefully anyone in the area who is interested will contact you.

Your magazine is very good, it just goes to show what can be done with limited resources.

of a commercial program under the guise of public domain?

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Programming pointers

I would like to learn computer programming in Cobol on my Amiga. It must be possible. The Amiga is capable of anything, or so they say. Can you help me on this matter - what do I need, where can I get the equipment, and how much roughly will it cost?

I've tried asking several companies who do courses in Cobol programming, but all they seem to do is try and sell me an IBM-compatible Amstrad computer and course work for hundreds or even thousands of pounds.

I would appreciate any advice that you can give me.

A S Jobe, Portsmouth

I've published letters like this before, asking for help, without response.

Come on guys 'n' gals, is there a PD version of Cobol hiding out there?

The first person to locate and send me one will get a prize. There, can't say fairer than that.

Ezra online

Ezra Surf can be contacted on a whole host of bulletin boards and conferencing systems. If you have anything to say, get it off your chest online!

AC also has its own Fidonet echo which is being carried by BBS systems throughout Europe. Any Fido sysops interested in hooking up should collect AMIGA.COMP off the backbone.

If you are experiencing difficulty, please contact Tony Miller, sysop of our home board - 01 for Amiga.

Additionally our mailman with the most, Ezra Surf, hangs out on the following services:

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CompuServe	70007,4734
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01 for Amiga	Amiga Computing

security. This will involve researching the various ways to prevent a computer from being stolen.

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who you know!

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GALLERY

We are always on the lookout for good Amiga art. Send your work (as an IFF) to **Amiga Gallery** at the address below.

EZRA SURF

Got something to tell other AC readers? Send your general letters to **Ezra Surf's Postbag (ESP)** at the address below.

COMPETITIONS

Enter competitions using the details on the form. If you have won a competition and not received a prize contact **Jonathan Maddock** on 0625 878888.

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PD libraries are welcome to submit their latest releases. Submissions should include a detailed list of what each disk contains. Jiffy boxes to **Daniel Whitehead**.

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If you have a serious complaint about the editorial content of AC please write to the **Editor, Eddie McKeand** at the address below.

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WRITS'N'BITS

Any legal enquiries should be addressed to our publisher, **Richard Williams**, at the address below. He can also be contacted on 0625 878888.

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A full calendar

I've been experiencing problems with QCal, the diary program you gave away on the December 1990 disk.

The problem occurs when trying to add new entries. An error message is produced saying "maximum number of entries reached" even though the disk is less than half full. Is there a problem with the program?

R F Upham, Camberley

There is no real problem as such. You've simply packed so much information into your QCal that the poor program can no longer cope. I'm not overfamiliar with QCal, as it was on a disk I didn't compile. However, I've experimented with a copy and found that several months' worth of diary dates can be handled with ease.

If you run up against the numbers barrier in future, I can only suggest that you purge all your old entries and prune the most distant future appointments.

Xerox blues

My problem is with my printer, which is a Xerox 4020 colour inkjet. I cannot get bold or italics, and sometimes the underline does not work properly when using Scribble!

Also, when I take a graphic print of, say, Rombos Complete Colour Solution the output is too dark and the colours a bit murky. When I carry out a self-test on the printer, everything appears to be fine. Any advice would be appreciated, as I am at a loss as to what to try now.

Gordon McLeod, Lanarkshire

You seem to be using the wrong printer driver and have missed the point of Workbench's preferences program. You are in luck because there is a printer driver specifically for the Xerox 4020, which should be available from better PD libraries. Phone round a few until you find one with a disk of printer drivers containing the 4020 driver.

As for your murky colours, the best way to sort these out would be through the preferences program's Graphics1 and Graphics2 screens. Use these to experiment with the density and threshold settings until you find a combination to suit your printer. You will certainly have to lower the threshold setting if your colours are too dark.

Knackered keyboard?

I have owned an A500 for about 18 months and apart from my internal drive packing up (thankfully inside my warranty), I've had few problems. Recently however, I've been having strife with my keyboard.

In the last couple of weeks the keyboard has locked up and the Caps Lock light has started to flash. Sometimes the keyboard goes dead without the Caps Lock light flashing, but both symptoms require the machine to be rebooted, which seems to cure it for a while.

If I am lucky, it doesn't happen at all. Can you tell me what the problem might be and how I can cure it?

K Kendall, Aberdeen

There are two possibilities. Either you have a virus, which is unlikely given the intermittent nature of the problem, or your machine has a hardware fault. Try a virus checker just to make sure, but if this doesn't solve the problem (which I doubt it will), the only option is to have your machine checked out by an engineer. FMG, Commodore's national



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repair centre, can be reached on 0733 391234. They currently charge a flat rate of £57.45 for A500 repairs. Alternatively, you could try a local Commodore dealer, but if the machine has to be repaired, they're more than likely to send it to FMG in any case, and would probably charge you a few quid on top for their time.

but when I tried to check a disk the same thing happened as before. Could you please tell me what I'm doing wrong?

Simon Garrington, Sheffield

The checksum is a device used by the Amiga to ensure a block of data has not been corrupted. When the block is written to disk, a calculation is carried out using the data it contains and the result, called a checksum, is added to the end of the block.

To verify that a block is OK, the Amiga will check to make sure the data in the block, when recalculated, results in the same checksum. If, however, a virus has scuppered one or more of your blocks, or the disk you are checking is a commercial release and not an AmigaDOS disk (ie one that opens a CLI or Workbench), the sums won't add up.

Make sure you are not trying to check commercial games software. Virus killers are of little use in this case because they are designed to search through AmigaDOS disks, and if the game's boot block has already been written over by a virus it's dead and buried anyway.

If you are checking DOS disks and still finding checksum errors, you'll have to use a program such as FixDisk or Quarterback tools to attempt a salvage operation. These programs can sometimes recalculate the checksum and revalidate a corrupted disk. Check our ads for a supplier of QB Tools (it's a commercial release) or contact Europress Direct (using the order form at the back of this mag) for a March 1991 back issue, which has FixDisk on the CoverDisk.

Spares and repairs

I am the owner of an A500, which I bought in December 1988. Unfortunately, my TV modulator has recently popped its clogs and I have had to use a green screen monitor, which is terrible for games.

When I tried to buy a new modulator from a computer shop in Cardiff that they were out of stock, but they said they'd try to get me one for about £25. When I phoned later they said they couldn't get their hands on one. I then tried Diamond Computers in

Nordic keyboard

I read your reply to T A Seaman in the September issue, and I have to correct you on saying the Checkmate Digital Unit is the only keyboard add-on for the Amiga. I recently saw a new keyboard unit in a Swedish computer mag.

It was originally meant for the PC, but it is easily fitted to the Amiga (both 500 and 2000 models). The keyboard has a built in trackball, and costs 1,400 Swedish Kroner (about £130).

The Swedish distributor is Chars Data, and they can be reached on 0381 10400.

Daniel Vedoy, Norway

I hope that the keyboard has been modified to suit the Amiga. You can't just plug a PC keyboard into the Commodore machine and expect it to work. If the company involved has carried out its own development on a PC keyboard, the result should be of a better quality than Checkmate's keyboard housing - though it's also well over twice as expensive.

Checksums

I am quite new to the Amiga world and do not know very much about viruses, but I am having trouble with them. I saw an offer for a "virus killer" free with every game so I sent off for a few games and received the virus killer.

I then rushed off to my computer to try it out on some disks that I knew were infected, but when they were checked a message came up "Error validating disk, checksum error". I thought it was a fault with the disk, so I reset the machine and booted up the disk with no problems.

I then received your great CoverDisk with Virus Checker v5.26. "Great," I thought, "a decent killer,"

The saga continues...

The information supplied by L J Maxwell in September's ACAS about running an Amiga from 12V batteries contains several errors.

1. The 0V connection to the two 12V regulator chips should connect to the centre of the two batteries as well as to each other (see diagram).
2. 12V regulators will not operate correctly off a 12V input. The regulators require at least 2.5V across them to guarantee correct operation. This, together with the fact that as a battery discharges its voltage drops to below 12V, would mean that the 12V outputs from the regulators may well drop to 9V or less.

To get round this problem, either the regulators need to be operated off a higher voltage (18V or 14V) by using more batteries, or switching DC to DC connectors need to be used to generate the 12V supplies.

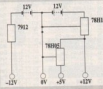
Anyone operating computer equipment from a DC

to mains inverter should make sure that the inverter does not generate large voltage spikes as this could lead to problems with machine crashes or even permanent damage to the computer and/or its power supply.

A J Matthews, Cirencester

Thanks for the tip, and the warning to potential battery boffins. This is as good a time as any for us to remind readers that we will print letters from technically expert readers in the hope that by doing so we can stimulate an informed debate on matters technical, such as has resulted in the battery debate.

However, we print replies to technical queries on a "try at your own risk" basis. As the letter above points out, there are always dangers in modifying your Amiga unless you know exactly what you're doing.



Bristol and they said I could have one for £66. What is the proper price and where can I get one?

Robert Read, Cardiff

If Diamond quoted £66, then they are trying to overcharge you by £30. Sure they didn't say £36? If you phone CPC Ltd, Commodore's spares people, on 0772 355034, you can purchase a modulator by credit card for £36.01 including VAT and postage. When I phoned them today, they said that they too were out of stock, but by the time you read this they should have had a new batch of modulators.

Wrong drive

I'm considering installing a hard drive in my Amiga, but not from the usual suppliers, hence the need for a lot of advice.

I believe that I need a SCSI hard drive (whatever that means), a control card, and partitioning software. I believe the latter is also in tracks and sectors on a floppy.

The supplier is an electrical company called MatMos who sell a 91Mb Seagate/Imprimus hard disk at £239 (ST2106N 5.25" SCSI). They also supply "disk controller cards" (is this for hard or floppies - or are they universal?) with obscure numbers like XT MFM, XT SCSI, AT RLL and AT SCSI, at prices around £30. If the latter are usable it's cheaper than the £119 - £199 IVS Trumpcard.

What software will I require? Is it best to go for the Trumpcard and attach a Seagate?

Chris Brown, Witham

Ooh - you're a bit off the track with some of your suggested hard drive combinations. All of the cards you mention, with the exception of the IVS Trumpcard, are designed for IBM PC compatibles. RLL, MFM, and SCSI are all types of hard drive; XT and AT are types of IBM PC. An XT SCSI is therefore a SCSI interface for a PC. SCSI, seeing as you asked, just stands for Small Computer Systems Interface, and it's one of the competing standards for hard drives.

Go for the IVS Trumpcard, or cast about for one of the other cards which come in under £200. There are some such as the GVP and Nexus cards (phone Silica Shop and Power Computing respectively), which will allow up to 8Mb on board as well

as a hard drive. The Seagate SCSI drive you quote is a 5.25in drive, and won't fit on most internal A2000 hard cards, but there are Seagate SCSI drives in 3.5in format, and can be had quite cheaply. On the other hand, most Seagates of this kind are stupendously slow - some have access times of 68ms or more as compared to the 16ms which is becoming the accepted standard for a decent HD.

You might be as well to go to one of the regular Amiga retailers and buy a card with hard drive already attached. Try to shell out the extra for a fast Quantum mechanism - once you've used one you'll never want to use another.

All the Amiga boards such as IVS, GVP, and Nexus come with their own formatting and partitioning software, and if you buy the lot as one unit, the drive will probably already have been set up for you.

Chips down

I bought my Amiga 500 about two years ago, for play, hobby and work. In need of good wordprocessors and DTP programs, I found 1Mb was essential, so I bought an A501 memory expansion. From then on I could load every program with no problem. Even the animations from DPaint III loaded fine.

Next on my list of peripherals was a hard disk, so I purchased an A590. Nothing out of the ordinary so far. The only thing that worried me was the fact that the above-mentioned animations couldn't be loaded any more - a "Not enough memory to load all frames" message appeared on my screen. I blamed it on the buffers needed for my hard disk.

I looked for RAM chips to fit in the A590 in several computer stores, but had no luck. So, having a degree in electronics, I ordered them from an electronics store, and installed them myself. After reconnecting the wires and cables, booting stopped after the message: "Workbench disk A500/A2000 release 1.3.2. Version 34.28", and my Amiga went into meditation giving me the number: "#81000005.00C1EAD0", which means that my memory map is scrambled.

The memory counter on my WB-screen does state 1354712 free memory, and most programs do work. The major problem is again in DPaint III animations. It loads about five frames, then gives me the absurd information that I'm out of memory. It deletes the previous four frames and distorts the current frame. After quitting, the guru gives me the error #0000003

(address error?). The instructions that came with the disk are in French, and that's about all I know. My computer is equipped with a faster agnus (only a half meg of chip RAM however). How can I sort out this problem?

Bert Visser, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

It sounds as if either you've fitted the chips in the wrong sockets or you've got one or two damaged chips. The A590 has to be filled up in a certain order, and if you can't understand the French manual you may have inserted your chips in the wrong sockets.

It's less likely that you have damaged chips, because if the memory failed to auto-configure you'd be unable to boot up at all. It is possible that one of the chips is dodgy, but it's more likely that either the chips are in the wrong places or the A590's memory board has been damaged.

Try CPC (phone as above) for an English A590 manual, or contact Commodore in the Netherlands and ask for a Dutch version.

A bridgeboard too far

My B2000 recently suffered a read/write error on the PC hard drive I was using via my A2088 bridgeboard. The error corrupted the file PCWindow and I lost access to the A2088 ("file is not an object module" came the reply from the Amiga).

A salvage attempt seemed successful at first until I tried to use the CGA-compatible graphics - the colours have separated but colour text is fine. I tried Commodore's customer care, who referred me to CPC plc, but they don't appear to have stocks of the software at the moment.

Where am I most likely to find the A2088 install disk? Our local dealers seem a bit vague on the matter.

G Glynn, Reading

Try CPC again and ask to put in a special order. They will have to get the disk from Commodore, so it will take a couple of weeks, but unless you can find a user with an A2088 who can help you out, this is your only guaranteed source of the software.

CoverDisk help

In answer to Graham Carter (September issue p144), the reason Andrew's Animation Studio won't save is because there's no room on the CoverDisk. Copy the program to another disk and you should have no problem - at least I didn't!

A note to the disk compiler - this sort of problem has been cropping up more and more lately because you cram the disks so full (for which many thanks), but do you think you could mention when it may be necessary to move a file to a new disk in the general instructions? I find it's almost always necessary for a file involving input from me, whether it be graphics, text, or maths.

Angela Cockburn, Lilyfield, NSW, Australia

Check out this month's CoverDisk and you'll find we've addressed the problem of copying files from one disk to another. The ShortCut menu system now contains a separate dose menu with two help files.

One, the general help file, contains information on backup procedure and how to copy files across. The second contains information on the extra files you might need for specific program on each disk. Keep up the feedback - if there's any help facility you'd like to see incorporated on the disk, drop us a line. It's your disk, so your input is always the most important factor in our decisions about its make-up.

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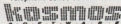
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BARTMAN REMIX great sounds
STAR DREN 2 disk comedy
JOURNEY INTO SOUND and so it is
AXIS select those tracks in style
VOGUE CD PLAYER looks and sounds good
VIVALDI 2 disk classical
BABY SITTING BOOGIE funny sampled song
DON'T PANIC great sounds from LSD
FLASHING BYTES brilliant

• GAMES •

OPERATION DESERT STORM shoot 'em up
MENTAL IMAGE GAMES (1 meg) fantastic
ARCADE good Amiga breakout
CHINA SHOP (1 meg) great fun
MAHJONG nice g/h good game
STAR TREK 2 disk space voyage
TRUCKING ON (1 meg) great 2 disk game
NO MAN'S LAND (1 meg) 2 player shoot out
SHAPES addictive puzzle game
MEGABALL a great game of breakout
BALOONACY drop those bombs
POWER PONG tidy tennis type game
LAZER-ZONE arcade blast em!
CHINA CHALLENGE addictive puzzles
DUNGEON DELIVER 2 disk arcade adventure
HOLLYWOOD TRIVIA an interesting quiz
CUBULUS a real brain teaser
ORIP arcade fun
TILE TRAIL (1 meg) tidy puzzle game
PIXIE KINGDOM 2 disk arcade quest
SEA LANCE strategy at sea
POM POM a very good blast em game
YELP neat game for the kids
READY ROBOT DEMO (1 meg) fun learning
TWINSTR terrific for two
LIGHTS OUT be a vandal & avoid the cops
LUNAR LATION a great Jeff Minter game
PROJECT 1 build the enemy
SEVEN TILES futuristic football game
THE SIMPSONS built on the loose

TRICKY a tidy puzzle game
ZEUS move those files in style
BLUZZARD an arcade type space game

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ENOMA good phenomena demo
REBELS COMA (1 meg) brilliant classic
PULLING THE TRIGGER (1 meg) love this
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REBELS MECH II neat g/h
WIZZCAT UK (1 meg) stylish intro here
PLASMUTEX the greatest plasma
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He's got a point...

Novice FidoNetters may be wondering how some users manage to have terribly neat messages, with quotes from previous messages and a snappy end line to the posted message. This can all be done with an offline mail reader, but for handling high volumes of mail, there's nothing to beat a mail point.

A brief explanation of FidoNet addressing is in order before we go further. The original Fido system split the World into several zones (zone one being America, two being Europe, and so on), each having many nets of bulletin board nodes. This works fairly well, but it does mean that a lot of users have the same address.

A newer system allows frequent and trusted BBS users to have a personal mail point by adding a fourth field – or dimension – to the Fido address. Thus newer 4D addresses are of the form <Zone><Net><Node><Point>, as in my own point address, 2:259/2.4.

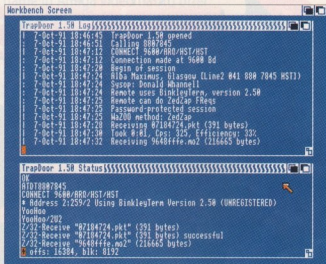
How it works

As it would take a whole month's column just to explain how to set up each part of a point arrangement, I'm only going to give a very brief introduction to becoming a mail point. The system allows the FidoNetter to do most of the things possible in a normal BBS session whilst offline. Since Britain is blessed with one of the world's most expensive telephone systems, running a point can really save on your connect time.

The point system works in a broadly similar manner to the way that mail is passed between bulletin boards. Instead of using a normal comms terminal, points use a special mailer program which dials the "Boss" node and uses a special protocol to collect waiting mail packets and send any outgoing mail.

There are several Amiga mailers available, but the most widely used is TrapDoor, a shareware product from Austria. It's efficient and reliable, and is now at Version 1.80. TrapDoor can be tricky to

Stewart C Russell saves phone bills with FidoNet



TrapDoor in action, showing the log and status windows

set up, but once you have it working properly it requires no maintenance. I use it daily, and am hugely impressed by the solidity of this product.

The best a mailer can do is leave an archive of mail packets on your disk. You'll need a program to split the packets into messages, sort these messages into the right Fido Echo (or area) and then allow you to browse through these areas, preferably in a friendly GUI manner.

Once you've replied to or created all the messages you wish to send, the point software creates an outgoing mail packet archive. The mailer will automatically send this archive the next time the

Boss node is called. Since there is more interaction between the user and the point software than there is with the mailer software, it's more down to personal preference. I happen to like Point Manager 2.05 because it handles my mail needs adequately. It does have a few limitations – such as its lack of a built-in file-request module – but it's quick and simple once you get over the rather confusing setup process.

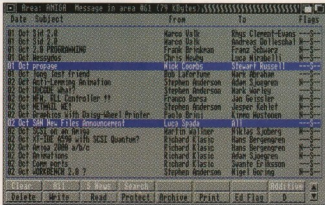
Flexible

A point can also send and receive files along with mail. The setup can even be used to request files from other bulletin boards, but this is rather frowned upon. Long distance callers frequently download without uploading anything useful – not clever.

Not everybody can have a mail point. The most basic limitation is whether your sysop's software can handle points – most can these days. Some support points, but don't use 4D addresses. So a boss net address has to be agreed between the boss and the points.

It is entirely up to your sysop to grant you the privilege of having a mail point. Generally, the more responsible you are when using a board, the better your requests for pointhood will be considered.

Stewart C Russell can be contacted on CIX as "scrus" or via FidoNet as Stewart Russell at 2:259/2 (Scottish Open).



Messages, with both sender and receiver, are displayed in a clear and functional way



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SOFTWARE

DTV

Zen, the ancient art

If you're anything like me, no matter how much time and money is spent on a project there's always that one little thing that could have been better, if only you had a special little utility to add those touches that all your commercial packages can't manage.

Do you fit this particular bill? If so Zen Computer Services could be just what you're looking for.

This Manchester-based outfit have been working extensively with various film and TV companies plus private production units, producing in the main one-off Amiga driven video graphic systems which vary from simple tele-promoting to commercial caption generators and live statistical graphics in the style of American football coverage.

You may ask has all this has possibly got to do with the humble punters. As you might expect, not a great deal, as custom-made software is far beyond the reach of most of us.

However all is not lost, as it's a sad businessman who doesn't look to make a few extra bucks in the second-hand market. As a result Zen are soon to release all their suitable software via Alternative Image.

Now you and I can benefit from the needs of the commercial world by picking up designer video graphic software at a fraction of the price. Isn't capitalism marvellous?

Prompting problems

Smooth Talker is the first of the new releases and tackles the problems of talking to the camera. It does this by importing the Ascii text of your choice which is then displayed in your favourite font.

All the action takes place over the entire screen, the speed control being applied by either mouse movement or alternatively via an optional control unit which slips into the parallel port and controls the speed of the rodent in either direction.

To make life a little easier the software allows various parts of the text to be highlighted so special commands can be spotted with ease.

Another handy addition is the inclusion of a marker system which allows various points in the text to be selected and as a result accessed

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As much prompting as anybody could possibly need,
thanks to the talents of SmoothTalker

Paul Austin looks at just what the latest name in Amiga video has to offer

This is Clarendon in size

This is Clarendon reduced to 1/2 size
from 80 point down to 22 point.

Here it has been outlined and
a drop shadow added in DPaint.

Anti-A in action - classy captions in a matter of moments

instantly for those up to the minute news items. On top of the simple control and smooth scrolling comes the impressive talent of text reversal which means that the system can be used to produce TV-style "autocue" displays. Now your news hound will never have to stumble through endless bits of paper again.

Instead his or her eyes can stay firmly fixed on the audience as the words scroll smoothly by, right in front of the camera. All you need is a mirror and piece of glass at just the right angle and you're away.

SMPTÉ subtitles

TCap is the next program in the Zen pipeline. It allows any amount of subtitled text to be locked into your creation via the industry standard of SMPTÉ timecode. It does this by employing a SMPTÉ timecode reader which locks the Amiga and video signal to an accuracy of 1/25th of a second.

Once coded, various parts of the text can be introduced at any point by either manual entry of the particular timecode position or by being grabbed via the external reader. In both cases the result is the same - a frame accurate intro or outro at the position of your choice.

The size of the production is unlimited so even full feature films can be titled in one pass - all you need to do is specify where you want the words to appear and what you want them to say - simply itself.

The usual array of wordprocessor commands are on hand, so your anglicised version of love and life in Lapland should appear in perfect English.

And if the fancy takes you the text itself can appear in either one or two

lines, with either a solid or semi-transparent background, all in the colours of your choice, of course.

Clean lines

Lastly we have what is nothing short of a dream come true for video fans. Yes folks, it's a program which can actually remove the dreaded jaggies from any standard Amiga font, leaving you with a smooth and stylish replacement which wouldn't look out of place on any TV screen.

As with most things there is a price to pay for the better things in life. In the case of Anti-A it is size that suffers. In order to achieve the increased quality the font itself is shrunk dramatically. The larger the shrinkage the better the quality, it's as simple as that. As you can imagine, merely shrinking a font isn't enough to make it as smooth as silk, so there has to be another element in the equation.

This extra element is anti-aliasing, or to be more precise four levels of anti-aliasing which in English means that four shades of grey are used to produce each character of the font. These extra shades are applied to the edges of the character where they produce a gradual fade rather than the harsh lines of the original font.

As you probably know, standard fonts only consist of one colour so processed fonts can't really be described as standard fonts any longer. Once the conversion process is complete they become "col-olors" - a format which many DPaint fans know and love.

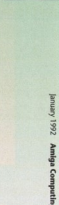
And finally...

On the good side, there is an obvious and dramatic improvement in quality, but the reduction necessary for quality results can be a problem. For example if you wanted a finished font to be 50 point the original would need to start out at 150. This two-thirds reduction is almost essential for quality results and if you can go even higher it's a bonus.

Next month we'll look back in anger at the last year. So don't miss the chance to catch up on what you've missed. Until then, bye for now...

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Sounding good

Margaret Stanger gets serious with registers

My next few Almanac pages will be devoted to sound production on the Amiga. The Machine Code page of the Almanac has been amalgamated with the Code Clinic to form this new page, Programming. As usual, some C and assembler source code may be shown in the text. The CoverDisk will contain full programs with both C and assembler source code, fully documented, as before.

All sound occurs in the form of oscillations, or sound waves, in the air. On the Amiga the digital equivalent of a waveform is stored in memory. This digitised data can be converted back to analogue form and sent to the amplifier.

Waveforms

The amplitude of the wave gives the volume of the sound, and the frequency of the wave determines its pitch. Next month I shall show how to create a musical scale with notes of different pitch – this page concentrates on the timbre of the sound, determined by the shape of the waveform.

The simplest waveform is a sine wave. Other waveforms like the sawtooth wave and the square wave are a mix of sine waves of different frequencies. I have included an example of each of these pitched tones in the programs on the CoverDisk. The waveforms have been converted into a series of numbers for the Amiga, each number represents a snapshot of the wave at a given point in time. For instance a sine wave is represented by:

```
char waveform[] = {
    0,-20,-30,-50,-71,-83,-92,-98,
    -100,-98,-92,-83,-71,-50,-30,-20,
    0,20,30,50,71,83,92,98,100,
    98,83,71,50,30,20
};
```

The digitised values are called samples.

Noises are an arbitrary combination of sound

events, rather than a mixture of other waves like a periodic waveform. I have included a noise made from sample data in the program – digital samples are read into memory from a file called "sploit", which is in the Programming directory with the software.

Other sound sample files can be obtained by using a digitiser on a real sound, or from some PD disks which contain sound samples.

Waveform data

For the Amiga to access the sound wave data, this data has to be in chip memory in the same way as the Copper list data. For my program to run on an Amiga with extended memory, I have to make sure the data is in the right place. This is done by allocating chip memory for all the sound data, and copying the data into this memory.

Registering sound

Last month's Machine Code page introduced the custom chips, and how to change the contents of some of the registers to use my own Copper list. Assembler programmers use the include file `HARDWARE/CUSTOM.I` to find the offset of the register addresses from the base register address.

C programmers have a corresponding include file, `HARDWARE/CUSTOM.H`. The custom structure includes four `AudChannel` structures, one for each sound channel. This is the structure from the C include file.

```
struct AudChannel {
    unsigned char *ptr; /* ptr to start of waveform data */
    unsigned int len; /* length of waveform in words */
    unsigned int ac_per; /* sample period */
    unsigned int ac_val; /* volume */
    unsigned int ac_dtr; /* sample pair */
    unsigned int ac_pos[2]; /* unused */
} aud[4];
```

Parameters can be put into this structure to

determine the sound when the corresponding DMA sound channel is enabled. I have set the sample period to an arbitrary value, and set the sound volume to its maximum of 64.

The waveform data pointer is set to point to the start of each set of samples, either to the periodic waveforms (sine, square and saw tooth waves) and/or to the digitised sample data from the file "sploit". (This file contains data to simulate the sound of a small frog falling off a lily leaf, as in Fun School 2.)

The length (`ac_len`) contains the number of words in the sound data, or half the number of bytes. The assembler code to reproduce the "sploit" sound is:

```
move.w #00001,dmacon(a5)
:disable channel 0 dma
lea aud(a5),a3
;store address of audio channel 0
move.l buffer,a3_ptr(a3)
;address of sound data from file
move.w #1125,ac_len(a3)
;length (in words) of the data
move.w #64,ac_val(a3)
;maximum volume
move.w #000,ac_per(a3)
;440 Hz
move.w #00001,dmacon(a5)
;enable audio channel 0 dma
```

Turn off

When the end of the data is reached, one sound cycle has been performed. The Amiga will continue with more sound cycles until the channel is disabled. In this program, the sound is turned off at the end of one second.

The Amiga may well be in the middle of a sound cycle when this happens, and the sound will not turn off smoothly. It is possible to control the sound channels using the system software, and I will demonstrate this technique in a later Programming.

The program

The two programs, `sound1` and `csound1` are almost identical – one is compiled from C source code, `sound1.c`, and the other assembled from assembler source code, `sound1.a`.

Each program opens the DOS library, allocates chip memory for the sound data, and reads a file (sploit) full of sound samples into the allocated buffer. The other sound data is copied into chip memory.

The sound channel 0 DMA is disabled each time adjustments are made and the parameters for `AudChannel[0]` altered.

The four sounds are made in turn, with a short delay after each one. The program releases the memory, closes the library, and exits gracefully.

COMING SOON: My next three Programming pages will involve varying the sound pitch, sound channel control using a MessagePort, and simple music. Both C and assembler will be supported.



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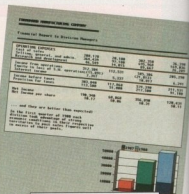


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Computers

Very basic Midi

Tutorial videos are big business on the Amiga and now it's the turn of MIDI, thanks to Basic Basics from ESW VideoWorks. Their particular aid to the teaching process comes in the usual video case complete with a very basic outline of the contents.

Unfortunately the contents themselves are even less detailed than their descriptions. As a result you're likely to learn far more from the blarney at the beginning of the manual than you are from this painfully weak introduction to the art of electronic music.

The video is hosted by a nameless roving reporter who occasionally prods the rather portly figure of Paul Wiffen for odd bits of bland MIDI trivia. Apparently our Mr Wiffen is a fully-fledged MIDI wizard, who has allegedly worked with just about everyone who's ever made an album.

It's obvious from both the packaging and the format that the makers have done their best to make the video as inquisitive as possible – no doubt so that as many copies as possible can be shifted to unsuspecting micro users no matter what machine they employ.

No reference at all is made to the Amiga or indeed the software it runs, which incidentally happens to be Dr.T's Tiger Cub. No doubt because of the video's multi-format design.

The extravaganza opens with some vague advice on a basic MIDI setup, quickly followed by the construction of a particularly uninspiring piece of Mr Wiffen's art.

After the damage is done our hero sets about editing his creation with the quantise option. When everything is in its place he continues with a brief explanation of transpose. This is followed by a little more tinkering and then it's off to a larger studio to add a few whistles and bells.

Of course, before we leave our resident expert manages to copy his creation onto his original Tiger Cub system disk, no doubt complete with a virus or two and perhaps even an odd read/write error – not a good idea...

Once settled into the new studio Mr Wiffen sets about adding some high quality sounds to his masterpiece. This process is accompanied by a brief mention on the units used along with an occasional zoom as the appropriate fader is adjusted.

On top of all this excit-

Paul Austin is transformed into the Barry Norman of the music business with a look at the latest MIDI video plus a listen to an all-new sound enhancer

ment comes a series of questions and answers presumably to pad out the massive 25 minutes running time.

Perhaps the most maddening aspect is the sound quality which is quite dreadful, especially considering the subject. No attempt has been made to record direct from the desk. Instead all sound – including the voice overs – comes from the onboard camera mic.

The demo music is less than impressive to start with and when this is compounded by poor recording techniques it only adds to the frustration.

The bitter end

On top of the thinly spread content there's the added insult of the £27.99 asking price. To be honest I can't see anybody but a very desperate music teacher finding any use for it.

If you still feel the need for assistance check out the local library or sign on to a

part time MIDI course at the local poly – you'll learn a lot more, for a lot less.

● Tel: Darrin Williamson on 081-460 1773 for details.



Excellent enhancement

Now before I'm pigeon-holed as the grumpiest man in music, take a look at what, for me, is almost frenzied excitement. Yes folks, I actually like something. In fact love might be closer to the mark.

What's the mysterious cause of such unrestrained excitement? Just a simple and lowly sound enhancer that's easy to use, produces excellent results and perhaps most important of all is cheap. What more could any muso want?

Like all good ideas, Omega Projects' Sound Enhancer is essentially simple – its only aim is to bring out the very best from any Amiga sound source. It does this by sitting – in line – between the audio outputs on the Amiga and either the monitor or your external amp and speakers.

In effect the unit works as a bass and treble booster which simply amplifies all those signals which are ignored by the Amiga's internal sound circuitry.

For those blessed with a graphic equaliser this probably doesn't seem very impressive but it's worth remembering that the unit has been designed specifically to suit the Amiga and as a result there's a good deal less effort required to attain that perfect sound.

It's simplicity itself to use, comprising a small but sturdily constructed metal box which is home for a single knob and a solitary bypass button.

The knob simply defines the amount of enhancement. When active the unit automatically boosts the bass signal. As a result the knob's main use is to define the amount of extra treble signal.

An added bonus is that with some convoluted connecting it's possible to pass any would-be samples through the unit before they're digitised.

As a result other Amigans can enjoy your increased fidelity without an enhancer of their own. This process is by no means as flexible as having your own enhancer, but it does give them a chance to hear just what they're missing.

If you're either an Amiga muso or a sound-mad game fan I'd say it's a must. If you're in the market for a Christmas present I suggest you get this right to the top of your list. It's worth remembering that the system can't produce miracles – in other words poor samples won't become good ones overnight. But it's certainly true that good sounds become far better. An excellent product, and highly recommended.

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Doing it with style

Desktop publishing is mainly about design. In the same way that you can't expect to be able to draw like Da Vinci simply because you own a pencil and paper, the acquisition of a desktop publishing program isn't going to turn you into a page designer.

But there are features within desktop publishing programs that can help you to produce professional looking documents that require a minimum of design. One such feature is the style tag.

Style tags let you keep a consistent look and allow you to publications while at the same time allowing you to make changes quickly and easily.

A simple example would be chapter headings in a book. You would want each chapter heading in the same book to be set in the same style, but in another book you might want them all in another style.

To alter all the chapter headings in the second book you would have to go through them one by one changing typeface, point size and so on. If there were a lot of headings it would take a long time. And if you decided to change them again for a third book you'd have to do it all again.

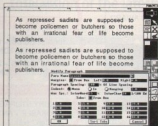
However, tag all the headings as a style called (say) "Chapters" and all you need to do to change every heading in the document is alter the settings of that particular tag.

Regular

If you were producing a newsletter or club magazine there are several parts of such a publication that could be defined as style tags - things like article headings, bylines, picture captions, sub-headings, contact addresses and so on. Keeping to a regular style for these parts of your publication will give it a professional look - it will have the appearance of being designed even though all you've done is decided that all headings are this big in this typeface and all picture captions are that big in that typeface.

What I'm going to do in this article is run through the Professional Page Define New Style Tag requester so that you can understand what effect each feature will have on your text. At the

Ben Pointer plays tag with Professional Page



While increasing the InterChar spacing helps to get rid of those ugly rivers of white, increase it too much and the words become difficult to read

top we've got Tag Name. This has no effect on your text. It is the name of your tag. It makes sense to use a name that exactly describes the use of the tag - "Article Heading" might be better than just "Heading", and "Picture Caption" might be better than just "Caption".

Remember that tags get listed in the Select Style Tag requester in alphabetical order, so if you're defining more than one style of (say) caption, then it might be an idea to call them names like "Caption: Photo", "Caption: Table", "Caption: Figure" and so on. That way all the caption styles stay together in the list, making them easier to find.

Underneath Tag Name is Para - the paragraph tag that this style will use. Paragraph tags are similar in principle to style tags, except that they are concerned with the formatting of the text rather than the style in which it is set. They have their own Define requester, which we'll quickly run through while we're on the subject.

The Margins part of the Define Paragraph requester deals with boxes not pages. If the From Box button is active then the box margins are taken from whatever they are set to in the Active Box requester, which means if you double click on a box - this means that you can have only the one margin in that box, and you couldn't force a certain paragraph to have larger or smaller margins than the rest of the text in that box.

To achieve this you have to deactivate the From Box button and enter the left and/or right margin measurement into the relevant string gadgets. Any text highlighted and tagged in this paragraph style will then take its margin settings from the paragraph tag rather than the Active Box settings.

Paragraph Spacing is the vertical

gap between paragraphs. The default setting of 100 per cent means that the space between the start of a new paragraph and the end of the previous one is the same as the vertical gap between each line.

If you find that your text is not fitting the space you've designated for it, increasing the paragraph spacing slightly is one way to quickly overcome the problem - newspapers often do this.

Indent is the style and distance for the paragraph indent. "None" means that each new paragraph will be set flush with the left margin of the box; "In" means that the first line of each new paragraph will be indented by the distance specified in the string gadget to the right of the three buttons; "Hanging" is the opposite of "In" - instead of the first line of the paragraph being indented it remains flush with the left margin and all the other lines of the paragraph are indented by the distance specified in the string gadget.

Tricky

The two Max Spc gadgets are probably the trickiest to get the hang of. To start with they only come into play if your text is flush justified. The problem with flush justified text is that you often end up with "rivers" of white space running down the page where the software has inserted space between the words in order to justify the line.

The InterWord and InterChar gadgets let you specify the maximum amount of white space the software is allowed to insert between words and letters when flush justifying.

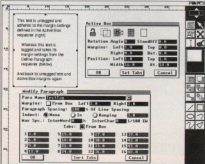
The InterWord distance is specified as a percentage of additional space over normal. The "normal" space is the distance you see between words in flush justified text when InterWord and InterChar are left at their defaults. Changing the value in the InterWord gadget has no effect unless you change the value in the InterChar one.

The InterChar distance is specified in 1/100ths of an em. An "em" is nothing more mysterious than the width of the lower case "m" in whatever font you are using for that text.

Finally...

The last button in the Define Paragraph requester is the Tabs one, and this works on the same principle as the Margins section - if the From Box button is activated then the tab settings for the paragraph are taken from the Active Box requester, otherwise you specify them in the string gadgets below - this allows you to have many sets of tab settings in one text box.

So that's the Define Paragraph requester dealt with and unfortunately we've run out of space. We'll continue the tour around the rest of the Define New Style Tag requester next month.



Deviating left and right margin settings in a single box can be achieved by setting up paragraph tags



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CDTV in a spin

Commodore had a large stand at TIME – the major multimedia show, which helped to make up for their absence from the Multimedia show earlier in the year. The show was the first chance for most of us to see NewTek's Video Toaster, still NTSC only, but impressive nonetheless.

I was given a sneak preview of some exciting new CDTV add-ons at the show. Firstly there is the Professional Video Adaptor, based on the DCTV 24-bit colour board. The output quality from this is excellent, and Commodore are talking about a price in the range of £50, and the possibility of future machines being bundled with the card.

The second card was an internal hard drive for the CDTV. The model I saw carried an 80Mb 2.5in Conner hard drive, mounted onto the back of a small circuit board, the whole assembly being smaller than a pack of cigarettes. Commodore will be launching 20Mb and 80Mb models, although they will be relatively expensive, being aimed at professional markets.

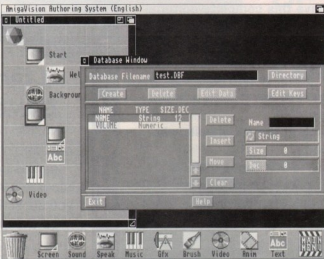
Chatting to Commodore's CDTV development manager, Jim Mackonochie, I also learned there are several hundred CDTV titles currently under development with around 80 available by January, including one by me! The rival CD-I system has about eight titles finished with another 30 in development. Microsoft have told me that Xenon-II for CDTV will be available any day now. Originally scheduled for a June launch, the title has been delayed due to copyright problems with the Rhythm King music on the disc. The audio tracks include work from Bomb the Bass and Betty Boo.

Dodgy drives

I've now seen two or three hardware companies advertising "CDTV compatible floppy drives". Well, if you want a cheaper CDTV drive just buy any standard Amiga floppy drive and a tin of black spray-paint. Spray the case black, and voila! A CDTV floppy drive. I'm using a standard RocTec Amiga floppy drive on my CDTV with no ill effects.

Commodore have set up CDTV Consortium Japan in co-operation with Mitsui and Dai-Nippon Printing, two major Japanese companies. The CDTV is currently manufactured by Matsushita, Japan's biggest electronics company,

The dynamic Jolyon Ralph brings you total vision of the latest developments



Now an updated version of AmigaVision is available from Commodore

better known over here under its brand name Panasonic.

I would expect that within six months there will be CDTV-compatible players on the market in the Far East – although probably not in Europe for a little while longer – bearing the Panasonic name. Sony have also worked on CD-Amiga technology before, so it would make sense for them to produce their own player.

Wobbly discs

Unfortunately there are no CDTV title reviews this month. This is not because I haven't got any titles to review – I have several lined up for next month – but because my CDTV player broke down.

This was probably caused by a rather dodgy plastic CD-single adaptor, so take this as a warning. If you're using CD-singles in their plastic adaptors make sure that the adaptor and the disc

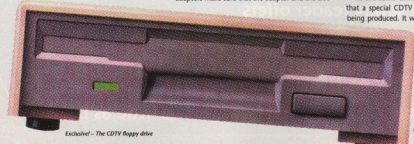
are perfectly flat. I've checked a couple of mine and they are not always supplied fitted properly.

My standard audio CD player isn't as fussy about wonky plastic adaptors, so it may have been pure coincidence that the CDTV died immediately after I put this CD single in, but be careful anyway. Many thanks to Sharon at Commodore for organising the replacement.

Commodore have announced that the long-awaited update to AmigaVision is now available. The current AmigaVision version is 1.72. Anyone with the older v1.53 – including most Amiga 3000 owners, as it is bundled with their machines – is entitled to a free update.

Commodore are not sure how the updates will progress but have suggested that dealers and users/groups can copy the latest versions onto users' master disks for free, or for just a nominal copying charge.

At the same time Commodore announced that a special CDTV version of AmigaVision is being produced. It will allow easy control of all CD audio functions and will contain a runtime module that can be included on CDs. Currently AmigaVision has been ignored by the CDTV community because it uses too much memory and does not have any distributable runtime module.



Exclusive! – The CDTV floppy drive



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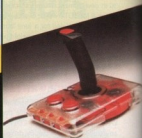
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Putting great to paper! The Workstation disk includes a superb text editor. This powerful package has an unmatchably so-called approach to producing and formatting professional looking text that would be envied by many of the more expensive commercial products.

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VACATION (PG)
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Chevy Chase stars as Clark W Griswold Jr., a family man with the heavy burden of Christmas on his shoulders.

Having found the perfect Christmas tree after an all-day trip into the country, he aims to excel himself this year. Clearly looking to become the envy of the neighbourhood, he single-handedly decorates every inch of the house with 25 sets of 100 blinking fairy lights.

Sadly, while Clark expounds the virtues of Christmas and all the traditions associated with it, two sets of warring grandparents and his cousin's family are all ensuring that Christmas night will be anything but silent.

Another good National Lampoon movie. Yule love it (I can't believe I just said that).

**FATHER CHRISTMAS
(U) Palace Video,
£9.99**

Raymond Briggs must do exceptionally well out of Christmas. Not only was his book *The Snowman* a Christmas hit everywhere, but the video has sold almost one million copies.

A repertoire of one is not a good thing, though, and no doubt it was with this in mind that the team behind *The Snowman* put together this animated film based on another Raymond Briggs book named, surprisingly enough, *Father Christmas*.

Mel Smith is featured as the voice of Father Christmas, and combined with some superb animation and a generally heart-warming story, this is an enjoyable little video. Sadly, like *The Snowman*, it lasts only 30 minutes, and as both titles are set to be screened on Channel 4 this festive season, it does make the asking price of £9.99 seem a little high.



**ENTERTAINMENT
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The Sky's the limit, as they say, and try getting Antony Purvis to disagree with you as he previews the coming month on Sky's movie channels. Plus video reviews

**Latest rental video releases
All available from December 4**

**THE ADVENTURES OF
MILO AND OTIS
MCEG Virgin Vision**

Milo and Otis are not big Hollywood stars, but more your average cat and dog. Milo is a ginger cat, and Otis a pug-nosed dog.

Milo is a bit of a wanderer. As a young kitten he wanders off to discover the world, starting with the rest of the farm on which he lives. Very quickly he comes across Otis, and the two strike up an instant friendship.

Together they share many adventures and experiences, for about 72 minutes, and then the film ends, leaving you with a nice warm glow inside. Yes, Milo and Otis is a cute film.

If you go gooey over sweet little furry kittens and all that jazz, Milo and Otis is the film to rent this month.

While this is really a children's film, it suited a big kid like me just fine. I liked it!

**LEATHER JACKETS
Medusa Home Video**

Ah. Yet another Rebel without a Cause for the 1990s. Quite why leather jackets are still considered such a symbol of rebellion these days is a subject I had best leave to someone else. Nonetheless, along comes this film to perpetuate the myth that wearing a leather jacket makes you look "hard", as we used to say at school.

But what of the film? Well,



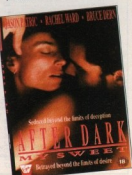
**AFTER DARK, MY
SWEET
MCEG Virgin Vision**

A tale of seduction, greed, betrayal, and all that. In this interesting new release, based on Jim Thompson's book *The Grifters*, Jason Patric plays an escaped mental patient known as Colie.

Colie drifts into town where he attracts the attention of Fay Anderson (Rachel Ward), a hard-drinking, taunting yet tender widow, and a small-time con merchant named Uncle Bud (Bruce Dern).

Colie's arrival prompts Uncle Bud to attempt to fulfill his ambition to kidnap the son of a wealthy Palm Springs family.

Which is about as far as I got before it got far too "intriguing" for me to follow. Sadly, *After Dark My Sweet* didn't manage to keep my attention for more than about 10 minutes, after which it rambled on for a further 100 minutes in its own incomprehensible fashion. There are hundreds of better films than this around, so you've not even got an excuse to rent it in desperation.



**Santa on satellite
Seasonal films**

Lots of seasonal films on Sky Movies Plus and the Movie Channel this month, which is good because they'd seem a little out of place were they screened in August. Those schedulers at Sky have earned their brownie points this time, and no mistake.

December 17 and 24 sees *A Year Without Santa Claus*, a truly chilling prospect I think you'll agree. Meanwhile on December 2, 8, 12, 17, 21 and 24, *Emmett Scoville* Saves Christmas. Six times over, apparently. *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*, meanwhile, is chronicled on December 11 and 24.

Rudolph's *Shiny New Year* can be seen on December 15 and 24, while over the Movie Channel, both *Snow* (the Charles Dickens novel) and *Soroged* (a Christmas comedy with Bill Murray) will be showing on the 7th and 22nd respectively.

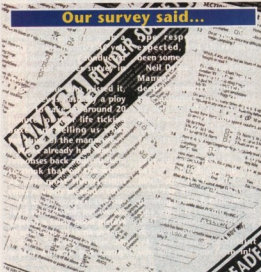
Also on the Movie Channel on the 3rd, 12th, 21st and 25th you can see *The Kid Who Loved Christmas* and *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* is on the 11th and 24th.

Not forgetting *Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus* on the 7th, 15th, 23rd, 28th and 31st, and *It Nearly Wasn't Christmas* on the 9th, 15th, 20th, and 25th. That should be enough to give you that warm, Christmassy feeling inside well into the new year.

ROCK LOBSTER

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luck next time!

Crash! Zzap! Wallop!

Zzap! Wallop!

Take a shuffle under your bed - is there a Speccy or a Commodore 64 lurking under there?

If you're anything like the AC team the answer will probably be a resounding "Yup!" In these high-tech days of Amiga sound and vision its often easy to forget just how much fun games like "Jetpack" and "Manic Miner" still are.

If you are a super observant type you will have noticed that the people who publish AC, Europress, took over "Crash" and "Zzap" 64 last month.

Great magazines for brilliantly fun machines. If you're the proud owner of a super Speccy or a Saxy 64 you'll not nip out and pick up one of these great mags.

You'll be shocked at how cheap the games are! Ahhh... memories are made of this (Advert end-Ed)

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CRASH



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Cast your mind back if you will to the August '91 Rock Lobster and the rather sad figure of Anthony Brewer from Newbury.

In the aforementioned Lobster we printed a chilling postcard from Anthony promising harm to the poor little Lemming folk of Psynosisland if we didn't send him a load of goodies PDQ.

Well, we gave in and sent the goods, but it looks like Mr.

Wallop!

harming the
Lemmings
The entire AC

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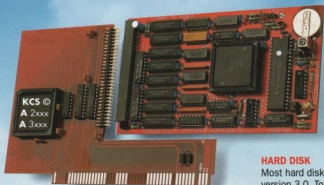
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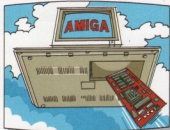
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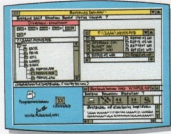
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